

Costumes a lifelong thrill

20th March 2007

Denise Hosty, who describes herself as a costume maker, has sewn for as long as she can remember.

The Bayswater resident and founder of Glenfield-based The Costume Studio, who used to clothe her teddy bears with her own creations, says, "I remember using a plastic sewing machine, similar to the Barbie doll version, to make a wedding dress for my doll when I was a little girl." So when



she was offered an apprenticeship in the wardrobe department of the Contact Theatre in Manchester in the north of England at the age of 16, she jumped at the chance. Agreeing to be the costume designer for the Auckland Theatre Company's production of Hatch or The Plight of the Penguins was a departure from the norm for Denise, who hasn't previously designed a garment. Geoff Chapple's Hatch introduces a fascinating character from New Zealand history, Joseph Hatch. The Southland entrepreneur's biggest venture was his Macquarie Island penguin oil works in the early 20th century. This placed Hatch at the centre of an international outcry for rendering down more than three million penguins for their oil. Denise, 36, found the process of designing for Hatch extremely interesting especially the "heaps of research" she's had to do on the internet and in books.

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"Although I'm not an expert on period costume, I've always loved that era," she says. Denise says she made it a point to have an intimate understanding of the play and the character Hatch she was designing for. While she enjoyed designing for Hatch, it reaffirmed her belief that "designing is just not for me". Denise is quite content working behind the scenes as the co-ordinator/ costume maker. "I'm the first to admit that there are some really amazing designers out there and I'm just not willing to invest the time in it to be competitive," she says. Denise, who worked with renowned costumier Elizabeth Whiting for the first six years when she moved to New Zealand, says she's happiest when complementing designers rather than competing with them. "I'm a very hands-on person and get a lot out of making it happen. "I

love juggling up to 15 clients at a time and making sure everything comes in within budget, although that can be extremely challenging at times."

Hatch or The Plight Of The Penguins, starring Stuart Devenie, at Hopetoun Alpha as part of AK07, until April 20. Tickets, Ticketek ph 307 5000 or www.ticketek.co.nz

By Sharu Delilkan