

June 2007

The Museum of Wellington City & Sea is the capital's social history museum.

The Museum's role is to preserve, present and promote the history of Wellington – harbour, city & sea.

Alfred, Mabel & Charles - a portrait from Hills Hats to Waiata Poi, is open until 29 July 2007.

Alfred, Mabel & Charles was made possible through support of the New Zealand School of Music and PianoShop, Plimmerton.

The Museum's next feature exhibition, **War in Paradise**, opens 25 August, 2007.

The Museum is managed by the Wellington Museums Trust with major funding support from the Wellington City Council.

Queens Wharf

Open daily (except Christmas Day)

10am to 5pm

Free entry

For exhibitions and events see
www.museumofwellington.co.nz

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Alfred, Mabel & Charles - a portrait from Hills Hats to Waiata Poi

Exhibition with Free concerts
Museum of Wellington City and Sea
until July 29, 2007

A sumptuous Victorian parlour is the stage for two months of free weekend concerts and events at the **Museum of Wellington City & Sea** celebrating Wellington's own Hill family, one of our early innovators of homegrown culture.

Alfred, Mabel & Charles explores the commercial and artistic achievements of this famous family, and offers an insight into the music, visual arts and industry of Victorian Wellington.

The Hills were prolific artists as well as leading business people, and took full advantage of all networking opportunities to promote themselves. Curator Jane Vial, of Art & Heritage Services, notes that the family were "conscious of their own importance, and left nothing to chance". The family thrived in the vibrant Wellington of the late 19th century; an era often mistakenly thought of as culturally dull.

Alfred, Mabel & Charles celebrates the Hills by bringing together works of art and industry from many private collections, Te Papa, the Alexander Turnbull Library and Wellington Hatters (formerly Hills Hats). The exhibition ranges from examples of historical contraptions designed to measure ones' head to a rare impressionist painting by Mabel Hill, originally commissioned by the New Zealand government.

The Hill family were all incredibly creative and this exhibition focuses on Charles Hill and two of his seven children, Alfred and Mabel.

Alfred Hill, is considered to be one of our finest composers from the romantic era and an important early champion of Maori music. He was one of New Zealand's first ethnomusicologists and his considerable talents led him all over the world. At one stage he was (of course) claimed by Australia as their own.

His sister **Mabel Hill** was one of New Zealand's early Impressionist painters, a successful art teacher and as the wife of John McIndoe she continued his publishing company after his death.

Their father, entrepreneur **Charles Hill**, established the nationally successful Hills Hats company. He was a clever and successful businessman who took advantage of Wellington's reputation as the Empire City with its booming economy and busy harbour, and over time provided generations of school children with a cap.

The lucrative hat business allowed the talented family to continue their cultural activities, and as such, offer one of the earliest examples of the successful merging of art and business practices.

A series of **free weekend concerts** accompany the exhibition. Highlights include Alfred Hill's celebrated compositions "Waiata Poi" and "Hinemoa" with performances from the Dominion String Quartet, the Wellington Chamber Orchestra and descendants of the Hill family.

The Wellington Repertory Theatre also perform the gay music of Music Hall including 'The Drunkard's Dilemma or Her Honour for a Tenpence' melodrama.

Concerts take place every Sunday until 15 July, with additional concerts Saturday 9th & 16th, Wednesday 4th & Tuesday 24th July, some of which take place at St Andrews on the Terrace.

A full programme is available at www.museumofwellington.co.nz

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