



# EVERYBODY'S THEATRE OPUNAKE IS 100

Happy Birthday Everybody's Theatre!

Turning 100 years old is no mean feat for this brilliant theatre in the lovely little town of Opunake.

WORDS Jane Fockert PHOTOS Pip Guthrie

In February 2021 they will be celebrating the milestone. A 1920s themed evening with a talented jazz band is planned for Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2021. Tickets are on sale now. There will be an official cake cutting at a high tea the weekend before - invites only.

Kids are catered for on the afternoon of Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> February with a matinee movie – free popcorn for everyone who dresses up.

The original building was built in 1912 for Mr J.C. (John Callaghan) O'Rorke, a farmer from Oaonui, as a grocery store. The cinema conversion took place after World War I in a joint venture between the owner, Mr O'Rorke and the sole lessee – Arthur White. Known as White's Pictures, on opening night (Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1921) The Virgin of Stamboul screened to a full house, as did the matinee Blue Streak McCoy. Mr White employed a small orchestra, going to the movies must have been a full-on sound and vision experience back then.

Mr L. Whiting (Boss) purchased the theatre toward the late 1920s, and on retiring his son Bruce picked up the reins. In early 1980 it was Bruce's turn to retire, and he shut the doors. On hearing from theatres that had previously closed – “the patrons removed the furniture as they left” – Bruce was not going to let that happen. The community rallied together, and after a meeting of six hundred residents on April 23 they unanimously agreed to raise funds and purchase the theatre. The 15<sup>th</sup> of May 1980 saw the theatre's first screening as a community asset and 40 years on continues to be run by a fabulous team of volunteers and one very capable Facility Manager.

During 2012 to 2015 Everybody's Theatre underwent extensive renovations inside and out due to forced closure for earthquake strengthening in 2012. The theatre now overwhelms with resplendent chandeliers and bevelled glass doors. Downstairs seating welcomes with comfy couches and lazyboy chairs covered in an eclectic array of colourful crochet blankets, while upstairs is new tiered theatre seats, including some of the original fold-up versions.

The first Sunday of the month Boutique nights are held when patrons can enjoy a movie with wine, cheeseboard and dessert. All details are on [everybodystheatre.co.nz](http://everybodystheatre.co.nz) and their Facebook page.

Tickets to the Centennial Celebration with jazz band are on sale now! Dress in your best from 1921 and join in the celebrations.

For more information please visit Everybody's Theatre website: [www.everybodystheatre.co.nz](http://www.everybodystheatre.co.nz).

Everybody's Theatre  
**OPUNAKĒ**  
**CENTENNIAL**  
**CELEBRATIONS**  
 20 February 2021 - 7.30pm  
 Dance the night away 1920's  
 style with a Jazz Band

1920's Style Dress - Refreshments available - Tickets \$55pp

72 Tasman Street - Opunake

[www.everybodystheatre.co.nz](http://www.everybodystheatre.co.nz) [www.eventspronto/everybodys](http://www.eventspronto/everybodys)  
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