



Jazz Vespers are attracting large numbers to Napier's Trinity Methodist Church.

Jazz Vespers in Napier

Napier's architecture gives it the reputation of New Zealand's Art Deco city. Now the music of the Art Deco era, jazz, has its own church service.

Over the summer Trinity Methodist Church in Napier developed its own 'Jazz Vespers'. Jazz Vespers is a new take on an old service.

Vespers was an evening service that was part of the traditional daily services of the church. With Trinity's Jazz Vespers, jazz music takes the lead for reflection and worship; supported by a prayer, scripture or a contemporary poem and a brief reflection - maybe even a jazzy congregational hymn!

Trinity presbyter Rev Tony Franklin-Ross says he wanted the spirituality of jazz, and the ability of its rhythms to start people toe-tapping, to come to the fore of the Vespers

"For example, jazz instrumental music starts and finishes the service. Sets of jazz music are gently intermingled with short elements of worship that seeks to draw out the spirituality of jazz. The feedback has been very positive to the format."

Tony developed the idea after a study visit to Vancouver in 2008.

"The purpose of that visit was to explore inner-city churches and their engagement with the homeless in downtown Vancouver. I spent some time at the United Church of Canada St Andrew's-Wesley Church. Among the services they hold, is a weekly Jazz Vespers, which attracts a large following; maybe, as the minister quipped, because it was the only regular free jazz concert in Vancouver."

Other churches around the world have also explored using jazz. These include a jazz-centred Methodist fellowship simply called 'Jazz Church', based in Birmingham and Coventry, UK.

Tony says he wanted to implement Jazz Vespers when he was stationed at Aotea Chapel, but it was not possible. "When I was stationed to Napier I thought 'Art Deco city - Jazz - it should work here!'"

The key to the concept is, of course, the musicians.

Tony says providence was at work to make the dream a reality. An article in the local newspaper profiled a retired Anglican priest, Rev David Day, who as a jazz musician sought to gather some other people to form a small jazz band.

"I got in touch with him, and found he had just met a couple of other musicians the week before I called. He asked them if they were happy to perform in a church - and they said yes."

At the first two Vespers, David played with local jazz vocalist John Redman and pianist Steve Miller. John has also facilitated other local musicians to help lead future Vespers.

Jazz Vespers takes place at Trinity just over the summer period, from November 2012 to April 2013, on the 3rd Sunday of the month at 7pm.

The first Vespers attracted 45 people; the second a Christmas Jazz Vespers attracted 90; and the January event brought in more than 115 people.

The mix has included people from other churches in Napier and even Havelock North and Hastings. Tony says the Vespers draw people who meld their Christian spirituality with their love for jazz; Christians who are no longer linked to church, and jazz fans who didn't mind going to church to hear it.

Tony says Trinity parishioners are pleased to see Jazz Vespers take off and attract large numbers to the historic church. Part of the success is through marketing - smart advertising postcards, regular profiles in local newspapers and radio, listings on the concert and gig website 'eventfinda' and posts on the Napier visitor centre website as well as Trinity's website and Facebook page.

"For each month's Vespers, we have been fortunate to have either a newspaper or radio station do a profiling article or interview. Radio Rhema also contacted me for an interview. That was a surprise."

All of this has also helped raise the local profile of Trinity Methodist.

NOW A

The Factory true for Met

By Hilaire Campbell

Musician Poulima Salima has always dreamed of composing for a major production and now, as the Auckland Arts Festival prepares to host New Zealand's first Pacific Island Musical, he's living that dream.

Poulima collaborated with some creative members/creative heads and came up with original songs that make up the musical score for The Factory, a theatrical performance created by entertainment company Kila Kokonut Koro.

Set in the 1970s, in the era of the dawn rain, The Factory is a hard hitting but tender evocation of the Samoan migrant experience as people struggled to make a new life for themselves while supporting relatives back home.

Drawing on universal themes of hope and aspirations for a better life, it is, says Poulima, "a celebration of our people coming from the Islands to a land of milk and honey for a better future."

After a highly acclaimed premiere season at the Mangere Arts Centre in 2011, a new and updated version of The Factory is being performed at the Auckland Arts Festival in early March. It is the perfect vehicle for Poulima's musical score which seamlessly fuses a range of genres from the traditional Pacific chants to more modern styles such as funk, pop, techno, hip hop and Pacific soul.

Poulima is an active member of Mt Albert Methodist Church. He is currently involved with the music group Musoz 'n' Faith at the Church and is enthused to see lives nurtured, encouraged and strengthened through music performance, creativity and leadership.

"I was taught by my parents to believe in the power of prayer. My parents prayed for my education and future and to honour God for everything."

The musical journey Poulima has travelled



Poulima Salima (centre left) and the...

The mission garden at Wesley

METHODIST ARCHIVES

The oldest pear tree in New Zealand is still fruiting regularly despite its age and lichen-encrusted branches.

This pear tree is in the orchard at the Kerikeri Mission House. It is sometimes called the John Butler Pear Tree after the man who is believed to have planted it. The tree is said to have been

