



MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 23 March 2009

BIG PLANS FOR A GRAND REVIVAL AT CHRISTCHURCH'S ICONIC AND HISTORIC ISAAC THEATRE ROYAL

The Isaac Theatre Royal Foundation is delighted to announce the appointment of Neil Cox, through his company Big Deal Limited, as General Manager at Isaac Theatre Royal in Christchurch.

"The Isaac Theatre Royal has been the gateway to the performing arts for the people of Christchurch and Canterbury for over 100 years; the refurbishment and redevelopment of Christchurch's grandest theatre, enhancing theatre facilities to world class standards, signaled our commitment to ensuring it continues to be our gateway to the performing arts for another 100 years," said Mr Ray Eddington, Chair of the Isaac Theatre Royal Foundation Board of Directors.

"The appointment of Neil Cox as General Manager is the next stage in the process and emphasizes that commitment. We are confident that Neil's knowledge, contacts, and extensive experience in the world of performing arts within New Zealand and internationally, in both production and promotion, will add enormous value to our efforts to reposition the theatre in the international performing arts world as THE venue of choice in Christchurch," said Mr Eddington.

Cox has worked in Senior International Marketing positions for EMI and Warner Music in UK, Australia and South Africa promoting the likes of Paul McCartney, Queen, Cliff Richard, Tina Turner, Pink Floyd, Crowded House, and many others. He formed Big Deal Productions on his arrival in Christchurch in 1996 promoting many NZ & International concerts and festivals throughout the country as well as consulting on event and entertainment marketing for the Melbourne Cup Carnival

and Rugby World Cup 2003 in Australia and more recently on a local basis for Vbase Ltd and the Christchurch Arts Festival.

Cox also had interests in major musical stage productions such as 'We Will Rock You' and 'Spamalot' as well spearheading the initial proposal to bring the musical 'Priscilla Queen Of The Desert' to New Zealand. In various other capacities he is also Chairman of CHART (The Christchurch Music Industry Trust), promoter of the annual Southern Amp music festival and a Trustee on the Board of the Christchurch Arts Festival.

Cox said, "It's an absolute honour to take on the management of this Majesty of a theatre and my applause goes to the Board and Trustees for achieving the beautiful recent refurbishment which has elevated the theatre to modern world production standards, while still keeping its fine heritage and Edwardian beauty intact. We will be continuing the upgrade of this city's 'centurion' of live entertainment, with extensive plans to upgrade the heritage exterior.

"A quick glance at the event posters adorning the walls outside the Grand Circle is an instant trip through theatre history and there are grand plans in progress that will build the next 100 years of history at the Isaac Theatre Royal!"

"The task ahead is to bring world class productions to the theatre to match our facilities," Cox added, "and we will kick that off with the Canterbury Showbiz production of 'Miss Saigon' from 17th April onwards. If you haven't been to a performance at the Isaac Theatre Royal in recent months, this is the perfect opportunity to reacquaint yourself with this amazing historic venue!"

For further comment:

Ray Eddington, Chair, Isaac Theatre Royal Foundation, 03 351 9630

Neil Cox, General Manager, Isaac Theatre Royal, 03 366 6326 / 021 933440