Romeo, Juliet to become a daily hit on Broadway

By: McLEAN Glenn

TWICE a day until the end of time, Juliet will appear at a window in Stratford's clock tower, and wonder aloud: Wherefore art thou Romeo?

From tomorrow, Juliet and Romeo will be regular features in the town's main street, Broadway, when the country's first specially-commissioned glockenspiel is opened.

The project has been funded by a $65,000 grant from the TSB Community Trust. Chairman of the trust David Walter will join Stratford Mayor Brian Jeffares at the opening ceremony tonight before the annual Christmas parade.

Stratford District Council promotions manager Stuart Perry said there had been many questions asked during the past few months over the length of time the project was taking, and no one had been more frustrated by the delays than the council.

"However, it should be realised that the whole project was started from scratch -- no designs, no mechanisms, not even plans or similar glockenspiels overseas," he said.

Mr Perry said the design was possibly unique in the world, as all others seen or investigated appeared to be miniature figures. Stratford's figures, designed by Tawhiti museum owner Nigel Ogle, were life-sized and made of fibreglass.

Mr Perry said the sequence would take five minutes and would start immediately the chimes had finished, at 1pm and 4pm daily.

"There have been some suggestions that for the first month or two we should have the glockenspiel perform every second hour," he said.

Glockenspiels are quite common in Europe, but most are on a far smaller scale to the Stratford version.

Television NZ is considering televising the glockenspiel as part of its millennium programming.

CAPTION:

TALKING CLOCK: Romeo makes an appearance on Stratford's glockenspiel yesterday.

Photo: ADRIAN MALLOCH