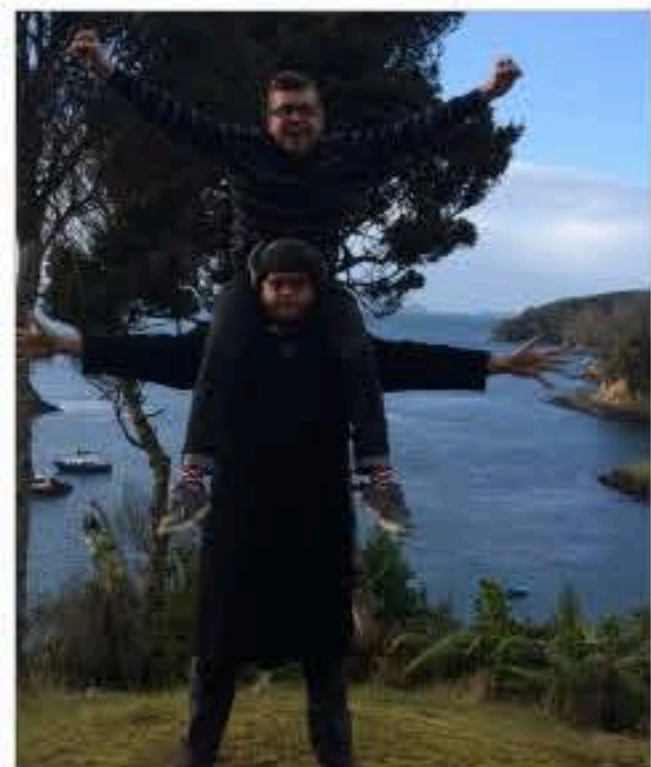


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# Southland Festival of the Arts complete for another year

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A Boy Wonder co-producer, writer and performer Ryan Richards (top) and technical designer Michael Craven brought boyish humour to the Stewart Island community.

The seventh annual Southland Festival of the Arts has just concluded for another year and the numbers look positive.

Festival director Angela Newell said ticket sales and audience numbers had come in above expectations.

"You pretty well know how much the shows are going to cost and box office revenue has been stronger than what was budgeted."

The festival's budget was \$136,400 and ticket sales had come in 11 per cent above expectations, Newell said.

It was difficult to tell exact numbers of how many people attended the 21 events during the festival, she said.

"I've been very happy with the level of engagement that the festival has had this year in both ticket sales and people enjoying the free events.

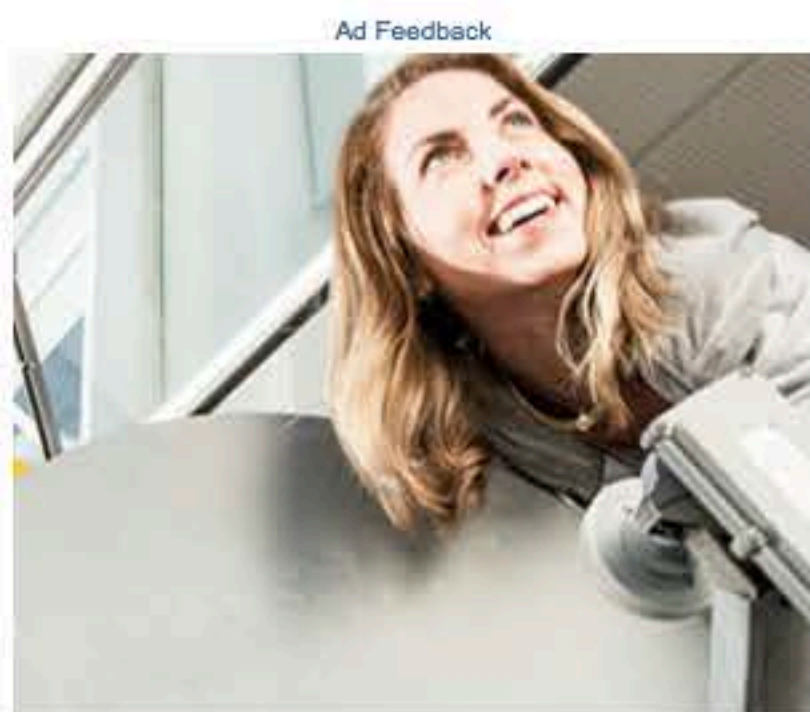
"With the yarn bombing [*A Bit of a Yarn*], I don't know how many people would have gone down Esk St."

The highlight of the festival was Thomas Monckton's solo circus performance *The Pianist*, which nearly 300 people attended at Centrestage.

"It was certainly one that people were talking about as being really

fabulous," Newell said.

This year's festival was the third time festival organisers had actively taken shows out into district areas.



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The shows taken out to the rural communities were well supported on the whole, she said.

It was the first time an evening concert went to Tuatapere and Lumsden, with the touring show *A Boy Wonder*.

More than 50 people attend *A Boy Wonder* on Stewart Island on the last night of the festival.

There were 15 Venture Southland-run events in last year's festival and 13 this year.

As the years went on, more and more people embraced the festival as good quality entertainment, she said.

"If you're selling shows like Queen or Pink Floyd people know what they're getting whereas with an arts festival there is a bit of a leap of faith.

"You might not know exactly what it is you're going to so you're risking your time and money on something."

The festival gets funding of \$17,000 from Community Trust of Southland; \$15,000 from the ILT Foundation; \$10,000 from the Invercargill City Council; \$4640 from Creative New Zealand; \$1,150 from Creative NZ Communities (ICC) and \$1,500 from the Southland District Council.

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