



# Alumni Association Newsletter No.8

**From:** Bethlehem Foundation [bounce\_bethlehem@bethlehemfoundation.org.nz]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 7 May 2009 7:32 a.m.  
**To:** Peter Wyatt  
**Subject:** May 2009 Newsletter - Alumni Edition

## *Bethlehem Times*

### **Alumni Edition**

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**May 2009**

## It's operational!!!

The long-awaited and much-anticipated Performing Arts Centre is now a reality. Construction having commenced in mid-2008, the keys were handed over on Thursday 23rd. Fit-out work will continue over the coming months.

Four days later and 0830 saw the first use of the auditorium for the morning devotions at the commencement of term 2's staff-only day – followed by tea and scones in the spacious foyer!



Next day saw the music department in full swing – all unpacked (well, almost) and use of their new facilities in full swing. Later in the week the Foundation hosted a number of tours of the facility with almost 50 supporters, contributors, and potential hirers exploring. Comments as people entered the auditorium were almost universally “WOW”. It really is quite a sight to enter the auditorium and look down on the 588 seats and stage, and yet from the stage there is a sense of intimacy.

The ground floor at one side houses the Primary Music room and music staff room, the Primary Hall which can readily house 500+ and has a glass wall along one of its sides resulting in it being warm and light, and multiple drama rooms for rehearsal, teaching, and a vast storage area.

The next floor goes around two sides of the auditorium and is devoted to Secondary Music with individual and group rehearsal facilities and classrooms and provision for a yet-to-be fitted (or funded) recording suite.



**MAKING MUSIC:** Chelsea McConnell (front), Rebecca Radford and Brigid McKinstry, in one of Bethlehem College's new rooms in its performing arts centre. PICTURE / SARAH GULLY 300409SG09BOP

Back on the top floor is the foyer and main entrance, office, and a fully equipped to commercial standards kitchen.

Going back to comments received there were two that particularly appealed. One from a seven/eight year old Primary student who, along with his classmates had just been shown through – “it’s the coolest place I have ever seen”. The other from a parent in an email after their participation on one of the Foundation’s tours “It’s a great indicator of the value the school places on providing excellent learning facilities for their students”. The Bay of Plenty Times Education reporter wrote “Walking into the centre it’s easy to forget it’s a school building.”



We have also been fortunate to obtain, on permanent loan, the Bosendorfer Grand piano from Baycourt, and this is to be put to immediate use as one of next week's early users of the auditorium is the Tauranga Civic Choir who are rendering a 150 voice choral concert (and that gives you some idea of the stage size), the other event of the week being BC's Speech Contest. The Official Opening is on May 29th by the Hon. Christopher Finlayson, Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage.

We know that many past students will be quite jealous of today's who have the use and opportunities which such a facility present. If you would like to have a tour of the facility just let us know by emailing to [p.wyatt@beth.school.nz](mailto:p.wyatt@beth.school.nz) and we will endeavour to schedule these when you are next in town.

The Foundation issues this bi-monthly newsletter on Campus developments, news of people etc. To receive a free copy just click on Newsletters on the Foundation website [www.bethlehemfoundation.org.nz](http://www.bethlehemfoundation.org.nz), which also contains an eleven minute Virtual Tour of the Campus and its people, staff and students.

This message was prepared by: Bethlehem Foundation, 7 Elder Lane Bethlehem Tauranga, BOP 3110 New Zealand.