

Granny's life inspiration

Upper Hutt-based and award-winning Arts a Go Go! performing arts classes for kids are giving their annual show this Friday at the Lower Hutt Little Theatre.

Happy Birthday Gran O'Shea is inspired by the life of Margaret Grant, who came to the Hutt Valley in the 1950s from Northern Ireland, raising four of her five sons in Wainuiomata before moving to Tokoroa in the 1970s.

The show begins at Granny's 70th birthday, where her grandchildren gather to hear stories of her life.

From there, the show takes the audience on a humorous and musical journey through post-war Belfast in the 1940s, Granny in the 1960s and even Granny's own children going nightclubbing in the 1980s.

"It has been a lot of fun finding costumes and staging

the different eras," says director Rachel Main, owner of Arts a Go Go! and daughter-in-law of Mrs Grant. "The 1940s scene is particularly new to most of the children, and the children look gorgeous. It has brought back memories for many of their real-life grandparents."

The end-of-year show is one part of the Arts a Go Go! programme, where 65 children have explored their creativity and learnt skills in drama, dance and singing throughout the year.

The venue is a Lower Hutt one as Expressions was booked out.

Ms Main says she has been given permission by Margaret Grant to take a few artistic liberties with the show.

"Margaret wasn't really a hippie, but we couldn't pass up the opportunity for the children to have a great time with this era!"



Scary stuff: Granny as young Maggie (played by Makayla Gibbs) is frightened with a mouse by Grandad as a boy named Joe (Sam Wilkes).

Two performances run this Friday, November 20, 5pm and 7pm, Lower Hutt Little Theatre.

■ Tickets from Ms Main on 977 7887. Adults \$12, \$8 children/school students and under 2s free. For Arts a Go Go! details, see artsagogo.co.nz.