

# **Professional Performing Arts Venue Study**

## **Needs Analysis**



**Prepared for Auckland City Council**

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**A member of Horwath International**

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## GLOSSARY

<b>Term / Abbreviation</b>	<b>Definition</b>
APO	Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra
ATC	Auckland Theatre Company
Drama Theatre	Traditional western proscenium arch theatre, usually fixed in end-on theatre configuration
End-on Theatre	A theatre configuration in which the audience directly faces the stage
Flexi-form Theatre	A theatre that is effectively a “black box” which can be configured in multiple ways
Fly Tower	Large structure above the stage with associated ropes, counterweights, and pulleys that enables a technical crew to quickly move set pieces, lights, and microphones on and off stage by 'flying' them in.
HHTLL	Horwath HTL Limited
Lyric Theatre	Traditional horse-shoe shaped theatre with balconies providing good acoustics and an intimate atmosphere
Mainstage	Mainstream product with a wide audience base
NTI	New Theatre Initiative Inc.
NZSO	New Zealand Symphony Orchestra
Off	Product that is associated with cutting edge work with high quality production / practitioners
Off-Off	Low budget, experimental product
Proscenium Arch	Archway through which the audience views a performance
RNZB	Royal New Zealand Ballet
Studio	Small (<200 seats) black-box theatre space.
Theatre-in-the-round	A theatre configuration in which the audience surrounds the stage
Thrust Stage	The stage extends into the audience
Traverse Theatre	A theatre configuration in which the audience sits on either side of the stage, effectively facing each other
Vaudeville	A genre of performing arts that involves multiple, unrelated acts including short movies, comedy, music, magic shows etc, popular at the turn of the 20 <sup>th</sup> century

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Auckland City Council (“Council”) engaged Horwath HTL Limited (“HHTLL”) to undertake a study into the need and market demand for professional performing arts venues in Auckland City and to develop a strategic action plan to guide and prioritise investment into required venues in Auckland City over the next 15 years.

In order to meet the objectives of this study we have:

1. undertaken extensive consultation with over 60 industry stakeholders
2. critically assessed the strengths and weaknesses of Auckland City’s existing venues
3. compared and contrasted the number and variety of venues in Auckland City relative to selected benchmark cities
4. assessed the industry’s venue needs if the industry is to deliver on the vision that:  
*“the sector will have a strong and vibrant interface with its audiences, embracing diversity and responding flexibly to emerging trends, so as to ensure its relevance, quality and sustainable development.”*
5. recommended a preferred development pathway based on a critical assessment of alternative scenarios.

Our analysis has identified that the current performing arts venue provision in Auckland is failing to meet the needs of the professional theatre and dance sectors.

The current venue provision in Auckland is sub-optimal in relation to drama and dance because of:

1. the absence of an appropriate mid-size venue (250 – 450 seats)
2. the various shortcomings of key venues including The Basement, Herald Theatre, Maidment Theatre, and SKYCITY Theatre that are seeking to meet the wide range of industry needs from developmental work through to “Mainstage”.

The current situation is resulting in a wide-range of sub-optimal outcomes including:

1. some Auckland-based producers solely undertaking work outside of Auckland due to the lack of suitable venues
2. Creative New Zealand declining funding applications for Auckland producers due to the lack of a suitable venue for the proposed work
3. touring work not coming to Auckland because of the lack of a suitable 300 – 400 seat venue
4. uncertainty around the availability of the Maidment (and to a lesser extent SKYCITY Theatre) has the potential to significantly disrupt the production of theatre in Auckland and undermine the business model of Auckland Theatre Company (“ATC”), which is Auckland’s only recurrently funded theatre company

5. significant difficulty for many emerging and mid-career practitioners to establish a strong profile in the Auckland market because of the lack of a suitable 250 - 350 seat venue
6. an overly high reliance on venues managed by organisations that are not focused on the performing arts and therefore have different priorities
7. an overly high reliance on community venues because of the lack of a suitably intimate CBD venue
8. reliance on adapting purpose-built spaces to undertake activity for which the space was never intended, thereby compromising the quality of work produced
9. the dance and theatre sectors struggling to optimise their profile and identity without a recognised “home”, which contrasts with comedy that has The Classic and classical music that has the Town Hall.

Because there is currently such a diverse range of sub-optimal outcomes, the development of only one theatre cannot provide the complete solution. This conclusion is also reinforced through comparisons with benchmark cities including Wellington, Brisbane and Adelaide that illustrate Auckland is relatively poorly served in terms of its quantity and mix of theatre venues, particularly in terms of flexible venues in the 100 – 350 seat range.

We therefore recommend the development of three new venues:

- flexi-form theatre (250 – 450 seats)
- drama theatre (500 – 600 seats)
- studio theatre (100 – 200 seats).

In our assessment the drama theatre and flexi-form theatre are both a high priority. By contrast, we regard the studio as being of a medium priority because there are a number of existing formal and informal spaces that can be utilised to fulfil the need. However, in the interests of developing a cluster of diverse venues, it may be desirable to incorporate an appropriately sized studio space with the drama theatre.

While the drama theatre and flexi-form are both of high importance, we believe the slightly higher importance attaches to the flexi-form theatre because of the current absence of any such venue in Auckland. This does not detract from the fact that both need to be advanced with urgency in order to meet the current needs of the professional performing arts sector in Auckland.

We therefore recommend that the preferred approach to meeting the industry’s needs is to:

1. progress with Q Theatre (including the planned small studio / function space) to address the need for a flexi-form venue as quickly as is possible
2. immediately commence planning and development of a 500 – 600 seat drama theatre within the Aotea Precinct
3. also plan for a 100 – 200 seat studio theatre to be co-located with the drama theatre.

We have made this recommendation for the following reasons:

1. this solution has the best ability to respond to the urgency of the sector's needs as Q Theatre has resource consent and can be delivered in approximately two years. While Q Theatre is not the complete solution, it will address many significant issues and could also be used by ATC as a transitional venue until the drama theatre is complete. This would be especially valuable should the Maidment cease to be available prior to the new drama theatre opening
2. the Q Theatre project has been comprehensively developed with Council support over the last eight years and has been conceived with significant input from a diverse range of industry practitioners to ensure it provides a space that meets the sector's flexi-form needs. It is therefore not simply an expedient option on the basis that it can be delivered quicker than any other flexi-form space
3. by progressing with Q Theatre, planning and design efforts for the balance of the cluster can be focused specifically on the needs of the drama theatre and studio space, which could facilitate a more speedy delivery of the overall mix of spaces than if all three venues were to start from the beginning of the planning process
4. it will provide the opportunity for separate management and governance to further stimulate diversity within the sector, which would not be as achievable with an integrated theatre complex.

An integrated solution involving the St James Theatre is not favoured as it cannot provide all of the priority need venues and there is significant uncertainty surrounding the delivery timeframes and costs given the required sites are not under Council control. Refurbishment of the St James Theatre as a stand-alone 1,200 lyric theatre is not a high priority to meet current industry needs. However, we do recommend undertaking a business case analysis at the appropriate time to ascertain the role that a refurbished St James could fulfil in the future overall mix of venues.

Due to the uncertainty surrounding the on-going availability of the Maidment Theatre, Musgrove Studio, and, to a lesser extent, SKYCITY Theatre, there is a risk that the current situation could deteriorate before any new venues are able to be developed. Therefore, we recommend that Council should negotiate with the University of Auckland and SKYCITY to secure greater certainty regarding the on-going availability of these theatres until the high priority venues are developed.

The delivery of the recommended venues will improve the quality and diversity of venues in Auckland and result in an overall mix of venues that is more in keeping with comparable cities such as Brisbane, Adelaide, and Wellington. The mix of venues will result in a more vibrant and sustainable professional performing arts sector. The sector will have stronger identity through the critical mass of activity within the cluster of venues and this activity will have greater depth and diversity resulting in improved audience engagement.

## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

We have identified a number of recommendations to Council that will assist the professional performing arts sector in Auckland to achieve the vision that:

*“the sector will have a strong and vibrant interface with its audiences, embracing diversity and responding flexibly to emerging trends, so as to ensure its relevance, quality and sustainable development.”*

Our recommendations are summarised below.

### **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Council should progress with Q Theatre to address the need for a flexi-form venue as quickly as is possible.
2. Council should immediately commence planning and development of a 500 – 600 seat drama theatre within the Aotea Precinct.
3. Council should plan for a 100 – 200 seat studio theatre to be co-located with the drama theatre.
4. There should be independent governance and management of some, or all, of the new venues in order to help stimulate diversity and creativity in the sector.
5. The three venues should be clustered together and co-located with café / bars to maximise their overall effectiveness.
6. Ideally, rehearsal and office space should be incorporated into the new drama theatre to improve the quality and range of rehearsal space available for dance and drama in the Auckland CBD.
7. Council, together with relevant sector representatives, should negotiate with the University of Auckland and SKYCITY to secure greater certainty regarding the on-going availability of these venues until the high priority venues are developed.

### **OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Council should facilitate the establishment of an Industry Reference Group to provide a forum for liaising with the industry as the new venues are planned and developed.
2. A detailed business case analysis should be undertaken to ascertain the role that a refurbished St James could fulfil in the future overall mix of venues.
3. A cost-benefit analysis should be undertaken to ascertain whether the benefits of The Basement could be effectively improved by undertaking a range of physical improvements and increasing operational funding.

4. Further work should be undertaken to better understand the type of re-configured space that could be created in the Herald Theatre and what, if any, implication this has for the 100 – 200 seat studio being co-located with the new drama theatre.
5. Council should enter into dialogue with SKYCITY to ascertain whether there is an effective way in which the two organisations could partner in a redevelopment of the existing theatre to better meet industry needs.
6. Council should liaise further with Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra (“APO”) regarding its rehearsal requirements including the potential for upgrading of its existing rehearsal venue in Mt Eden.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

*"We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us."*  
Winston Churchill

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

Auckland City Council ("Council") has engaged Horwath HTL Limited ("HHTLL") to undertake a study into the need and market demand for professional performing arts venues in Auckland City and to develop a strategic action plan to guide and prioritise investment into required venues in Auckland City over the next 15 years.

It is intended that the report findings will be used to inform future planning and funding decisions as well as provide information for other major funding agencies.

The key objective of the venue study are to:

1. determine the current and projected needs and market demand for professional performing arts venues in Auckland City (specifically within the CBD)
2. identify gaps in current provision and identify future development opportunities
3. specifically, provide further guidance to Council on the priority of the Q Theatre project
4. specifically, investigate the potential functional uses, need and market demand for a refurbished St James Theatre
5. assess the implications and risks associated with other developments that could have an impact on access to performing arts venues
6. develop a strategic action plan for how an appropriate mix of professional performing arts venues could be achieved over the next 10 – 15 years.

### 1.2 OUR APPROACH AND OUR SCOPE OF WORK

In undertaking this study, we have engaged expert input and assistance from two professional arts advisors: David Fishel of Positive Solutions and Briar Munro.

Our scope of work included:

1. initial Council planning workshop, which involved:
  - a) reviewing and finalising the project methodology and timeframe based on input from Council
  - b) identifying key issues for investigation based on information on hand.
2. a literature review to ensure the current study was informed by past learnings and to assist in identifying key themes and issues for consultations

3. initial broad industry consultation with individuals and small groups in order to provide a forum for open and frank discussion. Consultations were undertaken with:
  - a) venue hirers / users, both national and Auckland based (“practitioners”)
  - b) Q Theatre
  - c) Auckland Theatre Company
  - d) Council stakeholders
  - e) Creative New Zealand.(A complete list of parties that we consulted with is included as Appendix A).

Extensive consultation on relevant issues was undertaken with the purpose of identifying the status of existing venues, venue gaps on existing user requirements, and emerging user requirements that could influence venue requirements.

4. targeted consultation with key groups and organisations to follow-up matters arising from our initial consultation
5. facilitation of an open workshop session with the arts industry to present our draft assessment of the industry’s needs and options as to how these needs could be met in order to obtain feedback and further input on preferred development pathways
6. several internal workshops with our arts advisors discussing:
  - a) key findings of the literature review and industry consultation
  - b) key findings of the industry workshop and targeted consultation.
7. holding several workshops with Council officers to ensure Council was fully briefed on the project team’s draft findings prior to the discussion at the industry workshop and one briefing with Council staff prior to finalisation of the study.
8. targeted consultation with stakeholders impacted by our draft findings and the outcome of workshop discussions.
9. preparation of this report outlining our findings and recommendations and the resultant strategic action plan.

### **1.3 EXCLUSIONS OF SCOPE**

This study provides a high-level evaluation of potential venue solutions. It does not include the following:

- business plan creation / analysis
- projections of capital costs
- quantification of market demand.

## **1.4 DISCLAIMERS**

Our report is based on certain assumptions, estimates and other information developed from research, consultation with the professional performing arts sector and our knowledge of the industry. The sources of information and the bases of significant assumptions and estimates are stated in our report.

We are responsible to you, as our client, and not responsible to any other parties who may act or rely on our report.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

In order to provide the context for this study, we have summarised four key strategic documents that discuss / comment on professional performing arts venues in Auckland City. These are:

- The 1997 Venue Study undertaken by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu
- Auckland City Arts Agenda, prepared in 2000
- Auckland City Blueprint, prepared in 2007
- Aotea Quarter Plan, prepared in 2007.

We have also provided brief summaries of the three specific venue proposals that we have been asked to consider as part of our brief. These include:

- Q Theatre
- Mid City
- St James Theatre.

### **2.1 DOCUMENTS REVIEWED**

#### **2.1.1 1997 VENUE STUDY**

In 1997, Council commissioned Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu to prepare a strategic plan for the development of professional performing arts venues in Auckland.

The study identified:

- a lack of theatres in the 200 – 400 seat range
- a lack of theatres in the 600 – 1,000 seat range
- the presence of only one flexi-form theatre in the market, with a capacity of 100
- a high utilisation of most venues, with the exception of SKYCITY Theatre
- the risk of a lack of suitable venues leading to reduced activity in the sector, which could, in turn, lead to a narrower theatre product range for public consumption.

The study identified that the most immediate need for Auckland was for a theatre complex with two flexi-form theatres of 250 and 450 seats each. The Q Theatre proposal was born out of this recommendation. Another recommendation was to promote the utilisation of SKYCITY Theatre, which, at the time of the study, was significantly under-utilised. The utilisation of the SKYCITY Theatre has improved substantially since the time of the 1997 study. The study also acknowledged a proposal by AIT (now AUT) to build a 450 – 520 seat proscenium arch theatre as a potential medium to long-term requirement for the sector, contingent on proving

demand for such a venue. It was assumed that this venue would duplicate the Maidment Theatre.

### **2.1.2 AUCKLAND CITY ARTS AGENDA**

The Auckland City Arts Agenda was prepared by the Community Planning Group of Council in 2000, and was Auckland City's first comprehensive strategy for arts and cultural development. The strategy outlines the vision for Auckland as "a celebrated arts and cultural centre of the South Pacific...where the arts are highly visible, where there is lots happening, and plenty of opportunities for diverse communities to participate". The strategy emphasises the importance of the arts to Auckland's prosperity and quality of life, and the role of the arts in shaping a unique identity for the city.

Some of the relevant strategies and actions proposed were as follows:

- ensure a range of venues and facilities to support a flourishing arts and cultural sector
- research venue and facility needs
- facilitate the development of a flexi-form venue in the CBD
- support and encourage opportunities for emerging artists to develop and present their work in Auckland
- develop arts and cultural precincts with a unique feel and character
- investigate and support the development of an artists' quarter
- facilitate communication between arts practitioners, arts and cultural organisations, the arts education sector and the private sector
- provide a central point of contact, develop communication channels and hold forums to help build a strong relationship between Council and arts / cultural communities
- provide funding to core regional arts and cultural organisations and facilities as flagships and cornerstones of the region's arts infrastructure.

### **2.1.3 AUCKLAND CITY BLUEPRINT**

In 2007, Council released an action plan entitled "Blueprint" which outlines a strategy to actively promote and assist Auckland City's creative industries, which include the performing arts sector. The report alludes to prior research<sup>1</sup> that identifies the pivotal role of creative industries in shaping cultural identity and in attracting creative talent to drive economic growth.

*"New Zealand needs an effective world city if it is to succeed in the global economy. Creative industries help all cities to be more innovative and productive, spawning*

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<sup>1</sup> *Rethinking Auckland as a Creative City: Concepts, Opportunities and Practical Steps*, Starkwhite, 2002 and *Snapshot: Auckland's creative industries*, Auckland City Economic Development Group, 2005.

*new products, services and jobs, and they also contribute significantly to the 'quality of place' that attracts, retains and services other high-value activities. Of course, creative industries also add a sense of dynamism to the way we lead our modern lives and can engage us all imaginatively on the paths we tread. The creative industries in Auckland City are an indispensable element of what is needed to make the Auckland region the purposeful world city that New Zealand needs."* Greg Clark <sup>2</sup>

The action plan refers to Council's involvement in the performing arts sector, as follows:

- developing the Aotea Quarter as "Auckland's civic core, cultural heart and arts and entertainment hub"
- pursuing the development of an arts precinct in the area south of the Town Hall
- contributing to the development of Q Theatre.

#### **2.1.4 AOTEA QUARTER PLAN**

The Aotea Quarter Plan published in 2007 by Council discusses the future development of Aotea Quarter, the area bounded by Mayoral Drive, Wellesley Street, Lorne Street and Khartoum Place. The vision for the Quarter is articulated as follows:

*"Aotea Quarter, the city's civic core, cultural heart, and arts and entertainment hub: a vibrant centre for people where senses are indulged, creativity expressed, activities and events enjoyed, and civic life participated in."*

The key strategy of realising this vision is identified as making the Quarter accessible and affordable to both fledgling artists and established companies by providing a variety of venue sizes and types, and by encouraging these creative individuals / groups to locate, manage, create, rehearse, promote and present their work in the precinct.

In terms of cultural infrastructure, the plan noted that Council would, amongst other things:

- retain, as a minimum, the current mix of council-owned cultural infrastructure
- retain the current mix of council-owned performance venues (sizes and type)
- encourage retention of the current mix of non-council performance venues
- work with the New Theatre Initiative Inc to build a 350-seat flexi-form theatre as part of the Town Hall Arts Precinct (Q Theatre)
- identify any gaps in theatre provision and recommend how best to meet them.

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<sup>2</sup> Lead advisor, City and Regional Development, United Kingdom Department for Communities and Local Government, and Chair of the OECD LEED Forum of Cities and Regions

The plan also states that *should* the lease for St James Theatre become available, Council would *consider* taking it over *if* its use can contribute to the vision for Aotea Quarter.

## **2.2 SPECIFIC VENUE PROPOSALS**

### **2.2.1 Q THEATRE**

The New Theatre Initiative Inc. (“NTI”) was established in 2000 by practitioners from across the performing arts sector and other interested individuals as a response to the need for a flexi-form theatre identified in the 1997 venue study. Since 2000, NTI has developed business plans for the theatre, undertaken fundraising campaigns, and advanced the physical planning of the theatre to the point that it has resource consent. Council has actively supported the Q Theatre initiative, providing operational funding, the site at 305 Queen Street, and incorporating Q Theatre into its various arts policy documents including the Aotea Quarter Plan and Auckland City Blueprint.

The Q Theatre business plan has undergone significant scrutiny and update since its initial conception.

The cost of the Q Theatre project has increased markedly over the last eight years as a result of changes in scope and significant construction cost increases over the period. The current cost estimate for Q Theatre is \$21 million. Of this, Q Theatre has secured funding from Auckland City Council, ASB Community Trust, and various other private donors totalling \$9.7 million. In addition, Auckland City Council has committed a further \$4.6 million contingent on Q Theatre being successful with its current \$6.6 million application to the Lottery Grants Board. Therefore, if Q Theatre is successful with its Lottery Grants Board application, it will have secured approximately \$20.3 million.

According to the most recent version of the design, Q Theatre will comprise:

- a flexi-form theatre with stalls and gallery seating. Seating capacities vary depending on how the theatre is configured but are predicated on a 350 seat end stage capacity utilising the balconies. If only stall seating is utilised, the end stage capacity reduces to 230 seats. The upper-end capacities of 460 seats are achieved using theatre in the round and long traverse configurations
- a 100 seat “black-box” studio space that can be used for developmental work or as rehearsal space
- a dedicated rehearsal space
- a large foyer space and bar
- ancillary facilities such as green rooms, dressing rooms and loading bays.

It is proposed that Q Theatre will be owned by a Trust comprising representatives of key stakeholders and users of the venue, but the day-to-day operations of the venue will be undertaken by a separate limited liability company.

Q Theatre is projecting that, once it is established, it will have annual audiences of 45,000 – 55,000 people. This projected level of audience has been peer reviewed by a number of third parties as part of wider business case reviews that have been conducted over the last six years. It is therefore regarded as being robust, although it has not been subject to specific analysis as part of this study.

### **2.2.2 MID CITY**

Mid City, which is located at 239 Queen Street, comprises an old cinema multiplex on levels 3 to 5 and a retail arcade in the lower levels. The building is under strata title ownership. The title for the cinema multiplex came up for sale in early 2008. This prompted ATC, with Council support, to investigate its potential for conversion into a theatre complex. The initial concept comprised a 550 seat drama theatre, a 350 – 460 seat flexi-form space a studio space, and two rehearsal spaces.

After detailed investigation ATC and Council jointly chose not to pursue the development opportunity as it became apparent that the Mid City site is too restricted and could not deliver three performance spaces. It was felt by ATC and Council that this was too much of a compromise for the industry.

### **2.2.3 ST JAMES THEATRE**

The St James is a proscenium arch theatre that was built in 1928 as a replacement for Fullers' Opera House, and was designed for vaudeville shows<sup>3</sup>. The theatre has hosted live performances and film ever since, until it was closed in 2007 for fire safety reasons.

The building's design is a fusion of traditional theatre and American picture house design, with an ornate Spanish colonial-style interior décor that includes many rare / unique elements. In 1957, it was the first public space in New Zealand to be fully supplied with air conditioning. The aesthetic appeal and heritage value of the St James Theatre have made it a much loved venue. The theatre has a seating capacity of 1,794 over three levels, and has good acoustics and a good sense of intimacy. Access to the venue is from Queen Street and Lorne Street.

St James Theatre, along with much of the Queen Street block between the old ASB Tower and Rutland Street, is currently owned by the Norfolk Trustee Company, a private developer. We understand that the developer has plans to demolish all the

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<sup>3</sup> A form of variety entertainment comprising a series of separate, unrelated acts, including comedy, music, dance and short movies

buildings on this site with the exception of the St James Theatre, and construct new shops, car parking facilities and an apartment complex.

ATC has undertaken an initial scoping study to assess whether the St James could be configured to meet its needs. This work was undertaken prior to ATC focusing on the potential redevelopment of the Mid City Cinema complex.

## **2.3 SUMMARY - BACKGROUND**

Auckland City Council has a long history of supporting the performing arts and has been actively involved in commissioning venue needs assessments and developing policies and action plans to assist the development of the arts in the City. Over the last 11 years, these studies, policies, and action plans have identified:

1. the need for a flexi-form theatre in the CBD and that Council should work with the New Theatre Initiative Inc to realise such a venue as part of the Town Hall Arts Precinct
2. the importance of ensuring a range of venues and facilities to support a flourishing arts and cultural sector
3. the need to develop arts and cultural precincts with a unique feel and character
4. developing the Aotea Quarter as “Auckland’s civic core, cultural heart and arts and entertainment hub”
5. the need to further assess Auckland’s performing arts venue needs.

Q Theatre has been advanced as a means of addressing the specific need for a flexi-form theatre. Most recently, Mid City was identified as a potential means of addressing a wider range of venue needs, but has since been abandoned as the venue space was too compromised to provide three performance spaces. The St James Theatre has also been identified as a space that could be refurbished either as a stand-alone venue or in conjunction with the adjacent Westend, Odeon, and Regent Theatres to provide an integrated theatre complex.

### **3. CURRENT AUCKLAND PROFESSIONAL PERFORMING ARTS VENUES**

This section assesses the adequacy of Auckland’s current professional performing arts venues both in the context of their individual capabilities as well as the overall mix of venues that are available. To assist in this analysis, the section starts by introducing a framework for considering the roles that different types of venues play in supporting different types of product. A brief analysis is undertaken of the venues that have opened and closed in Auckland City over the last 20 years before assessing each of the twelve professional performing arts venues in the Auckland Region.

This section also identifies the key community-focused venues that are utilised by the professional performing arts sector as well as current issues in relation to rehearsal space.

#### **3.1 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEATRE AND DANCE VENUES AND PRODUCT-TYPE**

Performing arts venues tend to host specific types of product within a particular genre, depending on their size (seating capacity), amenities, ambience, cost of hireage, business model and operational ethos. We have categorised these different product-types as “Mainstage”, “Off”, and “Off-Off”, derived from the concepts of “Broadway” product, “Off-Broadway” product and “Off-Off-Broadway” product.

##### **3.1.1 “OFF-OFF”**

“Off-Off” product began in 1958 as “a complete rejection of commercial theatre”<sup>4</sup>, and was initially hosted in coffeehouses in New York where actors and playwrights could stage plays without any prior screening.

“Off-Off” product tends to be unsubsidised, experimental, cross-genre theatre involving a lot of unpaid effort by emerging artists, and caters to a young / fringe audience – often the friends and family of the artists. Ticket prices are rarely over \$20.

“Off-Off” venues tend to be small “found”<sup>5</sup>, “rough and ready” spaces with a youth-oriented, fringe culture. The spaces themselves generally have minimal amenities from both a practitioner and an audience perspective, but they are “made to work” by virtue of the experimental, “can-do” ethos intrinsic to these spaces. These spaces are hired out for a fixed fee or take a share of box office earnings, and often offer some form of support to resident practitioners. “Off-Off” venues provide a much

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Viagas, *The Backstage Guide to Broadway*, 2004

<sup>5</sup> Converted spaces, rather than purpose-built venues.

needed point of entry for artists starting their careers to test new skills and ideas, and to be seen by those who might fund or support their work.

### **3.1.2 “OFF”**

“Off” product is usually staged by artist groups aiming to combine cutting edge theatrical exploration with quality production standards and practitioners.

Venues hosting “Off” product tend to operate with a strong developmental ethos, and often showcase the best of independent practitioners. They may be curated by an artistic director / programmer / artistic producer or host a resident company with additional co-productions supplementing the programme.

Practitioners of “Off” product tend to be mid-career, and would treat their host “Off” venue as a “professional home”, rather than a “social home” as in “Off-Off” venues. “Off” venues, particularly if they have a good bar and rehearsal rooms, often act as a place of exchange / challenge / growth, and in this sense they are the “artistic hub” of the sector.

Audiences attracted to this product tend to be more risk averse than “Off-Off” audiences, and have a higher expectation of production standards. Ticket prices tend to be between \$30 and \$50 (although occasionally dearer).

The “Off-Off” and “Off” segments are important in ensuring diversity in the arts and in providing practitioners and audiences with alternative access points to the genre.

### **3.1.3 “MAINSTAGE”**

“Mainstage” product tends to be large-scale market-driven product with high production standards, broad audience appeal and relatively high ticket prices (\$50 to \$100+). Audience expectations of production standards are high. For the majority of people, “Mainstage” product will be their only experience of the performing arts.

Mainstage venues generally have a large seat capacity. (E.g. a “Broadway” theatre would have 500 seats or more). These venues and the shows they host play a crucial role in keeping the performing arts relevant for the general public, and help build trust in the genre.

### 3.2 RECENT HISTORY OF PROFESSIONAL PERFORMING ARTS VENUES IN AUCKLAND CITY

It is relevant to consider the venue developments and closures in Auckland City over the last 20 years in order to understand the context of the current provision of venues.

**Table 3.1: Recent Venue Developments and Closures in Auckland City**

New Venues	Venues that Have Closed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ASB Theatre, 1989, 2,256 seats</li> <li>▪ Herald Theatre 1992, 184 seats</li> <li>▪ Civic Theatre, 2000, 2,378 seats</li> <li>▪ SKYCITY Theatre, 1996, 700 seats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ His Majesty's Theatre, 1988</li> <li>▪ Mercury Theatre, 1992, 635 seats</li> <li>▪ Mercury Gods, 1992, 100 seats</li> <li>▪ Galaxy Theatre, 1995, 300 seats</li> <li>▪ Watershed Theatre, 1996, 250 seats</li> <li>▪ St James Theatre, 2007, 1,200 seats</li> </ul>

In net terms, Auckland City has gained more venue seats over the last 20 years, primarily through the provision of two large-scale venues - ASB Theatre and Civic Theatre. Over the same period, the City lost four venues, which have tended to be mid-scale venues (e.g. the Mercury and Watershed).

Importantly, the Watershed was Auckland's *only* flexi-form venue. Since its closure in 1996, Auckland has not had a flexi-form venue with more than 100 seats. Also, Auckland lost its only dedicated mid-size drama theatre in 1992 with the closure of the Mercury Theatre and since this time the sector has been reliant on access to the University of Auckland's Maidment Theatre.

Since the 1997 Venue Study, which recommended the development of two mid-scale flexi-form theatres, the only new venue in Auckland has been the 2,378 seat Civic Theatre.

### 3.3 CURRENT PROFESSIONAL PERFORMING ARTS VENUES IN AUCKLAND REGION

Auckland City currently has ten professional performing arts venues. These are supplemented by two other professional venues in the Auckland Region - the Bruce Mason Centre in North Shore City and the Genesis Energy Theatre in Manukau City.

The specifications and indicative utilisation rates of the twelve professional performing arts venues in the Auckland region are summarised in Tables 3.2 and 3.3.

**Table 3.2: Professional Venues with Drama / Dance Focus**

Venue	Capacity	Theatre Type	Predominant Use	Indicative Utilisation <sup>6</sup>
Basement Theatre	100	St, RS	Small cast drama, comedy	Low
Musgrove Studio (Maidment Studio)	105	St, PS	Small cast drama, contemporary dance	Medium
Herald Theatre	186	FS, PS	Small cast drama	High
Maidment Theatre	450	FSP, PS	Drama, dance	High
Genesis Energy Theatre	700	FS, RS	Drama, orchestral music, dance, comedy	Medium
SKYCITY Theatre	700	FSP, PS	Musicals, drama, dance, comedy, cinema	Medium
Bruce Mason Centre	1,164	FSP, PS	Drama, musicals, dance, comedy	Medium
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,405</b>			

NOTE: St = Studio, RS = Removable seats, PS = Permanent seats, FS = Fixed stage, P = Proscenium arch

Of the venues with a drama / dance focus, the two mid-sized venues (Herald and Maidment) both currently have high levels of utilisation, which impact on the sector's ability to access these venues. While the Basement currently has low utilisation, due to the recent departure of Silo Theatre, it has, up until the start of 2008, had very high levels of utilisation.

Of the other professional venues, the Classic and the Auckland Town Hall are the only venues that currently have high utilisation.

**Table 3.3: Other Professional Venues**

Venue	Capacity	Theatre Type	Predominant Use	Indicative Utilisation
Classic Comedy Club	140	Cabaret	Comedy	High
Concert Chamber	497	FS, PS / RS	Chamber music, small scale drama, comedy	Medium
Auckland Town Hall	1,673	FS, PS / RS	Orchestral music, chamber music	High

<sup>6</sup> There is no standard measure of utilisation amongst theatre venues. The indicative utilisation levels are our assessment based on discussions with venue operators. We anticipate that not all venue operators will agree with our assessments but they are intended to reflect the extent to which there is spare capacity for additional activity in times desirable to potential hirers.

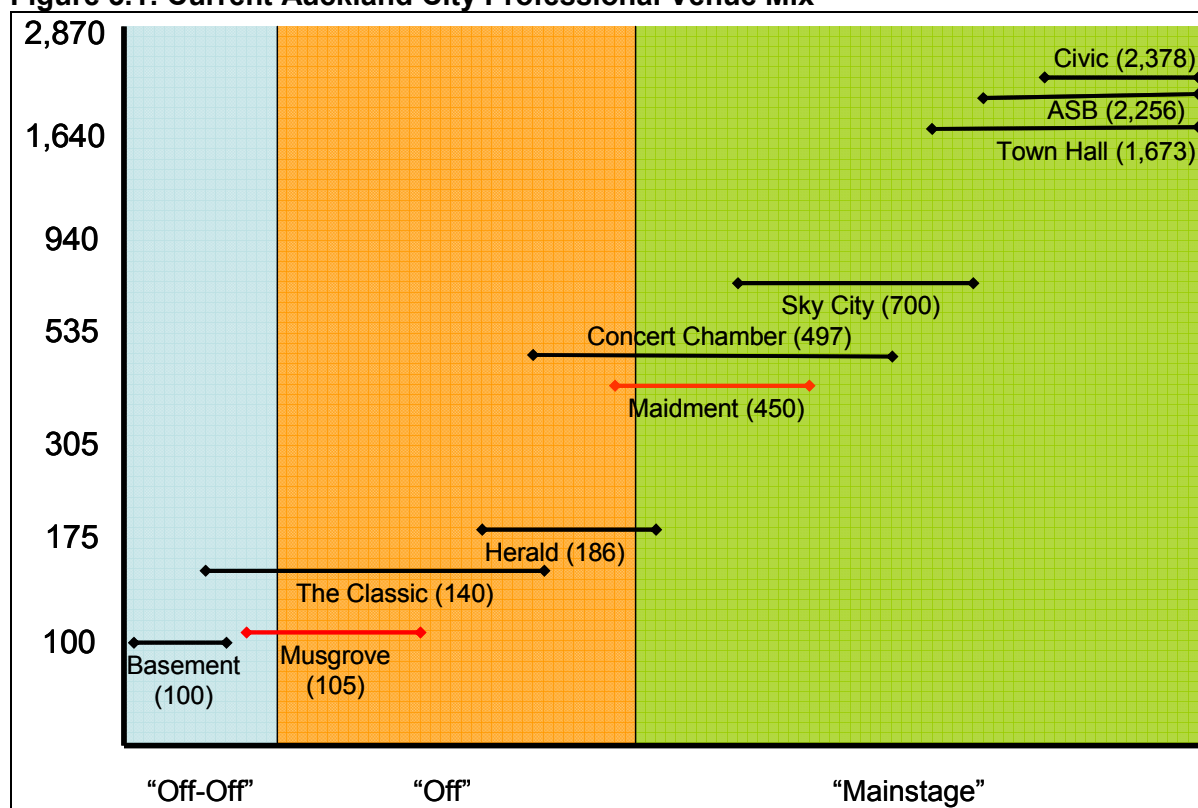
**Table 3.3: Other Professional Venues (cont.)**

Venue	Capacity	Theatre Type	Predominant Use	Indicative Utilisation
ASB Theatre	2,256	FSP, PS	Short-season large scale productions including: opera, ballet, orchestral music, drama, musicals	Medium
Civic Theatre	2,378	FSP, PS	Longer season large scale musicals and drama, cinema	Medium
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,944</b>			

NOTE: RS = Removable seats, PS = Permanent seats, FS = Fixed stage, P = Proscenium arch

The “venue map” below shows the current venues in Auckland City both in relation to their maximum capacity as well as the different types of product they tend to support. The size of each segment is indicative of each segment’s likely audience base (ie: “Mainstage” product tends to have the widest popular appeal).

The Musgrove and Maidment Theatres are shown in red indicating that their future availability is uncertain.

**Figure 3.1: Current Auckland City Professional Venue Mix**


### **3.3.1 THE BASEMENT**

The Basement, formerly the Silo Theatre, is an “Off-Off” theatre space located below the Classic Comedy Club. The venue is used for experimental / developmental theatre, generally produced by entry-level practitioners. The space has an 80 – 100 seat capacity and a moveable seating rack does provide some flexibility although this is hampered by the lack of size and height within the theatre space. The venue suffers from a lack of air-conditioning and basic amenities / facilities for both practitioners and the audience. The attractiveness of the space is its affordability, “ambience” and CBD location. The small capacity of the theatre means it is not a commercially viable venue. This does not impact on its ability to fulfil its role as an entry level venue, but does prevent it from having a role as on “Off” venue where commercial sustainability is important.

The venue does currently have relatively low utilisation due to the departure of Silo Theatre at the beginning of 2008 and a regular programme of work is still being developed. However, prior to 2008, it had very high levels of utilisation.

Our consultation has identified that the effectiveness of The Basement as an “Off-Off” venue could be improved:

- by excavating to increase the height of the venue
- by installing air-conditioning
- through increased operational funding to improve the levels of support to venue hirers.

### **3.3.2 MUSGROVE STUDIO**

The Musgrove Studio (“Musgrove”) is a 105 seat studio located in the Maidment Theatre complex at the University of Auckland. Although the theatre was originally designed to be flexi-form, the seating has subsequently been fixed. As a purpose-built venue, the theatre is of a different style to the Basement and straddles both “Off-Off” and “Off” in terms of the type of work that is performed. The theatre is predominantly used for small-scale theatre and dance. Like the Maidment Theatre<sup>7</sup>, the future accessibility of the Musgrove to the general public is uncertain.

### **3.3.3 THE CLASSIC**

The Classic is a privately owned venue that is home to New Zealand’s only fulltime professional comedy club. Located on Queen Street, in the Aotea precinct, the venue can accommodate 140 people in cabaret-style seating. The venue is open six days a week and hosts approximately 450 live events annually, which include events other than stand-up comedy (e.g. poetry nights). The venue also has two licensed bars, which allows for interaction between comedians and the audience after shows.

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<sup>7</sup> Refer to Section 3.1.5 for further detail.

### **3.3.4 THE HERALD**

The Herald Theatre was originally designed as a storage facility and rehearsal space at the Aotea Centre and was subsequently converted into a 186 seat theatre, with an unusually steep rake to accommodate the seating. The venue has its own bar and foyer space, and is considered an intimate space. The venue is used by small independent theatre companies and is now the main home of the Silo Theatre Company.

The Herald is currently a strategically important Auckland venue as it is the only theatre that caters predominantly for the “Off” segment of the performing arts spectrum. However, the venue does have a number of limitations, which mean it is not desirable for the Herald to be the primary venue catering for this segment. The Herald’s limitations include:

1. its relatively small size, which impacts on the financial viability of shows
2. its fixed format which impacts on the diversity of work in the venue
3. the unusually steep seating rake, which results in unusual sight lines for the audience.

The Edge has advised that it is currently considering plans to convert the Herald Theatre into a 100 – 200 seat black-box studio.

### **3.3.5 MAIDMENT THEATRE**

The Maidment Theatre (“Maidment”) is owned and operated by the University of Auckland and is located on campus. The theatre has a seating capacity of 448 over two levels and comprises a proscenium arch and fly rigging (but no fly tower). Front of house facilities include a small foyer with a beverage outlet, and a café space that is shared with the University. Opened in 1976 and refurbished in 1997, the Maidment will close for four months in late 2008 to have its roof replaced.

Usage of the Maidment is shared between professional performing arts groups, community groups and the University. Approximately 340 events – including theatre, dance and ceremonies – are hosted in the theatre annually.

The Maidment is currently the primary venue of ATC and has, therefore, evolved into being primarily a “Mainstage” venue.

Based on our consultation, the Maidment is perceived to be well suited for drama and dance, with good acoustics, good stage size, clear sightlines and a sense of intimacy. At a hireage rate of \$1,500 - \$1,700, it is also relatively affordable.

From an audience perspective, the shortcomings of the venue are perceived to be the constrained legroom, cramped foyer and bar space, lack of parking facilities and the distance from the restaurants, bars and general “buzz and activity” of the CBD. There are also issues around disabled access. The new parking facilities at the

nearby Business School and the roof replacement project are expected to address some of these issues.

From a practitioner's perspective, the shortcomings of the venue include a shortage of storage space, aging technical equipment, poor backstage facilities and the difficulty of accessing the venue due to high utilisation rates.

In 2007, the University researched a reconfiguration of the venue for more exclusive University use. The review confirmed that the Maidment could not easily be converted for use as a music venue, which is the University's most pressing need. As a result there are no current plans to change the current arrangements for outside parties (including ATC) to access the Maidment.

The University is making the theatre available for bookings by third parties (including ATC) for up to two years in advance, and reviewing this arrangement annually. The Director of Finance of the University has advised that at present "the University is unable to make a long term commitment to outside parties for the Maidment Theatre".

Given the current dependence on the Maidment for local "Mainstage" theatre and dance, the loss of the Maidment, without an equivalent replacement venue, may place a severe strain on the future viability of some major Auckland performing arts companies, particularly ATC.

### **3.3.6 AUCKLAND TOWN HALL – CONCERT CHAMBER**

The Concert Chamber seats up to 497 on two levels in traditional concert seating format, and is acoustically and spatially designed for music performances. It is widely acknowledged as having world-class acoustics for musical performance although there are some issues with inadequate noise separation from other spaces within the Town Hall. We understand these noise separation issues result in access to the Concert Chamber being restricted as management give preference to events in the Great Hall.

Due to a lack of venue alternatives, the Concert Chamber is also used for theatre, comedy and dance. However, the acoustics are regarded as being too "lively" to be ideal for spoken word. These alternative uses also require the reconfiguration of the seating (which adds cost and reduces seating capacity to approximately 300), and not using the main stage, which is too high for general theatre use.

### **3.3.7 SKYCITY THEATRE**

SKYCITY Theatre is a 700 seat theatre owned and operated by SKYCITY. The theatre is located at the southern end of the SKYCITY complex. It was originally designed and built primarily for Las Vegas-style cabaret performances, but ultimately has not been used for this purpose. The theatre is currently used primarily for mid-

scale dance, comedy, musicals and some theatre as well as cinema and conferences.

The theatre is regarded as being modern and clean, with excellent technical facilities (including a fly tower) and a large sprung floor stage. In terms of seating capacity and cost of hireage, the theatre is regarded as the largest “financially viable” CBD venue for most local performing arts companies.

The Theatre is popular for many short-season touring groups because of the ease of set-up and the ability to generate a good financial return because of the venue’s capacity.

Our consultation has identified that many industry participants (both SKYCITY Theatre hirers and non-hirers) dislike the venue’s strong connection with the casino and believe it does not create a desirable ambience for performing arts. This view is most keenly held by those that produce work targeted at children and / or family audiences. This shortcoming has been mitigated, to some extent, by reducing the areas around the theatre with views of the gaming floor.

Other shortcomings include:

1. the size and design of the theatre with a single seating rake, which impacts on the sense of intimacy
2. the need to travel up several levels to access the theatre
3. relatively poor acoustics for the spoken word, which requires amplification
4. the front of house facilities are generally considered to be rather cramped and inadequate, especially for larger audiences.

The theatre is operated as a commercial venue for hire, and we have been advised that it currently just breaks even. We have also been advised that while it may be technically feasible to increase the foyer space by up to 150m<sup>2</sup>, SKYCITY would only consider this if it were to improve the commercial viability of the venue. Other potential alterations to the venue (e.g. creating a gallery space or conversion of the existing theatre into a 550 seat drama theatre) would likely be technically challenging and probably very expensive. SKYCITY has also indicated it would be unwilling to undertake any alteration to the theatre that significantly reduces its capacity as the current capacity meets its own needs well, including as a conference / meeting venue, as well as those of various other hirers.

There has been recent conjecture within the performing arts sector as to the continued availability of SKYCITY Theatre. We have been advised by senior management that the Theatre is a condition of SKYCITY’s casino licence and the company does not, at present, have any plans to reconfigure the venue. However, senior management have advised that the theatre is viewed as being an important component of its casino / entertainment offering. As such, SKYCITY has advised that events in the theatre which relate to, and are consistent with, the gaming and entertainment presentation of the overall Auckland complex will be viewed favourably. SKYCITY has stated that this may restrict the availability of the theatre

(to some degree) for events and presentations that do not relate to the overall Auckland complex's offering and customer base.

### **3.3.8 AUCKLAND TOWN HALL – GREAT HALL**

The Auckland Town Hall was opened in 1911 and refurbished in 1997. The Great Hall has a theatre-style capacity of 1,673 on three levels. The acoustics of the Great Hall for fine music and orchestral performances is widely regarded as being world-class. It is the preferred venue of the APO and New Zealand Symphony Orchestra (“NZSO”) and is also used as a civic space for various ceremonies (e.g. graduation and citizenship ceremonies).

### **3.3.9 ASB THEATRE**

The ASB Auditorium is a 2,256 seat lyric theatre located in the Aotea Centre. Built in 1989, we have been advised that the theatre is scheduled to undergo an upgraded acoustic treatment in 2009. The auditorium is perceived to be modern and comfortable, with good sightlines and good technical facilities. Some practitioners have commented that the venue “feels more like a convention centre than a performing arts venue”. The theatre hosts ballet, opera and international touring events. Its size makes it uneconomical for most local performing arts companies.

### **3.3.10 CIVIC THEATRE**

The Civic was opened in 1929 as an “atmospheric” cinema theatre, and in 2000 underwent a \$42m refurbishment and adaptive re-use project to convert it into a lyric theatre. The project included building a new fly tower and backstage area, improved function rooms and additional bar space. The theatre comprises 2,378 seats on two levels, and has an ornate interior décor which creates a “sense of occasion” that is congruent with the high-end performances that are hosted in the venue, including opera, musicals and other international touring events. The Civic also hosts the annual Auckland Film Festival.

Due to its size and cost of hireage, the Civic is largely uneconomical for most local theatre and dance companies.

### **3.3.11 BRUCE MASON CENTRE – NORTH SHORE CITY**

The Bruce Mason Centre is located in Takapuna, and is the premier venue for performing arts on the North Shore. The venue comprises a reconfigurable 1,164 seat auditorium with excellent acoustics and clear sightlines. The proscenium arch stage has a fly tower and sprung floor. Although the venue is reasonably close to the Auckland CBD, and easily accessible via the motorway, there appears to be a

widespread perception among non-North Shore City practitioners and audiences that the venue is “too far away”.

### 3.3.12 GENESIS ENERGY THEATRE – MANUKAU CITY

The Genesis Energy Theatre is contained within the TelstraClear Pacific Events Centre at Manukau City. The theatre has a traditional end-stage configuration but does have flexibility in its seating block with a maximum seating capacity of 700. It is generally regarded as having good acoustics, clear sightlines and providing a good sense of intimacy. The theatre is operated as a sub-regional facility focused on meeting the needs of residents in the Counties-Manukau area.

## 3.4 COMMUNITY-FOCUSED VENUES IN AUCKLAND CITY

In addition to the 10 professional performing art venues in Auckland City, there are a number of community-focused venues that professional groups do occasionally utilise. These venues play an important role in providing supplementary suburban facilities, particularly to emerging groups.

Key venues of this type are summarised in Table 3.4 below.

The ability of these venues to fulfil a more significant role in supporting professional performing arts is constrained by:

1. their primary purpose to meet school and other community needs which limits access for rehearsals, available dates, etc
2. their non-CBD location and low public profile, which combine to make public access relatively difficult
3. their limited audience facilities (e.g. bar / café) which impact on the overall theatre experience.

**Table 3.4: Community-focused Venues in Auckland City**

Venue	Location	Capacity	Theatre Type
TAPAC Theatre	Western Springs College	120	Flexi-form
Raye Freedman	Epsom Girls Grammar	258	FSP, PS
Centennial Theatre	Auckland Grammar	360	FS, PS
Dorothy Winstone Centre	Auckland Girls Grammar	790	FS, PS

NOTE: PS = Permanent seats, FS = Fixed stage, P = Proscenium arch

### **3.5 REHEARSAL SPACES**

There is currently a significant lack of rehearsal space within the CBD and theatre and dance companies are consequently entering into short-term leases on spaces within buildings that are ear-marked for demolition or conversion (e.g. Britomart precinct). While these spaces are relatively low cost, because of the limited range of alternative use, they are significantly compromised rehearsal spaces in terms of size, configuration, fit-out, acoustic treatment, etc.

The Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra has identified the need for improved rehearsal space. The acoustic requirements of the Orchestra means a suitable rehearsal space for their needs is unlikely to be appropriate for theatre. The APO has identified their first preference would be for rehearsal space at 305 Queen Street, as it would reduce the extent to which instruments need to be transported to and from the Town Hall. APO has also identified that a suitable rehearsal arrangement could be achieved through the refurbishment of their existing rehearsal venue in Mt Eden

### **3.6 CONCLUSIONS – PROFESSIONAL PERFORMING ARTS VENUES**

The current venue provision in Auckland is sub-optimal in relation to drama and dance because of:

1. the absence of an appropriate mid-size venue (250 – 450 seats)
2. the various shortcomings of key venues including The Basement, Herald Theatre, Maidment Theatre, and SKYCITY Theatre that are seeking to meet the wide range of industry needs from “Off-Off” through to “Mainstage”.

Given the uncertainty surrounding the on-going availability of the Maidment Theatre, Musgrove Studio, and, to a lesser extent, SKYCITY Theatre, there is a risk that the current situation could deteriorate before any new venues are able to be developed.

In terms of classical music, the Auckland Town Hall’s Great Hall and Concert Chamber are widely regarded as having world-class acoustics and the capacities of the venues are appropriate for most users. There are access issues currently with the Concert Chamber due to sound transfer from the Great Hall limiting availability and the broad range of users seeking to utilise the venue. However, these pressures should ease, to some extent, once theatre and dance needs are better addressed and these users can shift to more appropriate venues. The ASB Theatre is also used for music when larger capacity is required and, while the acoustics are not as good as the Town Hall, they are generally considered acceptable and the greater audience comfort of the ASB Theatre is acknowledged.

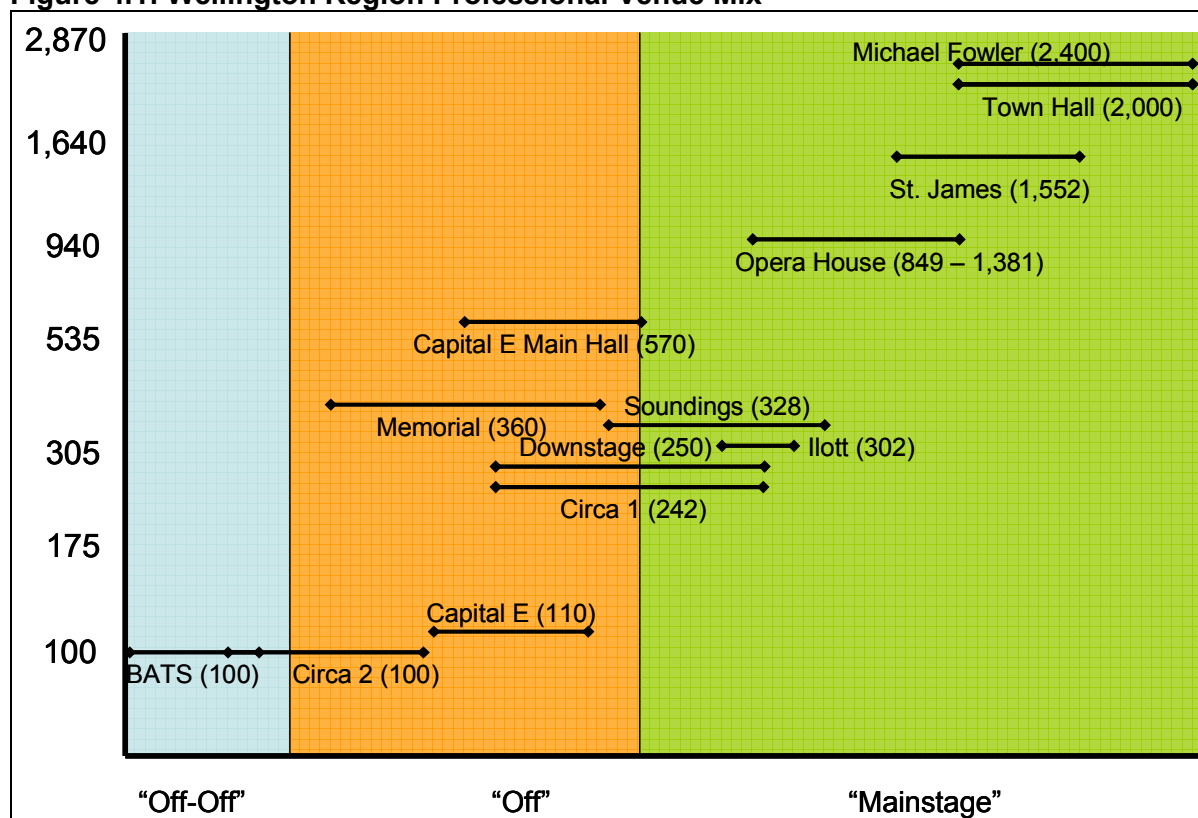
## 4. VENUE PROVISION COMPARISONS

To help inform our analysis, we have considered venue provision in three cities that are generally acknowledged to have vibrant and diverse performing art sectors. It should be noted that no one centre is necessarily an example of “best practice” and each city is acknowledged to have its own venue issues. Furthermore, to some extent, the range and size of venues in any city will reflect the local population base and differences in population do need to be considered when making comparisons between cities.

### 4.1 WELLINGTON

The Wellington region has 13 professional venues, compared to 12 in the Auckland region. A key difference between Auckland and Wellington is that Wellington has four venues in the 200 – 360 seat range, including two (Downstage and Circa) that are flexible venues, which help to support local practitioners emerging from the developmental end of the sector into their mid-career.

**Figure 4.1: Wellington Region Professional Venue Mix**



In Wellington, BATS and Circa 2 fulfil the same roles as the Basement and Musgrove, respectively, in Auckland. However, BATS is widely acknowledged as fulfilling its role as an “Off-Off” venue better than the Basement because:

1. its theatre space is better and enables a more diverse range of presentation of work without compromise
2. its audience and hirer amenities are generally of a higher standard
3. it operates as a curated space
4. there is more structured support offered to practitioners
5. BATS is a better funded and resourced theatre.

Local Wellington theatre practitioners predominantly use the smaller venues, while NZSO uses the Michael Fowler Centre, the Royal New Zealand Ballet (“RNZB”) and the NBR New Zealand Opera use the St James, and New Zealand touring productions tend to use the Opera House (often using only the stalls with an 850 capacity).

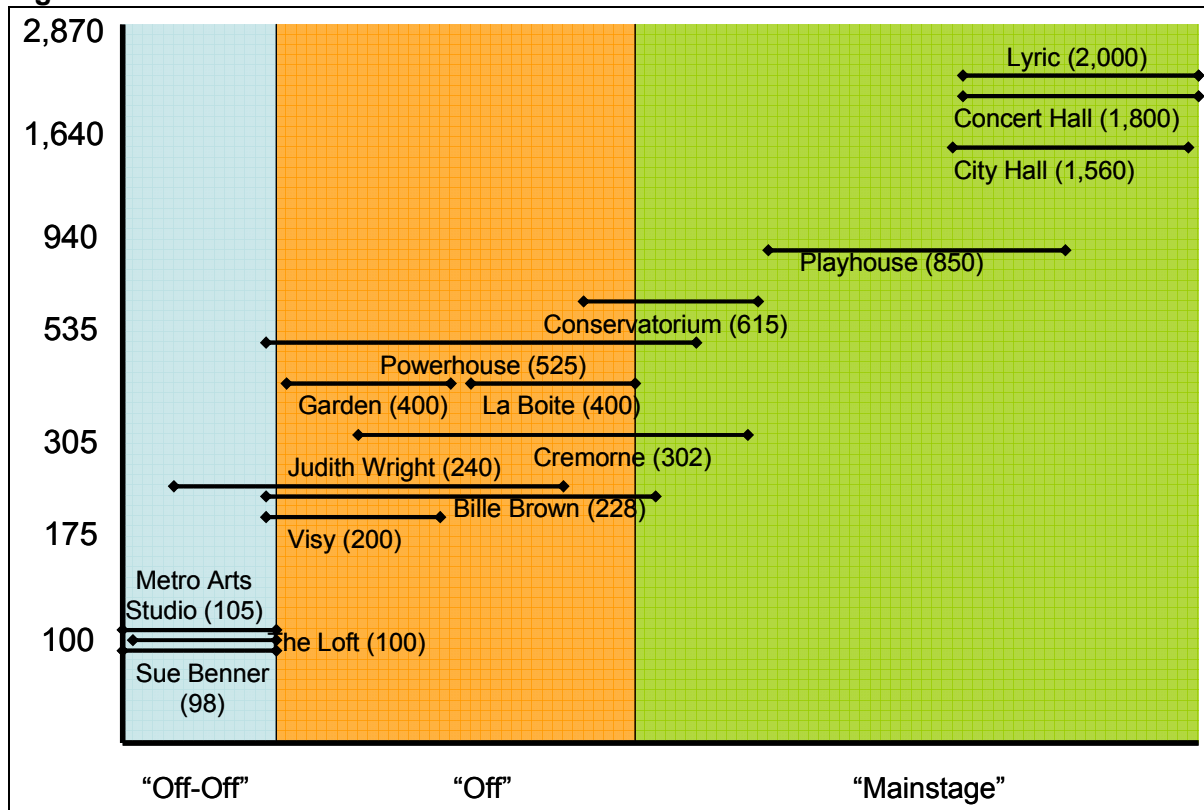
There are eight different entities operating Wellington’s 13 venues.

## **4.2 BRISBANE**

Brisbane has a population of 1.8 million compared to the Auckland region’s 1.4 million and, with a similar population base, is increasingly being used as a benchmark to compare a wide variety of infrastructure relative to Auckland.

As shown in Figure 4.2, Brisbane has 15 professional venues, compared to Auckland’s twelve. However, the balance of the venue provision is significantly different, with Brisbane having eight (53%) of the venues with a capacity between 200 and 615 seats. This compares to Auckland’s one venue (Maidment) in this size range. Consequently, Brisbane has a much more diverse mix of venues covering the spectrum from “Off-Off” to “Mainstage”.

**Figure 4.2: Brisbane Professional Venue Mix**



The Queensland Theatre Company (equivalent of ATC) produces an annual "Mainstage" season comprising nine works utilising a diverse range of venues including the Bille Brown Studio, Cremorne, and Playhouse.

There are eight different venue management entities in Brisbane including:

1. Queensland Performing Arts Centre (Lyric Theatre, Concert Hall, Playhouse, and Cremorne)
2. Brisbane Powerhouse (Powerhouse and Visy Theatres)
3. Queensland University of Technology (La Boite, Garden, and The Loft)
4. Metro Arts (Studio and Sue Benner Theatre)
5. Brisbane City Council (Brisbane City Hall)
6. Griffith University (Conservatorium)
7. Arts Queensland (Judith Wright Centre)
8. Queensland Theatre Company (Bille Brown Studio).

Brisbane has a wide variety of flexible venues that enable a diverse range of performing arts activity within each space. These flexible venues include:

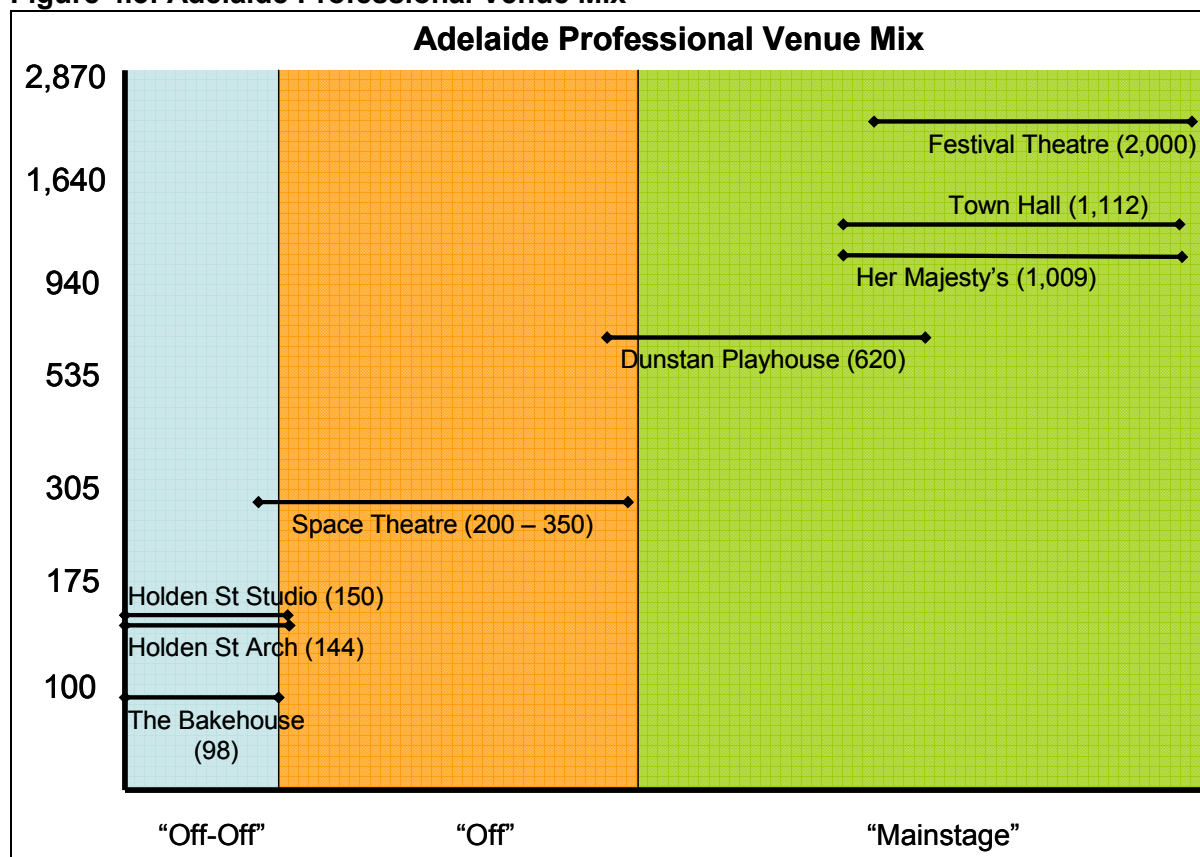
1. Cremorne
2. La Boite
3. Judith Wright
4. Bille Brown
5. Visy

6. Metro Arts Studio
7. The Loft.

### 4.3 ADELAIDE

Adelaide has a population of 1.1 million people and has eight professional performing arts venues compared with Auckland's 12 venues. Half of Adelaide's professional venues are managed by the Adelaide Festival Centre, including the Festival Theatre, Her Majesty's, Dunstan Playhouse, and the Space Theatre.

**Figure 4.3: Adelaide Professional Venue Mix**



The State Theatre Company has an eight work season that primarily utilises the Dunstan Playhouse with the Space Theatre being a secondary venue.

While Adelaide does not have the same range of venues as Brisbane, it does have a reasonable spread of venues across the spectrum from "Off-Off" to "Mainstage" with a strong mix of "Off-Off" venues and the flexi-form Space Theatre focusing on "Off" theatre requirements.

#### **4.4 CONCLUSIONS – VENUE PROVISION COMPARISONS**

Common themes that emerge from the analysis of venues at these three cities include:

1. the pre-eminent theatre companies are based at theatres operated by organisations focused solely on the professional arts
2. all cities have a variety of flexible venues with capacities ranging from 100 – 300 seats
3. all cities have a variety of venue managers, with each city having at least three different venue managers with a sole focus on performing arts (as compared with tertiary institutes)
4. all cities have a strong mix of venues at the “Off-Off” end of the performing arts spectrum.

In summary, Auckland is relatively poorly served in terms of its quantity and mix of theatre venues, particularly in terms of flexible venues in the 100 – 350 seat range.

## **5. REALISING THE INDUSTRY VISION**

Based on our consultation with professional performing arts industry, we have distilled a vision for the professional performing arts sector in Auckland City, as follows:

*“The sector will have a strong and vibrant interface with its audiences, embracing diversity and responding flexibly to emerging trends, so as to ensure its relevance, quality and sustainable development.”*

The key themes implicit in this vision are audience development, diversity, flexibility and identity, all of which contribute to the sustainable development of the sector. These themes are discussed from the perspective of a venue study.

### **5.1 AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT – GROWING THE AUDIENCE BASE**

The sustainability of the sector is ultimately predicated on attracting and growing a stable audience base, i.e. an audience base that habitually patronises the performing arts. This involves positioning the performing arts as an attractive entertainment option relative to competing genres (e.g. film and sport). Some of the factors that influence this include:

- quality product – Provision of product that meets / surpasses audience expectations at prices that are commensurate with the standard of product. For example experimental / emergent theatre audiences are generally more tolerant of variable product quality, but will also expect low ticket prices, whereas “Mainstage” theatre audiences are less forgiving of poor quality product, particularly in relation to production standards, but are also willing to pay significantly more for their ticket
- pre and post show experience – Patrons are usually looking for a “night out” – an overall package of experiences to complement the actual show. Key facets of the overall experience include the ease of securing a ticket and getting to the venue, immersion in a high energy environment, and the choice of a variety of proximate restaurants and bars for a pre or post show meal or drink. The ability to mingle with actors / performers post show could also potentially provide a strong point of differentiation for this sector
- attractiveness of venue – There are certain elements that tend to increase the attractiveness of a venue, including:
  - ease of getting to venue – This is influenced by the convenience of public transport options and the provision of proximate and affordable car parking
  - ambience of location – A high energy location with proximate complementary and compatible activity (e.g. cafés, bars, restaurants, boutique retail, other performing arts venues), and a strong street presence, is more likely to reinforce the sense of “a night out” relative to a quiet, isolated venue location

- ambience of venue – The architecture of the venue must be congruent with the nature of performance product, in order to reinforce the atmosphere most conducive to the enjoyment of the show. This ambience will differ depending on whether the venue is focused on supporting “Mainstage”, “Off” or “Off-Off” product
- patron comfort – This includes air conditioning, cleanliness, seat comfort, legroom, acoustics, sightlines and ease of entry / egress. Audience expectations of these amenities vary depending on the nature of the show e.g. “Off-Off” product is usually hosted in low-cost venues with minimal audience amenities, while a high degree of patron comfort / convenience is expected for “Mainstage” product
- audience participation – The performing arts sector is uniquely placed to play a pivotal role in the healthy development of society – by serving as a lens through which society may view and critique itself, by broadening and challenging perspectives, and by acting as a forum for debate and discussion. 82% of Aucklanders agree that the arts help define who we are as New Zealanders.<sup>8</sup> The extent to which the sector fulfils this role of “cultural facilitator” is influenced strongly by the depth of engagement between practitioner and patron. This engagement in turn is likely to make the performing arts a part of people’s lifestyles, as opposed to “just another entertainment option”, and is increasingly being encouraged in the following ways:
  - engagement at early age – Familiarity with the performing arts sector is being encouraged at an early age (e.g. through a school’s arts curriculum)
  - “demystifying” theatre spaces – The perception of performing arts spaces as “elitist” by the general public is being countered by making venues more welcoming (e.g. having a café in the venue that is open all day)
  - forums for discussion – Some practitioners we consulted alluded to examples overseas and, to a lesser extent here in New Zealand, of venues that organised workshops for debate and discussion around shows. There is also the potential for online forums.

## **5.2 DIVERSITY OF PRODUCT, VENUE AND CAREER PATH**

Diversity is crucial to a lively performing arts sector, from both an audience perspective and a practitioner perspective.

From an audience perspective, diversity refers to the range of art-forms on offer, as well as differentiation within each art-form (i.e. “Off-Off”, “Off” or “Mainstage” product). For example, within the “drama theatre” art-form, ATC and Silo Theatre product appeal to slightly different audience bases (despite some overlap). A well differentiated sector is likely to encompass and appeal to more of the population by virtue of providing multiple access points and catering for a greater range of tastes

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<sup>8</sup> *New Zealanders and the arts: Attitudes, attendance and participation*, Creative New Zealand, 2005

and preferences (including different ages and ethnicities). The need for diverse venues is likely to become increasingly important as Auckland's population becomes increasingly ethnically diverse.

A range of performance spaces, each servicing distinct segments of the sector in a manner that reinforces the brand, culture and nature of work hosted, enables and reinforces this diversity of product. Within performance spaces, the ability to change the appearance of a venue for a particular show can provide a "freshness" that enhances the patron experience.

From a practitioner perspective, diversity of space is vital to enable a range of different works to be performed using different styles and formats. Diversity of venue is also important in providing appropriate venues for practitioners at different stages in their careers. Based on our consultation, the most significant impediment in Auckland to a healthy range of career access points in theatre and dance, at all levels of product, is the severe shortage of venues, which inhibits the ability to put on shows at affordable rates. We have been advised of a number of instances where product created in Auckland has been staged in other New Zealand centres and even overseas, but not in Auckland, due to the lack of suitable venues.

### **5.3 FLEXIBILITY TO ADAPT AND INNOVATE**

Based on our consultation, there is a widespread perception that the performing arts sector is evolving at an ever increasing pace. Some of the drivers of change include:

- an increasingly sophisticated and savvy audience with higher expectations from the sector, particularly by virtue of being exposed to more international touring product
- a growing interest in Maori cultural expression
- the increasingly multi-cultural demographic of Auckland, with various immigrant groups seeking their own means of cultural expression
- the growing fusion of cultures which results in product with a unique New Zealand flavour
- the growing audience desire for contemporary New Zealand work
- a growing desire amongst many European New Zealanders to express and re-connect with their heritage
- the desire of the internet generation to "tell its own stories, in its own way"
- a growth in cross-pollination across art-forms (e.g. theatre dance, visual arts, multi-media, etc)
- the growth of new technologies (e.g. projection / laser technology, computerised fly systems and theatres with multiple stages)
- the growth of the internet as a marketing and distribution channel, and as a forum for debate and discussion
- increased desire for participation at a variety of levels in art forms
- increased understanding of the potential role of arts in other sectors (e.g. education, health, corporate).

It is in the dynamism of an evolving sector that new players emerge, and larger players adapt or cease to exist. Venues have a crucial role to play in supporting the emergence of new players and in providing sheltered spaces for larger players to innovate and test new product. In an environment where there is a shortage of venues and lack of diversity of venues, increased competition makes venues either unaffordable or unavailable to emerging artists, which stymies their growth.

Venues servicing the “Off-Off” and “Off” segments, where most experimentation and innovation occur, should ideally play a proactive role in supporting practitioners. This support could be in the form of in-house graphics designers, in-house technical support, producers, marketing / PR support or direct financial support. A venue that is widely considered an excellent example of this proactive approach is BATS in Wellington, which supports the “Off-Off” segment. The Downstage Theatre in Wellington and the Fortune Theatre in Dunedin provide similar support to the “Off” segment.

The level of venue support and intervention does need to be balanced however to ensure it does not become an economic burden to the venue, and does not “interfere” with natural market systems that vet out sub-par product.

Venues can also serve as a physical convergence point for practitioners to come together and discuss new ideas. New product is often created out of this “meeting of minds”.

## **5.4 IDENTITY – ONE VOICE, MULTIPLE FACES**

The theme of identity relates to strengthening the identity of the sector as a whole and the identity of the various participants within the sector. Strengthening this identity includes creating “physical anchors” to give it shape and form in people’s minds. Venues can be an important “physical anchor”.

Venue clusters can play a significant role in reinforcing the identity of the sector as a whole. A concentrated cluster of venues in a precinct is more likely to represent a strong physical identity for the performing arts than if the same venues were spread over a larger geographic area. This principle is illustrated by the concept of retail precincts – the concentration of similarly positioned shops creates a gestalt that reinforces the identity of the precinct as a shopping destination, rather than a mere collection of shops. Examples of performing arts precincts include New York’s Broadway theatre district and London’s West End. The Aotea Quarter, with its existing venues, provides an excellent opportunity to further develop a more significant and comprehensive performing arts and theatre district.

Individual venues can represent certain types of work, certain ambiances, certain brands, and certain companies / practitioners, with each element complementing the other. A “home venue” for a company / practitioner can reinforce the identity of the company / practitioner by allowing greater control over the “ambience” of the space, greater control over the overall patron experience (including ticketing and the pre and post show experience) and greater flexibility in reconfiguring the venue for a

particular show. Based on our consultation, there appears to be a significant consensus that “home venues” are needed for ATC, Silo Theatre and the smaller “independent” practitioners that will reinforce their identities and strengthen their brand. It must be emphasised that a “home venue” does not mean that the venue is run by, or used exclusively by, any one company / practitioner. Instead, the sense of a “home venue” will evolve through:

1. providing a venue that has an exclusive arts focus
2. providing a venue that meets the overall needs of practitioners and the audiences
3. the achievement of the two factors above resulting in regular use of the venue by specific companies and the public thereby associating venues with specific companies.

## **5.5 CONCLUSIONS – REALISING THE INDUSTRY VISION**

In order for the vision to be realised, there is a need for additional venues to be provided that will:

1. better support the quality of performing art that local practitioners are producing
2. ensure patrons have a great overall experience, including pre and post show
3. provide opportunities for increased levels of audience participation
4. support the delivery of more diverse art forms to a wider audience, recognising the particularly diverse nature of the Auckland population
5. provide industry practitioners with a more complete career path within the Auckland Region
6. create a hub of activity assisting to provide the sector with greater identity and encouraging greater creative collaboration amongst practitioners
7. through all of the above, ensure the sustainable development of the sector.

## **6. VENUE NEEDS ANALYSIS**

This section identifies the industry's venue needs in the context of the sub-optimal outcomes arising from the current situation and then assesses the potential of Q Theatre and the St James Theatre to meet the identified needs.

### **6.1 CURRENT OUTCOMES**

Our industry consultation and analysis has identified that the current venue situation in Auckland is resulting in the following sub-optimal outcomes for theatre and dance:

1. some Auckland-based producers are undertaking work in Wellington (and, in some case, overseas) but not Auckland due to the lack of suitable Auckland venues
2. Creative New Zealand is declining funding applications for Auckland producers due to the lack of a suitable venue for the proposed work
3. New Zealand-based touring work is not coming to Auckland because of the lack of a suitable 300 – 400 seat venue
4. significant planning difficulties exist for ATC due to the uncertainty around the availability of the Maidment (and to a lesser extent SKYCITY Theatre) which have the potential to undermine the business model of Auckland's only recurrently funded theatre company
5. significant difficulty for many emerging and mid-career practitioners to establish a strong profile in the Auckland market because of the lack of a suitable 250 - 350 seat venue to economically support regular seasons of their work
6. an overly high reliance on venues managed by organisations that are not focused on the performing arts and therefore have different priorities, which in the long term are not necessarily consistent with the needs of the professional performing arts sector
7. an overly high reliance on community venues, particularly by the dance sector, because of the lack of a suitably intimate CBD venue with an appropriate dance stage, which results in significant difficulty in creating audience awareness (attributable to the low profile of community venues)
8. reliance on adapting purpose-built spaces (e.g. Concert Chamber) to undertake activity (e.g. theatre, dance, comedy) for which the space was never intended, thereby compromising the quality of work produced (e.g. the acoustics in the Concert Chamber are too lively for spoken word)
9. the dance and theatre sectors struggling to optimise their profile and identity without a recognised "home", which contrasts with comedy that has The Classic and classical music that has the Town Hall.

## 6.2 PRIORITY VENUE NEEDS

The current needs are sufficiently diverse that the development of a single venue will not, by itself, provide a complete solution. In our view the wide array of current short-comings can only be solved by addressing existing gaps in relation to “Mainstage”, “Off”, and “Off-Off” venues.

Three priority venue needs have been identified as:

1. a 500 – 600 seat drama theatre
2. a 230 – 460 seat flexi-form theatre
3. a 100 – 200 seat studio.

In our consultation, the industry has identified each of these three venues as having equal priority. The industry recognises that these three venues would contribute to the overall health of the performing arts ecology by providing:

1. increased diversity of infrastructure which will support more diverse art forms in a viable manner
2. a range of access points
3. pathways for development of both practitioners and audiences
4. options for the necessary range of management styles, hireage options and environments.

The clustering of these venues in a central CBD location is desirable to:

1. assist in creating identity for the theatre and dance sectors
2. create a sense of vitality and energy
3. encourage creative synergies
4. provide opportunities for operational efficiencies so as to aid the provision of affordable venues to the professional performing arts sector
5. assist accessibility for the widest range of audiences.

In our assessment the drama theatre and flexi-form theatre are both a high priority. By contrast, we regard the provision of one or more studio venues as being of a medium priority because there are a number of existing formal and informal spaces that can be utilised to fulfil this need, even with various compromises. Provision of new studio venues is not, therefore, a critical need in terms of priorities for new venue development. However, in the interests of developing a cluster of diverse venues, it would be desirable to incorporate studio spaces into the flexi-form and drama theatre developments.

While the drama theatre and flexi-form are both of high importance, we believe the slightly higher importance attaches to the flexi-form theatre because of the current absence of any such venue in Auckland. This does not detract from the fact that both need to be advanced with urgency in order to meet the current needs of the professional performing arts sector in Auckland.

Auckland has lacked a mid-size flexi-form theatre for 12 years (since the closing of the Watershed) and with dance and mid-career theatre practitioners expressing increasing frustration at their compromised ability to connect with their audiences, there is an urgent need to develop a flexi-form venue. The 1997 venue study identified the need for such a venue and our latest industry consultation has confirmed this need is still present today. The flexi-form theatre will provide an opportunity for a wide variety of dance and theatre practitioners to further develop their careers in Auckland and a number of these practitioners will then have the ability to move into larger theatre spaces including the recommended drama theatre.

While Auckland does currently have the Maidment, which provides a drama theatre close to the 500 – 600 seat range, the theatre does have a number of short-comings, as outlined in Section 3. Furthermore, the high utilisation of this venue and the on-going uncertainty surrounding its future availability mean there is also an urgent need to develop a drama theatre. ATC has the most pressing current need for the drama theatre but this should not be interpreted as meaning the drama theatre is only needed to meet the specific requirements of ATC.

As Auckland's only recurrently funded theatre company, ATC's continued operation is important:

1. to ensure regular "Mainstage" product is available to the Auckland market<sup>9</sup>
2. to maintain its important school's work via its Education Unit
3. to maintain its development of new theatre works via its Literary Unit
4. as ATC is a significant employer of practitioners
5. given its "flagship" status in the sector.

ATC has an important role in maintaining the theatre sector's profile and providing income to practitioners, as well as helping to develop audience and new works for the benefit of the wider professional performing arts sector.

### **6.2.1 DRAMA THEATRE**

A drama theatre of 500 – 600 seats is a high priority for the sector as a whole in order to:

1. ensure ATC, as Auckland's only existing recurrently funded theatre company, has secure access to an appropriate venue over the medium to long term
2. ensure growing companies, including Silo Theatre, have access to appropriately sized venues for their "popular" works
3. ensure Auckland has an international standard drama theatre for the presentation of "Mainstage" product by local producers as well as domestic and international touring work.

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<sup>9</sup> Between 2003 and 2006 ATC attracted an annual audience base ranging between 61,000 – 69,000 people.

While the Maidment Theatre is currently the primary venue fulfilling this role, continued sole reliance on the Maidment is not desirable because:

1. it has a number of shortcomings including relatively poor front of house facilities, a shortage of back of house storage, limited wing space, difficult loading bay access, and no fly tower
2. it is not operated by a performing arts focused organisation
3. the University of Auckland is unable to guarantee continued access to the theatre for third parties and this introduces significant uncertainty in any long-term planning by professional performing arts companies
4. the Maidment is removed from the Aotea Quarter, is not close to restaurants and bars, and, being located on the University campus, is difficult to develop into the focus of any future cluster development.

The following broad aspects should be incorporated into the drama theatre design (with specific details subject to further business case analysis):

- 500 – 600 seats with stalls and balcony to provide intimate environment
- thrust stage
- proscenium arch
- sprung stage floor for dance with adequate wing space
- fly tower
- bar / café facilities
- box office.

### **6.2.2 FLEXI-FORM THEATRE**

A flexi-form theatre of 250 – 450 seats is a high priority for the sector as a whole because:

1. Auckland currently has only one flexible space (Basement), which has only 100 seats and has significant constraints in terms of financial feasibility for users, height, audience comfort, and back stage facilities
2. the absence of any theatre venue in Auckland between the 184 seat Herald Theatre and the 448 seat Maidment Theatre, which is suitable for “mid-career” producers
3. there is a need for an appropriately sized venue to present financially viable seasons of “Off” product by local producers
4. there is potential to develop a single venue that supports a diverse range of performing art, which individually could struggle to sustain “single-use” venues
5. practitioners working with different theatrical forms / hybrid theatrical forms require greater flexibility with the presenting space
6. it can cater to audiences seeking alternative, less traditional and formal spaces (e.g. Maori and Pacific Island audiences).

While there is broad agreement around the need for a flexi-form theatre, discussion has focused on the most appropriate size for the venue. Having considered the

audience size of key users (including dance), financial viability factors for venue hirers, and the role of the flexi-form venue to fill the gap between the 100 – 200 seat studio and the 500 – 600 seat drama theatre, we recommend the flexi-form theatre should have a minimum end-on configuration of approximately 250 seats.

### **6.2.3 STUDIO**

A studio theatre of 100 – 200 seats is a priority in order to:

1. increase the diversity of product at the development end of the spectrum
2. provide a small CBD venue that is suitable for dance.

While the Basement, Musgrove Studio, and Herald Theatre are currently fulfilling this role, continued reliance on these venues is not desirable because:

1. the University of Auckland is unable to guarantee continued access to the Musgrove for third parties
2. the Basement has a wide range of limitations that mean it is considered to be a “rough and ready” venue suitable to a relatively narrow range of work
3. none of the venues are considered ideal for dance
4. the Herald Theatre does not currently offer the flexibility of a black-box studio.

While specific aspects of the studio design should be subject to further business case analysis, the following aspects should be incorporated:

- approximately 150 seats
- flexible seating and stage
- ability to provide sufficient stage depth and width for dance
- bar / café facilities
- box office
- venue hire as a percentage of box office to ensure affordability for unsubsidised emergent and / or experimental work.

## **6.3 SPECIFIC PROPOSALS**

In accordance with our brief, we have assessed Q Theatre and St James against the priority needs of the professional performing arts industry.

### **6.3.1 Q THEATRE**

The Q Theatre proposal has the potential to deliver one of the high priority needs of the industry (i.e. the 250 – 450 flexi-form theatre). It also incorporates a studio theatre but, at 100 seat capacity, is at the small end of the identified range for a new studio and is therefore unlikely to represent the ideal solution. It does not address the identified need for a drama theatre.

Q Theatre has a number of attributes that mean it is potentially an attractive way to address Auckland's need for a flexi-form theatre:

1. it is a well-advanced project that already has resource consent and therefore has the potential to be developed in a timely manner
2. its end-stage configuration without balconies has a capacity of 230 people and therefore has the ability to provide an intimate theatre venue. With balconies, the end-stage configuration increases to 350 and therefore provides potential for higher financial returns for the more established practitioners with larger audiences. The venue's capacity increases to approximately 430 in the round
3. its location at 305 Queen Street provides it with good street frontage and ensures it sits within the heart of the Aotea Quarter
4. it enjoys very strong goodwill with the independent sector throughout New Zealand
5. the concept includes a café / bar and box office, which will assist in the vitality of the venue day and night
6. the proposed independent governance and management model will assist in realising the diversity outcomes sought by the sector.

The following two potential risks of the Q Theatre concept have been identified:

1. the development may have a higher cost than an integrated theatre development on a "greenfields" site. However, unless a more detailed business case analysis of alternative developments is undertaken it is not possible to be certain about the relative cost effectiveness of Q Theatre
2. The Edge has queried the potential for noise transfer from the Town Hall into Q Theatre following the refurbishment of the Town Hall organ. We have raised these concerns with acoustic specialists Marshall Day and been advised that they have been in contact with the German company undertaking the organ refurbishment. We have been advised that Marshall Day has undertaken sound testing of the Wellington Town Hall organ to obtain information that has then been modelled for the Auckland Town Hall allowing for the fact that the refurbished Auckland organ will be larger and louder than the Wellington organ. Marshall Day has advised they are confident that the proposed acoustic measures will be adequate to prevent sound transfer from the Town Hall organ into Q Theatre.

### **6.3.2 ST JAMES THEATRE**

In its current configuration as a 1,200 seat lyric theatre, the St James Theatre does not address any of the three priority needs of the professional performing arts sector.

However, it is widely acknowledged that the St James is an atmospheric theatre with good acoustics that provides an intimate experience for the audience. It is therefore seen as a valuable (but not immediately essential) component of the overall Auckland venue mix.

The St James could have the potential to fulfil a wide range of roles including:

- providing New Zealand Opera and the Royal New Zealand Ballet with the option of a more intimate venue than the ASB Theatre for certain works
- hosting smaller international touring work (e.g. musicals) and larger domestic touring work (e.g. musicals, drama, dance)
- providing an intimate venue for contemporary music
- having the flexibility to operate as a 500 – 600 seat drama theatre.

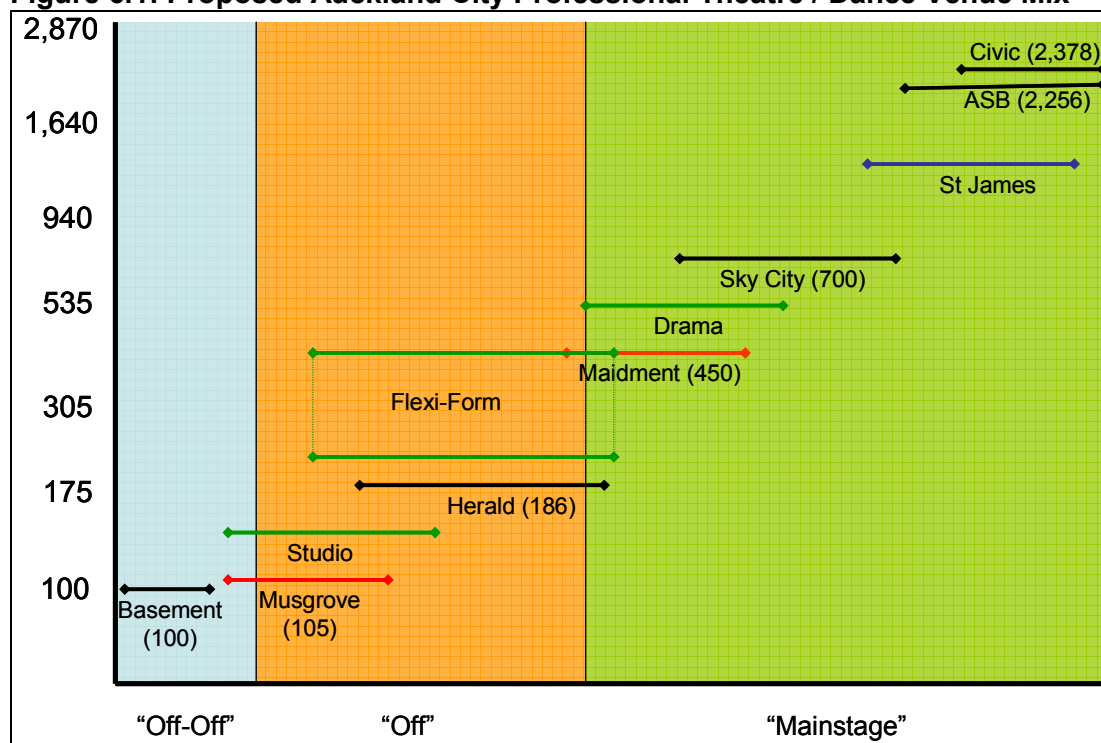
Key steps that need to be taken to realise the potential of St James include:

1. securing ownership of the St James
2. undertaking a business case analysis to:
  - a. identify the development costs associated with various development schemes that would meet a range of different user requirements
  - b. identify the space requirements of different development schemes
  - c. identify high-level operating costs associated with different development schemes
  - d. develop a cost-benefit assessment that short-lists potential development schemes
  - e. identify the critical success factors that need to be achieved in order to accommodate the optimal range of users.
3. significant refurbishment and upgrade to meet modern building standards and the requirements of key users, as guided by the business case analysis.

## 6.4 FUTURE VENUE SITUATION

As shown in the “venue map” below, the provision of the four new venues, will significantly improve the quantity and quality of venue space across the “Off-Off”, “Off”, and “Mainstage” product range. The high priority venues are shown in green, while the second priority venue (St James) is shown in blue.

**Figure 6.1: Proposed Auckland City Professional Theatre / Dance Venue Mix**



The new flexi-form space would provide a vital venue filling the significant current gap between the Herald Theatre and Maidment Theatre. The flexibility of the venue would also allow it to cater for a more diverse body of work than either of these venues, thereby significantly contributing towards the diversity of professional performing arts in Auckland. The venue will help to provide identify for the many independent theatre and dance companies in Auckland. The flexibility of the venue is also likely to better enable it to accommodate emerging art forms and the convergence of art forms. Also, depending on the management style, the flexi-form space would increase opportunities for partnering in co-commissions or co-producing with venues in other centres (e.g. Downstage / Fortune).

The new drama theatre will be a more centrally located and higher quality venue than the Maidment Theatre. Its role will be in providing a suitable venue to showcase “Mainstage” product that provides a sense of “identity” or “home” for Auckland’s leading professional performing arts companies (refer Section 4.4). Providing a recognised “home” for ATC will be key as part of this outcome and the provision of the venue is critical in ensuring ATC’s business model is sustainable and allows it to further its work at the development end of the spectrum (which will in turn feed work into the studio and flexi-form space).

A new studio space, co-located with either the new drama or flexi-form venue, will provide a flexible space of a size between the existing Musgrove and Herald Theatres thereby expanding the variety of venues at the development / experimental end of the spectrum. This venue would be very different in style to the Basement and offer a more refined (e.g. comfort levels, ambience, etc) and higher quality space for performance (e.g. better back-stage facilities, improved technical capabilities, improved flexibility, etc). With these qualities and higher capacity, it would provide practitioners with a transitional venue capable of staging both “Off-Off” and “Off” productions.

The new studio could play an important role, similar to BATS in Wellington, which is widely considered key to the health of Wellington’s theatre sector and has provided a seeding ground nationally for emergent practitioners. A similar space in Auckland would assist with development of practitioners emerging from Auckland’s theatre training institutions. A successfully functioning venue of this scale would be likely to attract ongoing (and potentially recurrent) subsidy from Creative New Zealand.

The new studio would ensure Auckland has a studio space suitable for a broad variety of work, should the Musgrove cease to be available. The studio space would be a valuable venue for a range of festival uses including the Auckland Festival, Comedy Festival, Tempo, etc.

These three venues will, therefore, collectively greatly improve the diversity and sustainability of the dance and theatre sectors. The fact the venues work together to achieve this outcome means there is merit in clustering the venues together. To further drive a sense of energy and vitality around the venues it would be advantageous to have rehearsal space and café / bars co-located.

The subsequent addition of the St James will be beneficial in providing an additional “Mainstage” venue between SKYCITY and the ASB Theatre, which could host a wide variety of activity including ballet, opera, larger domestic touring theatre, smaller international touring work, and contemporary music. It is not, however, a current priority venue in the context of the local Auckland professional performing arts sector.

## **6.5 CONCLUSIONS - VENUE NEEDS**

The industry’s needs are sufficiently diverse that the development of a single venue will not, in itself, provide a complete solution. In our assessment, Q Theatre has the potential to deliver one of the high priority needs of the industry. The St James, as a 1,200 seat lyric theatre does not address the high priority needs of the sector but is widely acknowledged as an atmospheric theatre with good acoustics that provides an intimate experience for the audience.

In conclusion, we believe that:

1. a 250 – 450 seat flexi-form venue be developed as the highest priority because of the absence of any such venue in Auckland
2. a 500 – 600 seat drama theatre also be developed as a high priority, recognising the deficiencies of the current venues, and the uncertainty surrounding their future availability
3. while a studio theatre is not required as urgently, the opportunity should be taken to co-locate a 100 – 200 seat studio as part of the drama theatre development so as to better provide for the “Off-Off” sector
4. the three venues should be clustered together and co-located with rehearsal space and café / bars to maximise their overall effectiveness
5. a business case analysis should be undertaken to ascertain the role that a refurbished St James could fulfil in the future overall mix of venues.

## **7. ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS**

We have identified five potential development pathways to meet the identified venue needs of the sector. In all the scenarios, the solutions to both high priority needs are advanced simultaneously, albeit with potentially different end points to each of these solutions.

The “start date” in each scenario refers to the commencement / continuation of a project at whatever stage the project is currently at (e.g. site investigation, preliminary design, start of construction, etc). The “end date” for all projects is speculative and provided as a guide to reflect the potential completion date if the relevant project progresses smoothly without delay.

All the scenarios involve the restoration and refurbishment of the St James Theatre as a 1,200 seat lyric theatre, albeit as a lower priority. The rationale for this is as follows:

- there is currently a gap in the Auckland City market between a 700 seat theatre venue and a 2,200 seat theatre venue
- based on our consultation, there appear to be several performing arts organisations that could currently use a 1,200 seat venue, even without accounting for future growth in the sector
- the aesthetics, heritage value and widespread affection for the St James Theatre make its eventual restoration almost inevitable. Delaying the project will only continue to raise project costs.

Finally, the proposed venue developments in all the scenarios are geographically located within the Aotea quarter, due to the benefits accruing from being part of a performing arts hub (Refer Section 4).

### **7.1 SCENARIO 1**

Scenario 1 involves the immediate commencement of a project to build a “flagship” theatre complex comprising a drama theatre, flexi-form theatre, studio space and rehearsal space in an integrated venue. The emphasis in this concept is on the high degree of integration between the various facilities. Ancillary facilities such as foyer space, bars, public access ways and entrances, as well as back stage storage, loading bays, etc could be shared.

The initial focus of identity is likely to be on the complex as a whole, rather than on the individual theatres within. The complex is most likely to operate under one governance and management structure. Examples of integrated theatre facilities overseas include the Adelaide Festival Centre, QPAC in Brisbane and National Theatre in London.

**Table 7.1: Scenario 1**

Start Date	End Date	Project
2008	2012 / 2014	Integrated Theatre Complex <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 500 – 600 seat drama theatre</li> <li>▪ 350 – 460 seat flexi-form theatre</li> <li>▪ 100 – 200 seat studio</li> <li>▪ Rehearsal space</li> </ul>
2015	2020 / 2023	St James Theatre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1,200 seat lyric theatre</li> </ul>

Under scenario 1, the project to restore and refurbish the St James Theatre into a 1,200 seat lyric theatre would commence at the completion of the integrated theatre complex, and is expected to take five to eight years.

The strengths of this “integrated theatre” concept are that:

- it meets the high priority needs of the sector simultaneously
- it focuses and sustains the efforts and collective voice of a larger proportion of the sector to work on meeting *both* priority needs. By meeting the needs of any particular segment first, there is the risk of losing this segment to this “collective voice”, which could potentially slow progress on the projects that address the remaining need
- it may maximise the economies of scale derived through the sharing of resources
- working under one roof could potentially maximise creative synergies through increased “mingling” of practitioners
- the venue might have a stronger profile by virtue of concentrating the branding effort on a single integrated venue (relative to trying to create distinct profiles for multiple venues).

The potential risks of this concept are that:

- it delays meeting *any* of the sector’s needs by potentially five or more years, as it is a completely new project with all planning still to be done
- the underperformance of any one theatre in the complex could threaten the economic viability / reputation of the complex as a whole
- the homogeneity of ambience in a theatre complex risks diluting the diversity and unfettered expression of the segments serviced by the complex
- there may be logistical challenges of getting multiple audiences into the complex for shows that start at similar times
- there may be an uncomfortable “clash of cultures” between the different types of audiences mingling together in the public areas
- from Council’s perspective, it will be difficult to stage any aspect of an integrated development.

## 7.2 SCENARIO 2

The key difference between Scenario 2 and Scenario 1 is that the venues are provided in co-located buildings rather than a single integrated facility.

**Table 7.2: Scenario 2**

Start Date	End Date	Project
2008	2012 / 2014	Theatre Cluster <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 500 – 600 seat drama theatre</li> <li>▪ 350 – 460 seat flexi-form theatre</li> <li>▪ 100 – 200 seat studio</li> <li>▪ Rehearsal spaces</li> </ul>
2015	2020 / 2023	St James Theatre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1,200 seat lyric theatre</li> </ul>

The additional physical separation that co-located venues provide potentially has significant implications on diversity, identity and management structures. The physical separation of buildings could enable an increased distinction in the architecture and interior ambience of each venue to further reinforce the distinct cultures of the space and the types of work that occur in each.

Under this scenario there would be the potential, if deemed desirable, for each venue to have a separate management and / or governance structure to further emphasise this diversity. Under this cluster approach it could still be possible to achieve some synergies through sharing of facilities such as bars, cafés, prop sheds and storage. The venues could be spatially linked by a central courtyard which could host a range of outdoor events or serve as an outdoor café space.

It must be emphasised that this concept involves the construction of both venues simultaneously.

This Scenario is identical to Scenario 1 in relation to the St James Theatre restoration project.

The strengths of the “theatre cluster” concept are that:

- it meets the high priority needs of the sector simultaneously
- it focuses and sustains the efforts and collective voice of a larger proportion of the sector to work on meeting both high priority needs
- economies of scale could be derived through the sharing of resources (though not as much as in a fully integrated complex)
- the underperformance of any one venue will have less of an impact on the others
- it provides the opportunity to optimise the differentiation of identity, culture and ambience between theatre spaces in order to support and reinforce diversity in the sector

- the co-location of the venues is likely to create a “sub-precinct” within the broader arts precinct, with a potentially stronger brand relative to venues that are geographically more disconnected
- there will be significant opportunity for “mingling” amongst practitioners.

The potential risks of this concept are that:

- it delays meeting *any* of the sector’s needs by potentially five or more years, as it is a completely new project with all planning still to be done
- the duplication of ancillary facilities has the potential to increase capital costs
- the “sub-precinct” of venues is likely to have an overall larger “footprint” relative to an integrated theatre complex, although this “footprint” is likely to be more flexible in terms of it’s ability to fit between existing buildings and physical constraints
- from the industry’s perspective, the physical separateness of the venues increases the risk of project staging, which could potentially delay or jeopardise the delivery of the remaining priority needs. This is not, however, a risk from Council’s perspective, which may consider staging to be advantageous.

### 7.3 SCENARIO 3

Scenario 3 involves the continuation of the existing Q Theatre project on the 305 Queen Street site and the immediate commencement of a project to build a drama theatre. This Scenario is effectively a variation of Scenario 2 with staging in the delivery of venues by virtue of the fact that planning for Q Theatre is well advanced.

**Table 7.3: Scenario 3**

Start Date	End Date	Project
2008	2010	Q Theatre (305 Queen Street) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 350 – 460 seat flexi-form theatre</li> <li>▪ 100 seat studio</li> <li>▪ Rehearsal space</li> </ul>
2008	2012 / 2014	Drama Theatre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 500 – 600 seat drama theatre</li> <li>▪ 100 – 200 seat studio</li> <li>▪ Rehearsal space</li> </ul>
2015	2020 / 2023	St James Theatre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1,200 seat lyric theatre</li> </ul>

As with Scenario 1 and 2, the St James restoration project commences once the high and medium priority needs are met.

The strengths of this pathway are that:

- given the urgency of the sector's needs, this pathway delivers at least one aspect of the overall solution sooner than any other scenario
- the mid-scale flexi-form space is most needed by the "Off" segment, which widely supports Q Theatre as the solution to this need
- the Q Theatre concept has a number of strengths, including a central location within the Aotea quarter, a Queen Street frontage, a large foyer / bar area, and ease of entry / egress to the main flexi-form theatre by virtue of its location at street level. The concept also utilises a heritage building, with a style of architecture and ambience that is congruent with that of the performing arts
- depending on the proximity of the drama theatre to Q Theatre, and the management and governance structures in place, there may be potential for some economies of scale to be derived through the sharing of resources between the two venues
- this pathway, like Scenario 2, provides the opportunity to optimise the differentiation of identity, culture and ambience between theatre spaces in order to support and reinforce diversity in the sector.

The potential risks and compromises of this pathway are that:

- the pre-selection of the Q Theatre site dictates / constrains the location of the drama theatre in order to create an effective "sub-precinct"
- it does not meet all the high priority needs of the sector simultaneously, and runs the risk of losing the engagement of some parts of the sector in meeting the remaining priority needs
- the duplication of ancillary facilities has the potential to increase capital costs. This could be mitigated to some extent by the cost benefits of earlier construction
- the physical separateness of the venues increases the risk of project staging, which could potentially delay or jeopardise the delivery of the remaining priority needs
- there will be less opportunity for "mingling" between practitioners, relative to an integrated theatre complex
- it limits the potential for rehearsal space adjacent to the Auckland Town Hall for the APO.

## 7.4 SCENARIO 4

Scenario 4 involves the development of an integrated theatre complex utilising the St James Theatre and the adjacent Westend, Odeon and Regent Theatres.

**Table 7.4: Scenario 4**

Start Date	End Date	Project
2008	2013 / 2016	Integrated St James Theatre Complex <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1,200 seat lyric theatre</li> <li>▪ 500 – 600 seat drama theatre or flexi-form theatre</li> <li>▪ 100 – 150 seat studio</li> </ul>

Preliminary site investigations suggest that it will not be possible to house both a drama theatre and a flexi-form theatre within the complex. The stalls of the St James could be used to provide a smaller “drama” theatre, although this would be a compromise outcome. The later estimated completion date reflects the fact that Council does not currently own the required buildings and the intrinsic complexity of an adaptive re-use project of this scale and complexity, with the need to work around the constraints of heritage protection.

The strengths of this concept are that:

- it provides the potential to optimise operational economies of scale derived through the sharing of resources
- working under one roof could potentially maximise creative synergies through increased “mingling” of practitioners
- it is centrally located in the Aotea Quarter
- will result in the redevelopment of an iconic heritage Auckland theatre.

The potential risks of this concept are that:

- it provides a compromised and sub-optimal solution to the sector’s two high priority needs
- securing ownership of the building, and adjacent properties, in a timely manner and at an affordable price is uncertain
- the underperformance of any one theatre in the complex could threaten the economic viability of the complex as a whole
- the technical complexity and heritage aspects of the project mean it is likely to be an expensive development option
- a homogenous ambience risks diluting the diversity of different segments in the sector
- there may be logistical challenges of getting multiple audiences into the complex for shows that start at similar times
- there may be an uncomfortable “clash of cultures” between the different types of audiences mingling together in the foyer areas.

## 7.5 SCENARIO 5

Scenario 5 involves the continuation of the Q Theatre project and the commencement of a project to build an integrated St James Theatre complex. A variation of this scenario could involve having the flexibility to create a 500 – 600 seat drama theatre within the lyric theatre.

**Table 7.5: Scenario 5**

Start Date	End Date	Project
2008	2010	Q Theatre (305 Queen Street) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 350 – 460 seat flexi-form theatre</li> <li>▪ 100 seat studio</li> <li>▪ Rehearsal space</li> </ul>
2008	2013 / 2016	Integrated St James Theatre Complex comprising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1,200 seat lyric theatre</li> <li>▪ 500 – 600 seat drama theatre</li> <li>▪ and 100 – 150 seat studio</li> </ul>

The strengths of this pathway are that:

- given the urgency of the sector’s needs, this pathway delivers at least one aspect of the solution sooner than any other scenario
- the Q Theatre proposal itself has many benefits (see discussion under Scenario 3)
- it is centrally located in the Aotea Quarter
- this pathway provides a strong differentiation of identity, culture and ambience between theatre spaces in order to support and reinforce diversity.

The potential risks and compromises of this pathway are that:

- it does not meet all the high priority needs of the sector simultaneously, and runs the risk of losing the engagement of some parts of the sector in meeting the remaining priority needs
- the duplication of ancillary facilities is likely to increase capital costs significantly relative to an integrated theatre complex. This is mitigated by the cost benefits of early construction of both the flexi-form theatre and the restoration of the St James Theatre
- the physical separateness of the venues increases the risk of project staging, which could potentially delay or jeopardise the delivery of the remaining priority needs
- there will be less opportunity for “mingling” between practitioners, relative to other scenarios
- it limits the potential for rehearsal space adjacent to the Auckland Town Hall for the APO.

## **7.6 CONCLUSIONS – ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS**

In the context of the industry's identified needs, we believe Scenarios 4 and 5 are sub-optimal options and should not be pursued. We believe both of these scenarios have significant disadvantages relative to Scenarios 1 – 3. Key disadvantages of Scenarios 4 and 5 are that:

1. Council does not have control over the required sites at the St James (both the theatre and adjoining sites) and therefore has substantially less control over the timely delivery of the venue solutions and the cost of procurement could be high
2. space constraints mean that Scenario 4 can not provide both of the identified high priority venues and either the drama theatre or flexi-form theatre would be excluded
3. the integrated development of the St James complex will involve significant costs related to the refurbishment of the St James Theatre, which is not a high priority need for the industry yet the overall costs involved could delay the delivery of the high priority venues
4. scenario 5 may result in less co-location synergies as a result of having venues on both sides of Queen Street.

In our view each of Scenarios 1 – 3 have significant potential to meet the industry's needs and enable the industry vision to be realised. They all have the potential to:

1. deliver both of the high priority venue needs
2. provide a central hub of venues around which the Auckland professional performing arts sector can focus its activities
3. provide a physical presence for the sector, which will assist in raising the profile of the performing arts sector within the Auckland audience
4. enable some level of operational efficiency through sharing of resources (e.g. ticketing systems, technical equipment, technical staff, props, etc) including, potentially, with existing venues in the Aotea precinct
5. provide separate identity for each of the individual performance spaces, although, arguably, the extent to which this could be achieved would differ between an integrated complex (Scenario 1) and a cluster (Scenarios 2 and 3) (Refer Section 7).

Intuitively Scenario 1, as an integrated venue, has the potential to be a more cost effective development than either Scenarios 2 or 3. However, the actual cost effectiveness of an integrated venue will be influenced by a range of factors including:

1. the extent to which separate venue identity is created by providing individual bars, public areas, entrances
2. how adequate noise separation is achieved between each performance space
3. the timeframe within which an integrated development could be realised, given the level of cost escalation in the construction sector.

## **8. THE WAY FORWARD**

This section provides our conclusions and recommendations in relation to:

1. the preferred development pathway to meet the sector's needs both now and over the next 10 – 15 years
2. the preferred governance and management model for the new venues
3. the platform for ongoing industry liaison with council in realising the development of the new venues
4. other venue considerations for Council, in addition to the core development pathway.

### **8.1 THE RECOMMENDED DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY**

We recommend that the preferred approach to meeting the industry's needs is to<sup>10</sup>:

1. progress with Q Theatre (including the planned small studio / function space) to address the need for a flexi-form venue as quickly as is possible
2. immediately commence planning and development of a 500 – 600 seat drama theatre within the Aotea Precinct
3. also plan for a 100 – 200 seat studio theatre to be co-located with the drama theatre.

The St James Theatre would then be re-developed at a later date.

The four key reasons for recommending this approach over Scenarios 1 and 2 are:

1. it has the best ability to respond to the urgency of the sector's needs as Q Theatre has resource consent and can be delivered in approximately two years. While Q Theatre does not solve all the sector's issues, it will address many significant issues and could also be used by ATC as a transitional venue until the drama theatre is complete. This would be especially valuable should the Maidment cease to be available prior to the new drama theatre opening. Significant use of Q Theatre by ATC could, in the short term, compromise the realisation of Q Theatre's objectives but would be beneficial in ensuring the overall sustainability of the sector. It would also have the benefit of ensuring a regular venue hire revenue stream for Q Theatre during its establishment period
2. the Q Theatre project has been comprehensively developed with Council support over the last eight years and has been conceived with significant input from a diverse range of industry practitioners to ensure it provides a space that meets the sector's flexi-form needs. It is therefore not simply an expedient option on the basis that it can be delivered quicker than any other flexi-form space

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<sup>10</sup> This is Scenario 3, as outlined in Section 7.3.

3. by progressing with Q Theatre, planning and design efforts for the balance of the cluster can be focused specifically on the needs of the drama theatre and studio space, which could facilitate a more speedy delivery of the overall mix of spaces than if all three venues were to start from the beginning of the planning process
4. it will provide the opportunity for separate management and governance to further stimulate diversity within the sector, which would not be as achievable under Scenario 1.

## **8.2 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES**

It is important that the governance and management of the new venues is consistent with the vision of delivering diversity and identity. At one extreme this could be interpreted as each of the new venues being under separate governance and management. This, however, needs to be counter-balanced with considerations regarding the associated cost effectiveness and the availability of appropriately qualified governance and management personnel.

The industry has, almost without exception, expressed the view that independent governance and management is very desirable and that the new venues should not be managed by The Edge. The industry's rationale for this includes:

- the need to avoid a "monopoly" situation with one entity managing virtually all significant professional performing arts venues in Auckland City
- a desire to have governance and management that is more closely linked with the performing arts industry
- a belief that the governance and management of the new venues needs to be flexible and responsive to hirers' needs and wishes
- a concern that any additional future focus on convention business by The Edge could conflict with the best interests of the performing arts venues.

We recommend that there should be independent governance and management of some, or all, of the new venues in order to help stimulate diversity and creativity in the sector. In our view it is most important that the flexi-form venue has independent governance and management, although this may involve a variation of the existing Q Theatre governance proposal to better reflect final funding contributions. Operational efficiencies across the different venues could be achieved through the negotiation of appropriate purchase agreements (including with existing venue managers such as The Edge).

### **8.3 ON-GOING INDUSTRY LIAISON**

The optimal realisation of the recommended venue developments will only occur through an on-going close working relationship between the professional performing arts sector and Council. For this to work effectively it will be necessary to have an organisation that represents the wider interests of the sector that has a mandate to work with Council.

During our consultation process an informal group was formed to speak on behalf of the sector. This group included one representative each on behalf of:

- ATC
- Q Theatre
- Silo Theatre
- independent producers
- directors
- designers.

This group might form the basis for an on-going industry organisation although its representation would need to be broadened and its existence would need to be formalised in order to ensure it has a mandate to liaise with Council on behalf of the wider industry.

We recommend that Council facilitate the establishment of an Industry Reference Group to fulfil this ongoing role.

### **8.4 OTHER FACILITY PROVISION CONSIDERATIONS**

The primary focus of our study has been on performance spaces and the identification of new spaces that are required to meet the industry's needs. This has culminated in our recommendation outlined in Section 8.1. However, during the course of our consultation a range of related matters have been identified and we summarise these below:

1. APO has identified that a suitable rehearsal arrangement could be achieved through the refurbishment of their existing rehearsal venue in Mt Eden and this should be investigated further in light of the recommendation to proceed with Q Theatre, which removes the potential for an APO rehearsal space at 305 Queen Street
2. the Basement is fulfilling an important role as Auckland's primary CBD "Off-Off" venue. A cost-benefit analysis should be undertaken to ascertain whether the benefits of this venue could be effectively improved by undertaking a range of potential improvements including:
  - a. excavating to increase the height of the venue
  - b. installing air-conditioning

- c. increasing operational funding to improve the levels of support to venue hirers
3. The Edge is undertaking preliminary investigations into the potential conversion of the Herald Theatre into a 100 – 200 seat studio theatre. Further work should be undertaken to better understand the type of space that could be created and what, if any, implication this has for a 100 – 200 seat studio being co-located with the proposed new venues
4. SKYCITY has identified various ways in which the theatre and associated public spaces might be improved but will not commit expenditure without an identifiable return on investment. There could be potential for Council to partner in any work if an identified benefit is achievable. Based on our analysis, however, a redevelopment of SKYCITY Theatre would not substitute either of the identified high priority venues.

## **8.5 RECOMMENDATIONS – THE WAY FORWARD**

### **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Council should progress with Q Theatre to address the need for a flexi-form venue as quickly as is possible.
2. Council should immediately commence planning and development of a 500 – 600 seat drama theatre within the Aotea Precinct.
3. Council should plan for a 100 – 200 seat studio theatre to be co-located with the drama theatre.
4. There should be independent governance and management of some, or all, of the new venues in order to help stimulate diversity and creativity in the sector.
5. The three venues should be clustered together and co-located with café / bars to maximise their overall effectiveness.
6. Ideally, rehearsal and office space should be incorporated into the new drama theatre to improve the quality and range of rehearsal space available for dance and drama in the Auckland CBD.
7. Council, together with relevant sector representatives, should negotiate with the University of Auckland and SKYCITY to secure greater certainty regarding the on-going availability of these venues until the high priority venues are developed.

### **OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Council should facilitate the establishment of an Industry Reference Group to provide a forum for liaising with the industry as the new venues are planned and developed.
2. A detailed business case analysis should be undertaken to ascertain the role that a refurbished St James could fulfil in the future overall mix of venues.

3. A cost-benefit analysis should be undertaken to ascertain whether the benefits of The Basement could be effectively improved by undertaking a range of physical improvements and increasing operational funding.
4. Further work should be undertaken to better understand the type of re-configured space that could be created in the Herald Theatre and what, if any, implication this has for the 100 – 200 seat studio being co-located with the new drama theatre.
5. Council should enter into dialogue with SKYCITY to ascertain whether there is an effective way in which the two organisations could partner in a redevelopment of the existing theatre to better meet industry needs.
6. Council should liaise further with APO regarding its rehearsal requirements including the potential for upgrading of its existing rehearsal venue in Mt Eden.

## APPENDIX A: CONSULTATION LIST

During the course of our research and analysis we consulted with the following people. In most cases the consultation involved direct meetings, either personally or in a small group situation. Telephone interviews were conducted for those people outside Auckland and a small number of people provided input by way of e-mails.

Name	Organisation
Ian Hughes	Actor
Raymond Hawthorne	Actor
Donogh Rees	Actress
Amanda Rees	Angel Theatre
Barbara Glaser	APO
Elisabeth Vaneveld	Arts Consultant (formerly CNZ)
Colin McColl	ATC
Lester McGrath	ATC
Peter Scholes	Auckland Chamber Orchestra
David Malacari	Auckland Festival
Neil Ieremia	Black Grace
Beth Kayes	Co. Physical theatre
Scott Blanks	Comedy Club/Basement
Cath Cardiff	Creative New Zealand
Susan Jordan	DANZ (Dance network)
Tracy Grant Lord	Designer
Beatrix Coles	Fingertips and Teeth
Deirdre Tarrant	Footnote Dance Company
Andrew Malmo	Independant Producer
Felicity Letcher	Independant producer
Lauren Hughes	Independant producer
Justin Lewis	Indian Ink Theatre Company
Marie Adams	Inside Out Productions
James Wilson	Massive Theatre Company
Kerry Harvey	Ministry for Culture and Heritage
Aidan Lang	NBR NZ Opera
Kylie Aitchison	NZ International Comedy Festival
Peter Walls	NZSO
Jochen Stossberg	NZSO - Auckland office
Karl Bartlett	Pacific Theatre/Kokonut Kream
Madeleine Hyland	Peripeteia
Leisha Ward Knox	Phundmi Productions
Mark Amery	Playmarket
Andrew Caisley	Q Theatre
Susanne Ritzenhoff	Q Theatre
Malia Johnston	Rifleman Productions
Amanda Skoog	Royal NZ Ballet
Frith Walker	Silo Theatre
Shane Boshier	Silo Theatre
Alistair Ryan	SKYCITY

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Barb Cuttance	TAPAC
Roger King	Taranaki Festival/WOMAD
Richard Jeffery	TelstraClear Pacific Events Centre
Mary-Jane O'Reilly	TEMPO Dance Festival
Greg Innes	The Edge
Melanie Roger	The Edge
Craig Cooper	The Edge
Jennifer Ward-Leyland	The Large Group
Michael Hurst	The Large Group
Yee Yang Lee	The Oryza Foundation
Anders Falstie	The Rebel Alliance
Catherine Nola	The Rebel Alliance
Trygve Wakenshaw	Theatre Beating
Ben Crowder	Theatre Stampede
Michelle Laferty	Theatre Stampede
Christian Penny	Toi Whakaari
Tina Hong	UNITEC
Marin Matulovic	University of Auckland
Paul Minifie	University of Auckland - Maidment Theatre
Sharman Pretty	University of Auckland - NICAI