



Occupying a gateway position, the Middleton Grange School Performing Arts Centre is a premium facility that represents the realisation of a dream that began back in 1996

When Middleton Grange School commissioned a ten year development plan that included provision of curriculum facilities for Drama, Music, Dance and Maori, they had no idea it would take much longer than 10 years to fulfill their dream.

Serious planning began with briefing a significant national architect to come up with a concept plan. However, after several attempts this firm was unable to deliver a remotely viable solution.

Senior staff members from Middleton Grange School visited Bethlehem College, who were well on the way to completing a Performing Arts Centre with us, at a comparatively affordable price. The rest, as they say, is history.

We were asked to provide a concept design and submission and our design team visited the school and met with all of the proposed facility users to fully evaluate their needs, assess the existing architecture and review any constraints of the proposed site.

"Our experience has been extremely positive. You genuinely went out of your way to assist us at every stage. There are many accolades that I could document but suffice to say that we would have no hesitation in retaining your services."

*Peter Marshall, Project Manager & Trustee,
The Christian Schools' Trust*

The existing school was well established and the proposed site housed multiple classrooms, the existing music and drama suites, the original school hall and three residential dwellings.

Along with a limited budget, designing a new facility while providing enough teaching space during construction presented a significant challenge. The site also had town planning issues.

Our design solution achieved all the functionality required and created an architectural statement at the gateway position to the school. Through some innovative design and negotiation with the Christchurch City Council we also gained resource consent without notification.

Officially opened on 31 May 2011, this eagerly anticipated Performing Arts Centre has earned the highest of praise from all its many users.



“Having everything you need all in one place is absolutely brilliant ...

...We love having multiple spaces for competing groups to warm up, plus the sensibly placed side access doors make it easy to unload percussion instruments straight onto the spacious main stage.

Our audiences have all been very impressed with the general quality of the Middleton Grange School facility - the sightlines and sound quality from an audience perspective are really good and the auditorium is exceedingly comfortable. We are thrilled to have access to a high calibre facility like this in a school environment.”

Jody Keehan, Christchurch District Contest Organiser and Concerts Manager, Chamber Music New Zealand

“We are thoroughly enjoying our whole performing arts complex - we love the way the spaces are associated and the easy flow from one to another. We are particularly thrilled with the theatre, both as a venue to use and acoustically, we have achieved a good compromise between a venue that is great for big band sounds and still does justice to softer acoustic performances. Among the many shows that have been staged here, our own school production of ‘Annie’ was a roaring success, 1800 seats sold out across the 6 nights, with fantastic feedback from our audiences.

Being the first time we had built a performing arts centre, our thinking about how we would use the spaces and what we needed in each evolved somewhat during the 12 month build. In this way, the design build process worked well for us. Right from the very first meeting with their design team through to the day to day contact we had with their on-site Project Manager, they listened to us and responded with effective adjustments to the design to accommodate our thinking.

One of our early visitors to the site was the CEO of Chamber Music NZ and he was blown away by the facility - the easy flow between the multiple spaces and the great access - commenting that it may well be one of the best facilities of its size in the country. It’s certainly working for us!”

David Bennetts, Head of Music, Middleton Grange School

Key Features

- The **Auditorium Wing** groups Drama and Dance activities, while the **Music Wing** provides for Music and Maori.
- The two wings are linked by a **central atrium**, featuring double height glazing and a striking feature wall of school memorabilia and displays.
- The **Auditorium** seats 304, and the stage incorporates a 5.6m high proscenium to allow excellent viewing, and lighting supported from gantries.
- **Also included** are an orchestra pit, green rooms, a dance studio, teaching spaces for music, dance & drama, itinerant music teaching rooms, a recording studio, storage & workshop areas, 5 general purpose classrooms and a whareniui.
- The **foyer** has a full kitchen, with direct access to the carpark for caterers.
- The **whareniui** was recycled from the existing assembly hall, retaining a physical part of the school’s history. The traditional whareniui form provides a spiritual and cultural centre for the school and community.

