

AUCKLAND THEATRE COMPANY

2023

CELEBRATING  
30 YEARS

2023  
SEASON







AUCKLAND  
THEATRE  
COMPANY

30  
YEARS

2023 SEASON

Principal  
Fundors:

 **creative** *nz*  
ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND / TOI AOTEAROA

**Auckland  
Council** 



# Nau Mai Haere Mai!

Welcome to the 2023 Season of Auckland Theatre Company.



In celebration of the actors who tell our stories, we feature three covers for our 2023 Season brochure, starring Nicola Kāwana, Munashe Tapfuya and Michael Hurst.

JONATHAN BIELSKI  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR & CEO

Auckland Theatre Company – 2023 Season

Tēnā koutou katoa.

The March 1993 world premiere of David Geary's *Lovelock's Dream Run*, directed by Raymond Hawthorne at the Watershed Theatre, heralded the arrival of the newly minted Auckland Theatre Company. It was an emphatic statement by a collective of theatre artists and supporters who were determined our city would have a professional theatre company. In these pages, our founding leader Simon Prast looks back on those heady days when he and his comrades willed the Company into existence.

I salute the founders of Auckland Theatre Company for their bold vision, chutzpah and tenacity, and acknowledge the extraordinary era led by Colin McColl and Lester McGrath that, among many achievements, gave us our homes at Balmoral and ASB Waterfront Theatre. All who follow are the beneficiaries of that visionary leadership.

Our 2023 Season includes three works by New Zealand playwrights, including two world premieres. After two years of disruptions, we finally bring you our new production of *Witi's Wāhine* by the late, beloved Nancy Brunning, in a collaboration with Hāpai Productions, and *Things That Matter*, Gary Henderson's brilliant stage adaptation of David Galler's memoir. In another debut, we unite with SquareSums&Co to commission and produce futuristic comedy-crime caper *Basmati Bitch* by Ankita Singh.

The centrepiece of our year will be a return to the work of William Shakespeare, marking both our birthday and 400 years since the First Folio. I have invited the great Michael Hurst to ascend the mountainous theatrical challenge of *King Lear* in a production to be co-directed by Benjamin Henson and Michael. We are assembling a breathtaking group of theatre luminaries to make this *Lear*, which will be a certain sell-out.

Our anniversary year sees a return to the Auckland stage by Sarah Peirse, one of our most distinguished international actors, in a tour de force turn as Patricia Highsmith in *Switzerland*, a brilliant thriller by Joanna Murray-Smith.

Before all that happens, we begin our year with a laugh-out-loud new comedy by Aidan Fennessy, *The Heartbreak Choir*, with Lara Macgregor making her directorial debut for Auckland Theatre Company.

In no year, let alone our 30<sup>th</sup>, can we exist without government funders or corporate sponsors. I particularly highlight the generous support of our city's ratepayers through funding by Auckland Council. It was Creative New Zealand that was there at the beginning, and they remain a pou that hold us up. Also, there on day one were Dentons Kensington Swan, Villa Maria and Canon, who remain as vital as they were in 1993.

It is the personal gifts that inspire me. Generous people making donations, large and small, some giving in every one of our 30 years. Of the many who have given, I pay a special tribute to the ATC Patrons Group, led by Lady Dayle Mace MNZM and Hon Justice Anne Hinton KC, who from the Founding 100 onwards have had our backs.

My final acknowledgement in this anniversary year is to the audiences, theatre practitioners, staff, board members and crews – the people who have nurtured Auckland Theatre Company and carried us to the dawn of our fourth decade. To each person who has bought a ticket, worked in the office or made a show, I extend humble gratitude and abiding respect. As we confidently plan for the next 30 years, we celebrate all that has come before.

Ngā mihi nui e hoa mā. Mauri ora!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Jonathan Bielski'.



AUCKLAND  
THEATRE  
COMPANY

**The Heartbreak Choir**

by Aidan Fennessy | 14 Feb – 5 Mar

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**Witi’s Wāhine**

by Nancy Brunning | 2 – 21 May

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**King Lear**

by William Shakespeare | 13 Jun – 2 Jul

10

**Basmati Bitch**

by Ankita Singh | 11 – 23 Jul

12

**Things That Matter**

by Gary Henderson | 11 – 27 Aug

14

**Switzerland**

by Joanna Murray-Smith | 19 Sep – 8 Oct

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**2023 Season Calendar**

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The Plays





# THE HEART BREAK CHOIR

BY AIDAN FENNESSY

In rural Australia, a bunch of misfits  
find their perfect harmony.

Auckland Theatre Company – 2023 Season

**“Big voices, small town politics, and a collective desire to be and do good: for each other and for the greater community.”**

– ArtsHub Australia

**ASB Waterfront Theatre**

**Dates:** 14 Feb – 5 Mar

**Duration:** 2 hours including interval

**Direction:** Lara Macgregor

**Assistant Direction:** Keagan Carr Fransch

**Musical Direction:** Jason Te Mete

**Cast:** Esmay August, Jodie Dorday,  
Kate Louise Elliott, Mufrida Hayes,  
Levi Kereama, Munashe Tapfuya

**Design:** Sean Coyle, Phillip Dexter

*“Music can lift us out of depression or move us to tears – it is a remedy, a tonic, orange juice for the ear.” – Oliver Sacks*

If you want to be in, then you must be supportive, tolerant, giving and collegiate. Or else!

There’s been a bit of drama in the local choir. Splintering off from the original group, a small band of oddballs have gathered in a quintessentially country town hall to begin again. It’s cold, it’s musty and the heater is on the blink. But they’ve got a new name, they’ve got their voices and they’ve got each other. All they need now is a song to sing.

Will our heroes find a way to harmonise?

Ella Fitzgerald once said, “the only thing better than singing is more singing”. *The Heartbreak Choir* is a testament to the power of community and the possibility that can be found in healing. This Aussie hit is packed with glorious song and tiny little miracles of friendship and optimism. Wild, wonderful comedy that will charm its way into your hearts. The perfect start to your year of theatre.

**“We need some laughs right now and this new comedy is filled with recognisable Aussie characters brought to life by a choir of our funniest actors in full voice.”**

– Jonathan Bielski

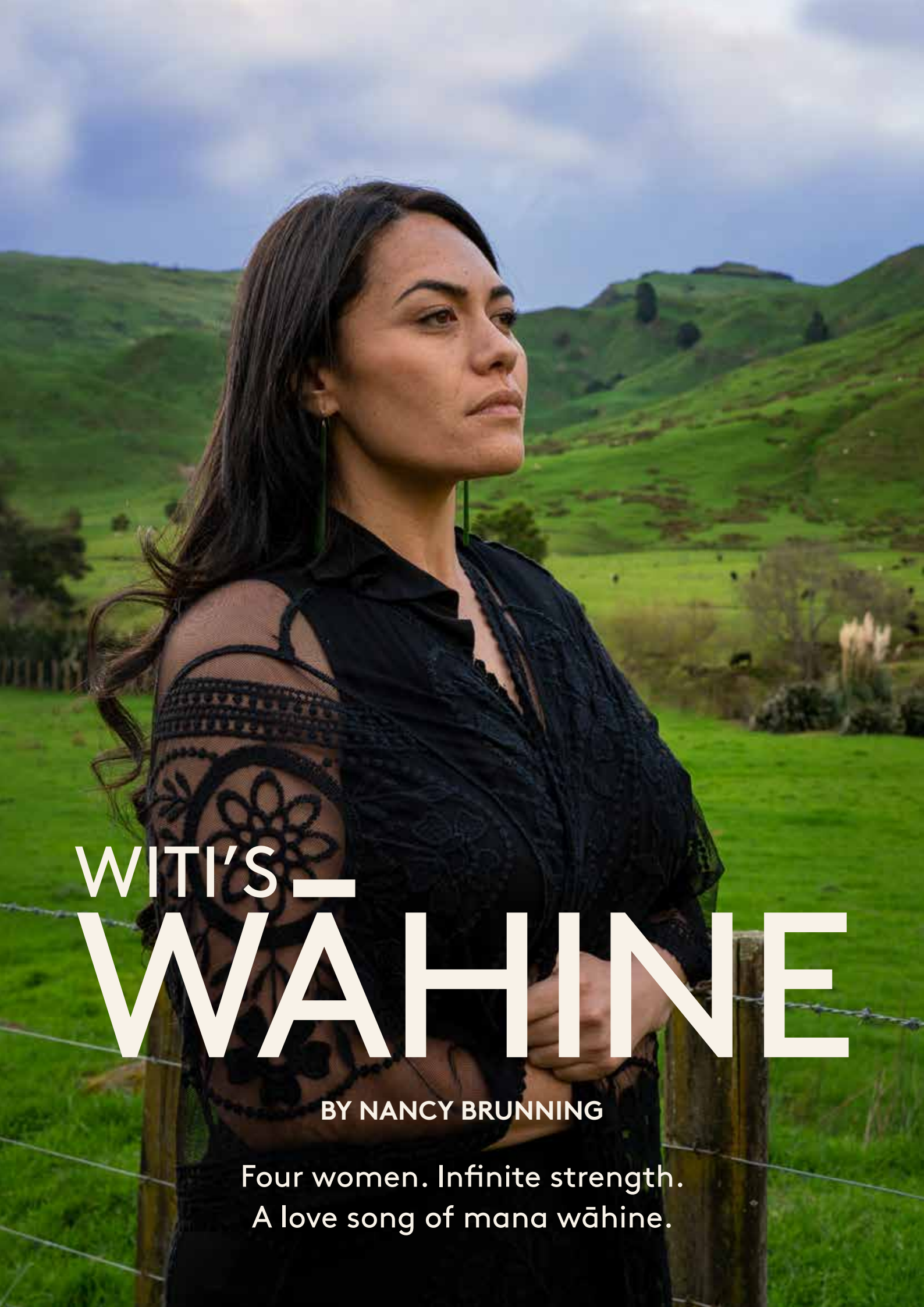
*The Heartbreak Choir* was commissioned with the assistance of Melbourne Theatre Company’s NEXT STAGE Writers’ Program and was first produced by Melbourne Theatre Company in 2022.

**Advisory:**

Contains coarse language, mature themes, references to sexual assault and references to suicide.

Effervescent,  
hilarious  
and big-  
hearted, this  
is a summer  
comedy that  
makes a big  
noise.





# WITI'S WĀHINE

BY NANCY BRUNNING

Four women. Infinite strength.  
A love song of mana wāhine.

Auckland Theatre Company – 2023 Season

**“[Nancy Brunning] has brought forth from Witi’s work the inherently Māori style of oral tradition... punctuated with tears, laughter and song.”** – *The Gisborne Herald*

**ASB Waterfront Theatre**

**Dates:** 2 – 21 May

**Duration:** 1 hour 20 minutes, no interval

**Direction:** Ngapaki & Teina Moetara

**Cast:** Roimata Fox,  
Awhina-Rose Henare Ashby, Pehia King,  
Olivia Violet Robinson-Falconer

**Design:** Penny Fitt, William Smith,  
Sandra Tupu

*“...I remember, three generations of women bending and culling through the scrub, the steam curling off their work clothes as they ascended the hills.”*

The phenomenal women of Witi Ihimaera’s writing, including *The Parihaka Woman*, *The Matriarch* and *Pounamu Pounamu*, take focus and lead us powerfully through the universe of Rongopai (the wharenuī at Waituhi) to reveal that which lies deep behind the veil of a world we think we know and occupy.

You are invited into a story crafted by Nancy Brunning. Ultimately, it is her love story: a tribute with powerful commentary, unflinching reality, sensitivity and warm affection that places wāhine, whenua and Māori wisdom centre stage. It is a story yearning to be told and will now be shared with Tāmaki Makaurau.

Witi’s wāhine are distinct from one another, where time, situation and context overlap into a single thread: a cord that draws sustenance from the whenua, from onamata – the past. This wisdom anchors us in the inamata (present), toward an unknown anamata (future).

*“And the spear leapt from his hands with gladness and soared through the sky. When it hit the earth, it did not change but waited for another 150 years to pass, until it was needed.”*

**“Nancy Brunning was a treasured theatrical talent and in this, her final work, she gifts us a beautiful ode to wāhine Māori.”**

– Jonathan Bielski

A collaboration between Hāpai Productions and Auckland Theatre Company.

An uplifting  
love song to  
the wāhine  
toa of the  
East Coast  
who inhabit  
Witi Ihimaera’s  
celebrated  
writing.



When power and privilege are put to the test.

# KING LEAR

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



Auckland Theatre Company – 2023 Season

**"It is a story of its time but also of all times. You only have to look at the politics in the world today to see Lear-type figures, secure in their power, making the wrong decisions while surrounded by those that would flatter them in the pursuit of their own advancement."** – *London Theatre 1*

One of Shakespeare's greatest plays, starring acting royalty Michael Hurst.

**ASB Waterfront Theatre**

**Dates:** 13 Jun – 2 Jul

**Direction:** Michael Hurst & Benjamin Henson

**Cast:** Fositua Amosa, Andi Crown, Michael Hurst, Andrew Laing, Jessie Lawrence, Colin McColl, Cameron Rhodes, Beatriz Romilly, Jennifer Ward-Lealand

**Design:** John Gibson, Vanda Karolczak, John Verryt, Elizabeth Whiting

*"How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child."*

Having built an empire, the ageing Lear is poised to abdicate his crown. When he challenges his children to compete for his land, his favourite refuses to play the game. Civilisation is thrust to the edge of chaos and Lear, broken by his own vanity, will be forced to confront who he is for the very first time.

Tender, violent, moving, humbling, *King Lear* navigates the complexities and contradictions of human nature like no other piece of storytelling. At a time when we are all reconsidering the role of monarchy, Shakespeare's great meditation on succession, family and country couldn't be more potent.

Michael Hurst, one of Aotearoa's greatest exponents of Shakespeare, takes the crown. Renowned for his boldly theatrical contemporary productions, this iconic artist will be joined by a large ensemble cast and a celebrated design team. Using the full majesty of the ASB Waterfront Theatre, they'll bring to life this poetic and powerful masterpiece. Expect everything.

*"Who is it that can tell me who I am?"*

**"Michael Hurst has been preparing for his Lear for decades. It will be a blazing performance by one of our greats in the role of a lifetime. Boldly adapting the ASB Waterfront Theatre for traverse staging, this will be one for the ages."**

– Jonathan Bielski

**Advisory:**

Contains depictions of violence, stage blood and weapons, smoke/haze, and themes of suicide.





BY ANKITA SINGH

Fight or die in the underbelly  
world of illicit rice-dealing.

Auckland Theatre Company – 2023 Season

**“Everything Ankita Singh writes is  
thought-provoking and highly entertaining.”**

–Tom Sainsbury

**Q Theatre, Rangatira**

**Dates:** 11–23 Jul

**Duration:** 90 minutes, no interval

**Direction:** Ahi Karunaharan

**Design:** Te Aihe Butler, Rachel Marlow &  
Bradley Gledhill – Filament Eleven 11,  
Imuy Teav

When retired fighter, Shiva, is dragged into the world of illegal MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) fighting by bored overworked Bisma, the last thing they expect is to be embroiled in the contraband black market.

But that’s exactly what happens when they end up in massive debt to basmati baron Toby, ‘The King’. They have seven days to acquire a truckload of rice, or else...

Set in an alternate reality where ethnic dietary staples, like rice, are banned due to crop disease and closed borders, *Basmati Bitch* transports us to a heightened reality of contested borders, exploited migrant workers and a crumbling empire.

A self-aware, neo-noir action-crime-comedy full of whacky fourth-wall-breaking characters, slick dance and stage combat.

Nightclubs double as fight clubs, dairies have rice bunkers and Aunties scheme away in their mahjong dens.

Strap in, it’s gonna be a wild ride.

**“Ankita Singh is an inventive and clever new voice. Imaginatively  
staged in-the-round at Q Rangatira, this futuristic Pan-Asian romp  
of a crime caper promises a glimpse of what might be to come.”**

–Jonathan Bielski

A collaboration between SquareSums&Co,  
Oriental Maidens and Auckland Theatre Company.

**Advisory:**  
Contains strong language

In the neon-  
lit streets  
of futurist  
Aotearoa,  
an ex-MMA  
fighter  
discovers you  
can’t ever  
really escape  
the past.



A tender and articulate account of the compassion and change needed in New Zealand’s health system.

“It’s as if a poet had been commissioned to write an episode of ER.”

– Review of *Things That Matter: Stories of Life & Death* by David Galler, Elisabeth Easter, *New Zealand Listener*

ASB Waterfront Theatre

Dates: 11–27 Aug

Duration: 2 hours, no interval

Original Direction: Anapela Polata’ivao

Remount Direction: Troy Tu’ua

Cast: David Aston, Jen Huang, Ian Hughes, Margaret-Mary Hollins, Vaiari Ivirangi, Greg Johnson, Nicola Kāwana, Shaan Kesha, Donogh Rees, Elsie Ropati, Aleni Tufuga

Design: Rachel Marlow & Bradley Gledhill – Filament Eleven 11, Poulima Salima, Nic Smillie

“Right now, somewhere out there in the real world, on a road, in a house, maybe, someone is in real trouble. At risk of dying. An ambulance has been called.”

Today, Middlemore Hospital is full, at 107% capacity. Babies are being moved to other hospitals; patients are being treated in corridors. In Emergency, there are already 50 people waiting for beds. Doctors are pulling double shifts, there are nursing shortages and the Gingernuts are being rationed.

Raf Beckman is on the frontline. An intensive care specialist in Aotearoa’s busiest hospital, he’s juggling a bureaucracy determined to exercise efficiencies, a political system wanting to point score and a mum with eroding health. Yes, it’s the perfect through-line to burn-out, but he’s doing what he can to keep his head above water, grabbing for realistic optimism.

Adapted from Dr David Galler’s best-selling memoir, *Things That Matter* is a love letter to resilience, to our healthcare system, its patients and the essential workers, who treat every life as valuable. Galler’s life as a doctor is artfully contrasted with tender stories about his Polish-Jewish family. Award-winning playwright Gary Henderson and director Anapela Polata’ivao have joined forces for this compassionate, insightful and vividly theatrical new work. It’s a perfect Venn diagram of the emotional, the spiritual, the moral and the physical.

What could a truly healthy Aotearoa look like? How do we want to live? The prognosis is yours to determine.

“There is never a moment when our healthcare system is not in crisis. Taking to the stage adjacent to the election, this play will act as commentary and provocation.”

– Jonathan Bielski

*Things That Matter* was commissioned and developed by Auckland Theatre Company with generous support from the ATC Patrons Group.

**Advisory:**  
Please note this production discusses topics related to and displays images from the Holocaust.

# Things That Matter

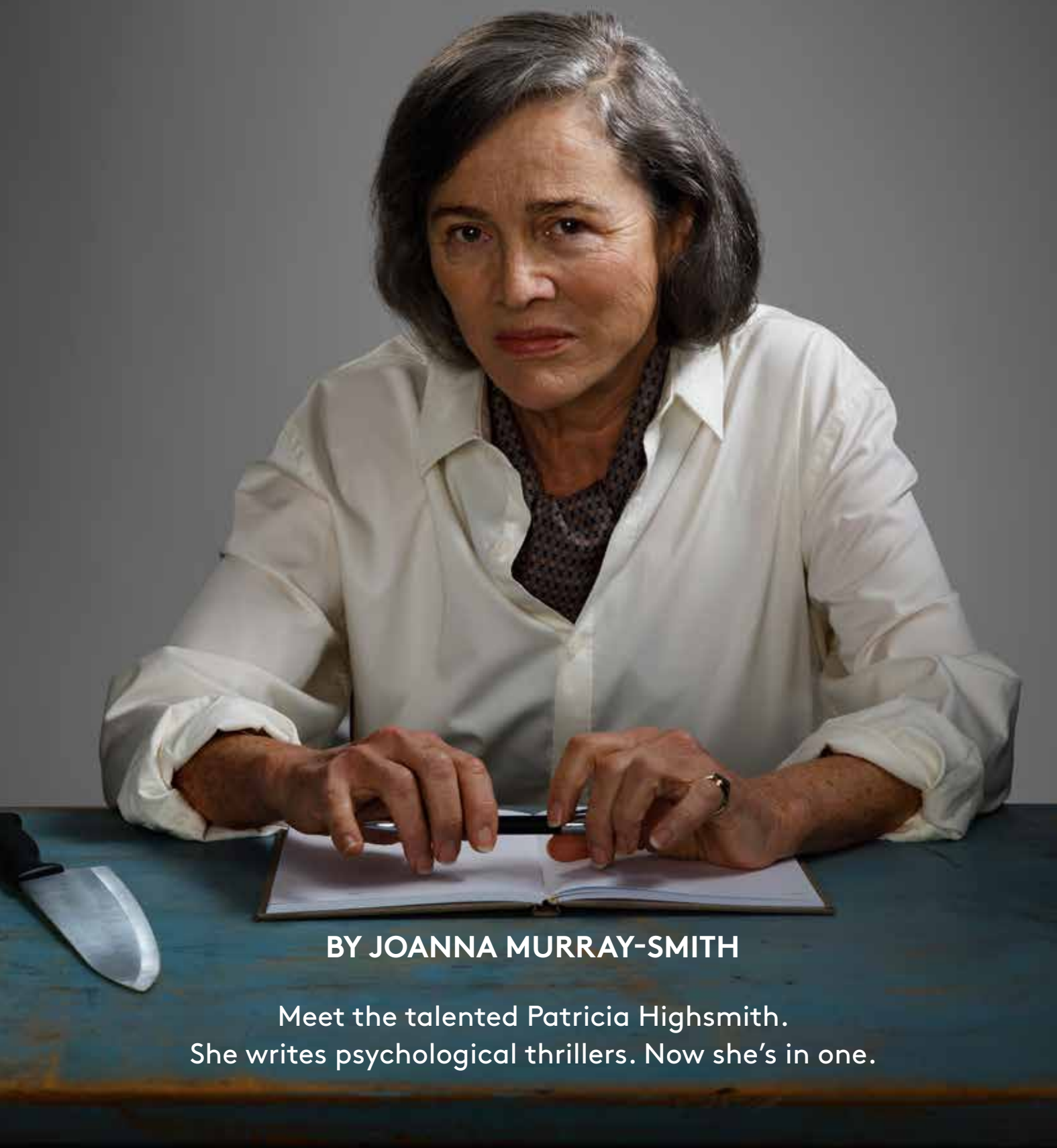
BY GARY HENDERSON  
adapted from the memoir by David Galler

Aotearoa’s healthcare system  
has a much-needed check-up.





# SWITZERLAND



BY JOANNA MURRAY-SMITH

Meet the talented Patricia Highsmith.  
She writes psychological thrillers. Now she's in one.

Auckland Theatre Company – 2023 Season

**"A riveting psychological two-hander...  
woven with a compelling black humour."**

– The Stage UK

ASB Waterfront Theatre

Dates: 19 Sep – 8 Oct

Duration: 1 hour 35 minutes, no interval

Direction: Sarah Goodes

Cast: Sarah Peirse

Design: Michael Scott-Mitchell

*"The past sits on our shoulder taunting us. Challenging us. To murder it."*

She was best-selling and she was brilliant. With *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, Patricia Highsmith once created one of the greatest literary characters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: terrifying, enigmatic, complex, human. A bit like her really.

These days, she's living as a recluse in the Swiss Alps. She's done with writing, having firmly slammed the door on the Dead White Males of the American literary establishment. She fills her days with cats and show tunes, chain-smoking as she nurses her ever-growing collection of antique weapons.

But, now, there is a young man standing in her study. He's been sent by her publisher to convince her to pen one last Tom Ripley novel. And he's not going to take no for an answer.

What starts as a simple game of cat and mouse becomes a breathtaking battle of wits as Highsmith and her visitor interrogate identity and the art of creation. Crackling with intelligence and bristling with tension, this enthralling meta-thriller is a white-knuckle ride to the finish.

From *Honour* to *The Female of the Species*, playwright Joanna Murray-Smith has dazzled Auckland audiences with her robust plotting and lacerating wit. As it dances with the very idea of fiction, *Switzerland* proves itself as a truly novel experience.

**"I saw Sarah Peirse originate this role at the Sydney Opera House and her Highsmith was astonishing. I knew I had to share this riveting play and Sarah's extraordinary performance with Auckland in a production of our own."**

– Jonathan Bielski

Presenting Partner: **MINDFOOD**

Advisory:

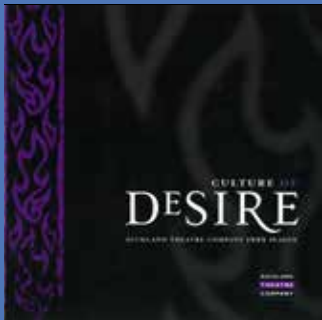
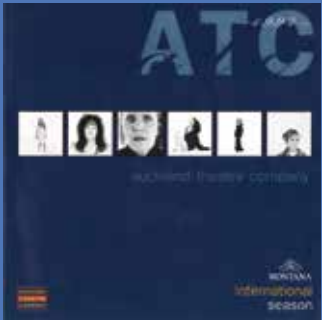
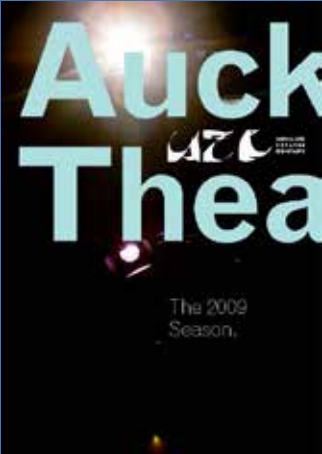
Contains strong language, smoking and offensive views.

**A pitch-perfect thriller, underpinned with cunning twists and a knockout performance by the great Sarah Peirse.**



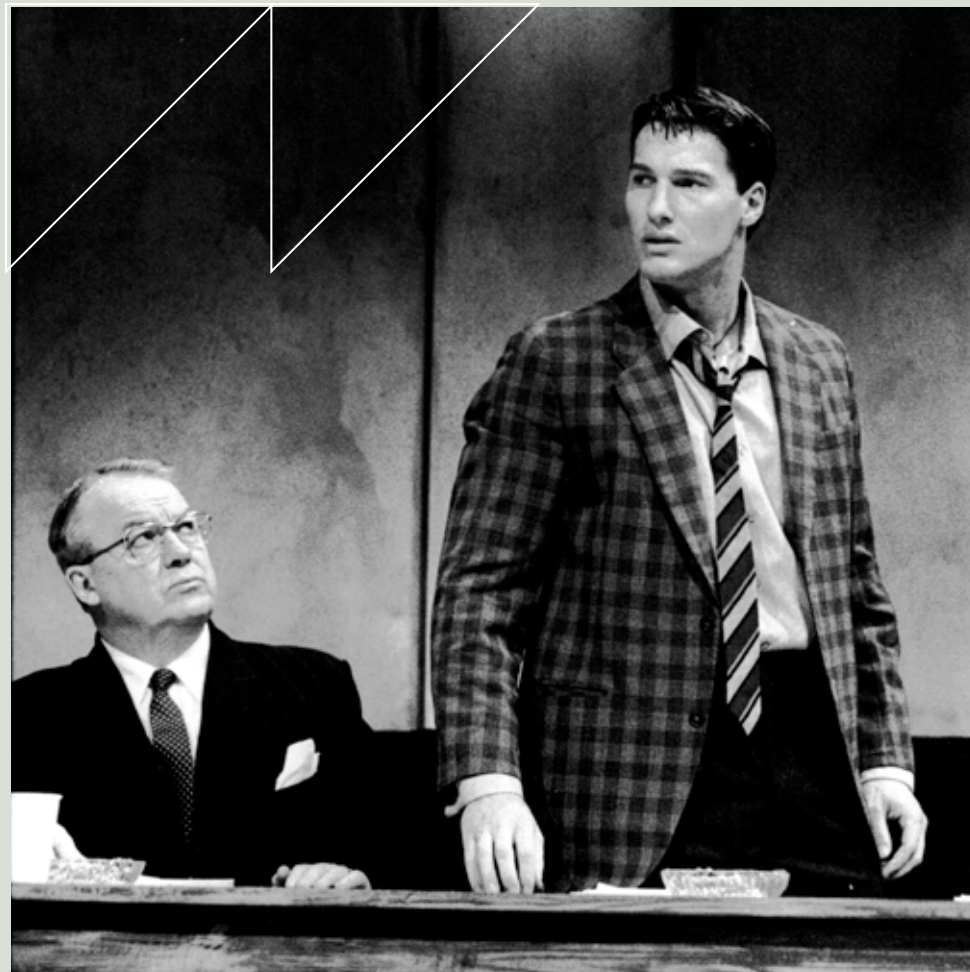
# Celebrating 30 years of storytelling

These covers represent the work of thousands of people over three decades. They unlock memories of the stories behind the artwork, the countless productions and the unforgettable nights in the theatre. In 30 images, we see the story of the making of an Auckland cultural institution.





# Lost and Found(ed)



A brief history of how an actor was caught up in a drama and ended up running a theatre company.

by Simon Prast

“We had no funding, no track record, no vision, no venue, no structure. What we did have was faith, passion, friends and relatives.”

I played Willy Loman in a 1979 Auckland Grammar School production of *Death of a Salesman* (alongside Rima Te Wiata, Finlay Macdonald and Andrew Dickens, to name a few), all I ever wanted to be was an actor. That was my dream. After high school, I went to Law School but, the second I graduated, I auditioned for three drama schools. Only one accepted me: a year-long programme led by Raymond Hawthorne. It was attached to Theatre Corporate, the hugely respected company he'd established some years earlier.

For two years, I worked at Corporate in back-to-back productions as a 'jobbing actor'. It was bliss. But then, in 1986, the theatre ran out of money and closed its doors for the last time. It was a painful experience and, as it turned out, somewhat premonitory. Around this time, my big break on TV came along, playing Alistair Redfern on *Gloss*. During the show's Christmas break, I was lucky enough to get work at the Mercury Theatre, New Zealand's largest theatre company and, since 1968, an institution of Auckland's arts scene. It was a sweet deal to be sure and, for an actor, the best of both worlds. But then, in 1989, *Gloss* was canned. It was another painful experience and, again, somewhat premonitory.

To my great good fortune, I still had a job at the Mercury and, from late 1989 until 11 March 1992, I once again worked in back-to-back productions as a 'jobbing actor'. In many ways, this was a golden time; I had the privilege of working alongside arts practitioners who were the best in the business and taught me everything I know. It was heaven.

They say things come in threes.

In the early evening of 11 March 1992, five days after my 30<sup>th</sup> birthday, I was in the downstairs dressing room preparing for an early show of Robert Lord's *Glorious Ruins* (!), then playing in the theatre's intimate upstairs space. I had been doing a double shift, simultaneously playing a doctor in the show on the main stage, *The Rose Tattoo* by Tennessee Williams, starring Sarah Peirse and Kevin Smith.

Suddenly, a group of men in suits came running down the stairs. Politely but very firmly, they instructed us all to gather up our personal belongings and leave the building immediately. They had done the same to everyone in the theatre, including admin people and those in the onsite workshop and wardrobe department. We streamed out onto France Street, which, with bitter irony, had just been renamed Mercury Lane to boost the theatre's profile. There must have been 100 of us: actors, administrators, directors, designers, builders, barmen and front-of-house staff. Amongst the human swirl, there were also a goat and a parrot, both of whom had made an appearance in *The Rose Tattoo*. Now, standing amongst us all, agog and aghast, they seemed like the feed-line to a very, very, very bad joke. A goat and a parrot walked into a theatre; then it closed.

For seven days, the theatre's future hung in the balance. A decision had to be made. Could the theatre trade its way out of receivership and live to fight another day? Or would this be the end? Could 25 years of experience, expertise and service to the city be snuffed out and flushed away with such ease and brutality? Over the week, we continued to meet in the theatre's Beresford Street rehearsal rooms. Surely, surely, the powers that be would not

Image: Rhys McConnochie and Michael Hallows in *12 Angry Men* by Reginald Rose, directed by Simon Prast (1998). Credit: John McDermott.



## “A joke went around saying that the difference between Auckland and yoghurt was that yoghurt had ‘living culture’.”

let such an arts disaster happen. If there was any optimism, it was misguided. On the seventh day came the word. And that word was ‘liquidation’. To say we were shocked, stunned, numbed and discombobulated would be an understatement. It was the injustice of it all that had struck me like a punch to the gut. In the nearest thing to an Irish wake I’ve ever attended, we got utterly drunk and sang sad songs. It was around this time that Raymond, to whom we had turned as we always had, pointed to me across the crowded room. The words he said next would change my actor’s life: “That man could run a theatre company”.

My God!

We organised that very night. A committee, which I would chair, was elected and tasked with seeing whether or not ‘anything could be done about the situation’. In my righteous anger, I was convinced we could convince whomever we needed to convince that the Mercury could not be allowed to die and that, once those people had heard our sensible and compelling words, the doors would be opened again and life would continue as it had before. Job done; it would soon be hi-diddle-dee, back to the boards for me.

Of course, that’s not how things worked out. Very soon, it became apparent that the Mercury was gone forever and there would be no turning back. From this rock-bottom place, the only way was forward and up. Though everyone was sure Auckland needed a new professional theatre company to replace the Mercury, no one was sure about the form that new company would take: the who, what, when, where and why. We had no funding, no track record, no vision, no venue, no structure. What we did have was faith, passion, friends and relatives.

Over the coming weeks, the discussion continued at various locations across the city and a plan emerged. Before we came close to putting on a play, we had to settle on a legal structure. Though a foundation was mooted, what emerged was a charitable trust, which would oversee a limited liability company. The trustees

and company directors would be the same people. Now, we needed to find those people. It’s fair to say that the sudden closures of the Mercury and Theatre Corporate and the notorious levelling of His Majesty’s Theatre had made Auckland something of a laughing stock. A joke went around saying that the difference between Auckland and yoghurt was that yoghurt had ‘living culture’. The Mercury’s demise, in particular, had significantly lessened the cachet of sitting on the board of an arts organisation. This new venture came with no guarantee of success, the real possibility of failure and no small risk to reputation. In short, we were looking for heroes. And we found them.

This was Auckland Theatre Company’s founding board: James (Jim) Macaulay as chair, Timothy (Tim) MacAvoy, Judith Tizard MP for Auckland Central, David Stubbs from the Auckland Council and me. Jim was the father-in-law of my dear friend Teresa Sokolich, who had been working as a stage manager at the Mercury Theatre when the proverbial hit. He was a former chief executive of the National Bank and sat on many boards. Tim was a partner at Kensington Swan, a friend of a brother-in-law of Geoff Snell, who had been a fellow actor that fateful night. At our maximum moment of need, Jim, Tim, Judith and David stepped up to the mark and there can be no doubt that, without their courage and contribution at this time, there would be no Auckland Theatre Company.

As chair, Jim led us safely and steadily through this tumultuous time. He took charge of the paperwork, crossing every T and dotting every I. He found us free office space in the central city. Seeking sponsorship, I accompanied him to visit old corporate friends. “How much do you need, Jim?” they would ask. “Twenty thousand, please.” “Done,” they would reply without hesitation. Later, in 1995, when we dipped into the red for the first and only time, Jim opened his chequebook and, right before our eyes, wrote out a \$12,000 cheque to cover the shortfall. He gave no second thought to whether or not he would see the money again. I am happy to report his faith paid off and there exists somewhere a photo of me handing him back a cheque for the same amount. I saluted him then and I

salute him now, as I do every trustee who followed him. It is impossible to do good work on stage without good governance and, throughout its history, Auckland Theatre Company has been blessed with the best.

As 1992 passed, I became the hub of a wheel of activity rolling slowly but inevitably towards putting on a first play. One day, I had a call from someone saying “Arthur Andersen would like to help out”. Know-nothing that I was, I was mildly impressed that some accountant called Arthur wanted to offer his services. Of course, Arthur Andersen turned out to be one of the world’s top five accountancy firms and the commitment it made that day turbocharged our meagre administrative resources. With the assistance of that firm, we acquired the name: AUCKLAND THEATRE COMPANY.

So much had been achieved in a short space of time. But, of course, a theatre company has to put on theatre. What play/s would we do first? Where would we do it and when? To be frank, these decisions were the most terrifying as I had zero programming experience. After much consultation and general dithering, this is what we came up with. Auckland Theatre Company’s first production would be a world premiere of a new New Zealand work, *Lovelock’s Dream Run* by David Geary. Immediately following was *Daughters of Heaven* by Michelanne Forster. We sold the two together as the ‘NZ on Stage’ season. The country’s two top directors would be at the helm: Raymond Hawthorne and Colin McColl, respectively.

On 11 March 1993, one year to the day after the Mercury closed, we opened at the Watershed Theatre. John Parker designed our very first set and this was our very first cast: Robert Pollock, Damon Andrews, Hone Kouka, Bruce Hopkins, Michael Mizrahi, Erik Thomson and Patrick Griffiths. Tony Rabbit designed our second set and this was our second cast: Tina Regtien, Rebecca Massey, Lee Grant, Raewyn Blade, Ross Duncan, Paul Gittins, John Callen and yours truly. I salute them all and every cast and crew member who has followed in their pioneering footsteps. Their good company along the way made it all a possibility, a pleasure and a privilege.

In 1994, we doubled our output to four plays, adding the Herald Theatre at the Aotea Centre to our venue mix. In 1996, the huge success of Roger Hall’s *Market Forces* allowed further expansion to the Maidment Theatre on the campus of my Alma Mater, the University of Auckland. Here, we met another hero of the cause, Paul Minifie. Paul was a veteran of Theatre Corporate and Raymond’s deputy at the Mercury. No one knew more about how to put on a play than Paul did. He became a trusted ally and sounding board, and his support was so extensive it almost amounted to a hidden subsidy. For many years, the Maidment served as our main venue and the artistic expansion it afforded was all thanks to Paul. He is crucial to our story and, as a colleague and treasured friend, I salute him and his staff for their unstinting support and hospitality.



Image: Elizabeth Hawthorne as Maria Callas in *Master Class* by Terrence McNally, directed by Sarah Peirse (1997). Photo: John McDermott.



Key to Auckland Theatre Company's success has been its subscription database. Without a venue, the importance of branding the Company and its plays in the mind of the market could not be overstated. Where once Aucklanders could point to a building and say "that is a theatre", we now had to establish the same ongoing presence with a brochure. To that end, we had help from offshore. Wayne Harrison, at the time artistic director of the Sydney Theatre Company, opened his doors, affording unprecedented access to STC's marketing machine and methods. Later, courtesy of the British Council, I attended a ground-breaking course on arts marketing in London. The upshot of all of this was our 1998 season brochure, titled *Seven Plays of Passion*. Designed by Arch MacDonnell and adorned with John McDermott's gorgeous black-and-white photography, it served its purpose well and propelled the Company into its best year yet. If I had to pick a moment when I knew our efforts would not be in vain and the Company would survive no matter what, it would be the publication and reception of this brochure.

There were other developments. In 1998, I directed my first play for the Company: *12 Angry Men* by Reginald Rose. To my enormous relief, it took off at the box office, necessitating a transfer from the Maidment to SkyCity Theatre. One year earlier, we had transferred *Master Class* by Terrence McNally from the Herald Theatre to SkyCity. The cast included the now-famous tenor Simon O'Neill singing an aria live on stage and Elizabeth Hawthorne's performance as Maria Callas was a show-stopper that had to be seen to be believed. Indeed, Peter Jackson sat next to me at one performance. If I had to nominate my favourite performances from my time with the Company, I would give the individual award to Elizabeth and the ensemble award to those 12 remarkable men. By the late 1990s, we were in a position to open the Company to new energies and faces. Here I salute my good friend Oliver Driver, who brought his considerable talent and vision to a new programme of artistic development we called 2econd Unit.

There were other treats I had the good fortune to experience. In New York, I met with Arthur Miller's agent, Bridget Aschenberg, who asked if I would like to talk to him. Before I could answer, she had him on the phone and, suddenly, I was talking to the playwright whose words had brought me into the business in the first place. I stuttered and stammered and asked if *Death of a Salesman*, which I was about to direct in a production starring Jonathan Hardy and Rima Te Wiata, was autobiographical. He said no and was so polite and patient. To this day, I still have the page of the contract which shows his signature next to mine.

It seemed somehow fitting that my last production for Auckland Theatre Company was *The Graduate*. Here's what I wrote in the programme:

"To the artists and audiences who have contributed so much, I extend my heartfelt thanks. Together, we have made something very special that will endure. I leave you and Auckland Theatre Company with the lyrics you will hear in tonight's curtain call:

*Sail on Silver Girl  
Sail on by  
Your time has come to shine  
All your dreams are on their way  
See how they shine, oh  
If you need a friend  
I'm sailing right behind."*

Half a lifetime has passed since that first opening night and, 30 years on, as a 60-year-old, I look back on these days with, dare I say it, a grandparental pride. Thanks to a supreme effort, especially by Colin McColl and Lester McGrath, Auckland Theatre Company now has a glittering home on Auckland's waterfront. That it should stand within metres of where the Watershed once stood is a tribute to that fine space and all the incredible, gravity-defying moments that have since transpired. A city that once closed theatres or pulled them down now celebrates the 30<sup>th</sup> birthday of its very own company, Auckland Theatre Company, under the leadership of an exciting new director, Jonathan Bielski.

To everyone on both sides of the curtain, to every cast and crew member, to every playwright, director, set, light, costume and sound designer, stage manager, musician and technician, to every trustee, patron and donor, to every sponsor, single-ticket-buyer and subscriber, to Creative New Zealand and Auckland City, and to my dear Auckland Theatre Company colleagues, who soldiered alongside and put up with me during those early years, especially Teresa Sokolich, Amy Drury, Diana Goulding, Shelley Geenty, Leal Butler, Alison Reid, Alex Gortchinski and Susanne Ritzenhoff: thank you, thank you, thank you.

Everyone yearns to be a part of something greater than themselves. This was Auckland Theatre Company's gift to me and I could not be more grateful.



**Simon Prast**

*Dedicated to the memory of Jim Macaulay, Lee Grant, Jonathan Hardy, Dorothy McKegg, Ray Henwood, Ian Watkin, Sophia Hawthorne, Kevin Smith, Nancy Brunning, Willy Plumb, Martyn Sanderson, Graham Mumford, Matthew Brown, my brother Andrew and my parents, Gail and Colin.*

Auckland Theatre Company

# Our 30-year book

In the year of our 30<sup>th</sup> birthday, comes a celebratory book.  
Written by Frances Walsh and published by  
Penguin Random House New Zealand.

It was 1993. Whitney Houston's *I Will Always Love You* was number one on the charts for weeks and weeks. A cabbage cost 70 cents; a litre of petrol \$1; a packet of cigarettes \$5.25. In Tāmaki Makaurau the gym enthusiast Les Mills was mayor and no one was treading the boards. Her Majesty's Theatre had been bowled, and Theatre Corporate and Mercury Theatre had gone under. Enter the actor Simon Prast and a small group of concerned citizens. On a wing and a prayer, they founded Auckland Theatre Company. More than 200 productions later, Aotearoa's premier professional theatre company now quartered in glam digs on the waterfront, looks back to look forward. A starry ensemble of creatives, board members and staff tell, if not all, some. There's a leading lady who champions workers' rights; a leading man who has views on shoes and Shakespeare; a costumer who consulted a horse whisperer; an architect who rates a play about peaceniks withholding sex in 411 BCE; a lighting

and set designer who dreams of Chekhov; a critic (male) who described one hit as "a swaggering testosterone-filled John Wayne of a drama with balls of steel"; a playwright who knows all about single-sex boys' schools; another playwright who has been banished from dinner parties; a theatre-maker who is pleasantly surprised that Auckland Theatre Company staged his exploration of racism in Aotearoa; a director who once resembled the British playwright Tom Stoppard; another director whose years of programming have led him to conclude that nuns and totalitarians are as catnip to Auckland audiences. However, Auckland Theatre Company's most recent sell-out shows *The Haka Party Incident* (2021) and *Dawn Raids* (2022) featured neither type.

Commissioned by the  
ATC Patrons Group.

*Rocky Horror Picture Show* by Richard O'Brien, 2002. Photo: John McDermott.

Pre-order  
the book now  
as part of your  
subscription to avoid  
bitter disappointment.  
Visit [atc.co.nz/book](http://atc.co.nz/book)



# Theatre all year starts here

Join us with a subscription to our 2023 Season and experience creativity at its best, give power to artistic crafts and support the voices and talent of Aotearoa.

We love the theatre and, three decades in, we believe that theatre is important. Being fully present with a group of tangible, living, different people is how you can best experience the art of acting and connect with the human spirit: to learn, to feel, to enjoy.

A subscription will save you time, secure the best seats and offer you flexibility to make going to the theatre with your friends and whānau easier. Subscribers are the lifeblood of our theatre and we thank you for your loyalty and the support you give to this artform and our industry.



## Season Pass

Go all in. See every show from the best seats and book with total flexibility.



## Design Your Own

Feeling picky? Pick four or five of the shows you want to see most. The more you see, the more you save.



## Snap a Seat

Catch a preview performance of every show for a bargain price. Take the risk and see six shows from only \$204.



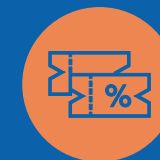
## Theatre Club

Share the social experience of theatre with your mates and receive an even bigger discount. Bring a group of six or more friends to all the shows and save.

Book online at [atc.co.nz/subscribe](https://atc.co.nz/subscribe) or call 0800 ATC TIX.

# Subscriber benefits

## Great Savings



### Ticket Savings

The more you see, the more you save. With a subscription, you can save hundreds of dollars over standard adult tickets.



### Free Exchanges

You can exchange your tickets for any other performance within the same show season at no cost.



### Extra Tickets

Buy additional tickets for friends and whānau at an exclusive subscriber price all year round.



### Fixed Prices

Just like airlines, our prices start low and rise as the performance becomes busier. Unlike airlines, prices for subscribers stay fixed all year round.

## Exclusive Extras



### First Access. Best Seats

Secure the best seats in the house. Early ticket access is for subscribers exclusively until 31 January 2023.\*



### Car Park

Take the hassle out of finding a car park before the show by pre-booking a space. Subscribers can access parking at a special price for each show at ASB Waterfront Theatre.



### Priority Service

Subscribers are the first to know ahead of the public. If changes to your performance or event happen, subscribers have priority choice.



### VIP Concierge

For your convenience, call our ticketing team for fast and easy subscriber service on 09 309 3395.

\* The Heartbreak Choir will go on sale to the public on 29 November 2022.



# Ways to save

If there is just one show that you have to see this year, we don't want you to miss out because of the price. Theatre is for everyone.



### 30 & Under

If you're 30 or younger, and love theatre, you can buy a \$30 ticket to any of our shows.



### Become a Subscriber

Go all in. The more you see, the more you save. Snap-A-Seat gives you access to six fantastic nights of theatre from only \$204.



### Book Early

Just like airlines, our prices start low and rise as the performance gets busier. Book early to benefit from the cheapest price.



### Preview a Show

The first performances of a show season, before opening night, are called Preview. Preview performances are a bargain so see it first and save.



### Pick B Reserve

Our website lets you pick the seat you want. We have three reserves, Premium, A and B Reserve. All our seats are great, but B Reserve is a great way to save, too.



### Pay What You Wish

If you've never been to the theatre before, there's no excuse not to try. It's a bit of a vibe and a lot of fun. And yes, you can literally pay what you wish.



### Group Pricing

Book six or more tickets to one performance and save at least \$5 off the price of a Standard A or B Reserve Adult ticket.



### Payment Instalments

Split the cost of your ticket(s) over six weeks. Tickets need to be paid in full prior to attending the show. Available online at [atc.co.nz](https://atc.co.nz) only.

Book now [atc.co.nz](https://atc.co.nz) | 0800 ATC TIX. Visit the box office at ASB Waterfront Theatre, 138 Halsey Street, Wynyard Quarter

# Special events

Dive into the world behind the curtain and enrich your experience by attending a special event.

See the Calendar on pages 32–33 for the dates and times of special events.

## Backstage Story

Come closer to the action with Backstage Story. Join us inside the rehearsal room and have a glimpse backstage. Watch the director work with the actors in an open rehearsal and be part of the process of making great theatre. With sneak peeks into the design, glimpses of the script and a taste of the actors' work, this is the perfect event for viewing behind the curtain. Backstage Story is free and open to everyone to attend at Auckland Theatre Company studios, 487 Dominion Road, Balmoral.

## Sunday Forum

Stay on after the performance for a special guest speaker who delves more deeply into the world and themes of the play. Enrich your theatre-going experience with a thought-provoking discussion and gain insight into the wider context of the work. Come intrigued; leave inspired. Sunday Forum takes place in the theatre immediately after the performance concludes and is free for anyone to attend.





# Accessibility

PRESENTED BY  **DENTONS**  **KENSINGTON SWAN**

Our accessibility programme provides Audio-Described and New Zealand Sign Language-interpreted performances to make our productions accessible to blind/low-vision and Deaf/hard-of-hearing patrons. Our staff can accommodate your needs.



## Wheelchair Access

ASB Waterfront Theatre has eight seats and three wheelchair spaces centrally located in the auditorium, reserved for customers with special access requirements. There is step-free, level access to all tiers of the building and to seating in the stalls. Wheelchair-accessible toilets are located on the ground floor; accessible parking is available on Madden Street and other accessible parking spaces are within 150 metres of the theatre.



## Hearing Assistance

The theatre has a T-Loop radio frequency system to amplify the sound of the performance. If you don't use a hearing aid or your hearing aid does not have a T setting, there is a listener unit available on request from the box office.



## New Zealand Sign Language-Interpreted Performances

NZSL-interpreted performances feature a trained interpreter from Platform Interpreting New Zealand who appears on stage to interpret the show for Deaf and hard-of-hearing patrons in the audience. The trained interpreters carefully translate the play's script prior to the performance and work closely with the cast and crew to incorporate the vision into their final interpretation.

### NZSL-Interpreted Performance Dates

**The Heartbreak Choir** Sat 25 Feb, 8pm  
**Witi's Wāhine** Sat 20 May, 8pm  
**King Lear** Sat 24 Jun, 8pm  
**Basmati Bitch** Sat 22 Jul, 7pm  
**Things That Matter** Sat 26 Aug, 8pm  
**Switzerland** Sat 30 Sep, 8pm



## Accessible Performance and Companion Tickets

Tickets to NZSL-interpreted and audio-described performances are \$20 for Deaf/hard-of-hearing and blind/low-vision patrons. One companion ticket per theatre-goer is also available for \$20.



## Assistance Dogs

Assistance dogs are welcome at the theatre. We can find a seat that's comfortable for you and your dog or arrange for the theatre staff to look after your dog during the show.



## Audio-Described Performances and Pre-Show Touch Tour

Audio-described performances provide a live audio commentary by professionals from Audio Described Aotearoa who describe key visual elements of what is happening on stage, slipped seamlessly between portions of dialogue. This commentary is relayed to blind and low-vision patrons via an earpiece which is provided at no extra charge to those booking accessibility tickets.



Taking place 90 minutes before the audio-described performance, the touch tour is a free experience where patrons can walk through the set, touch props, feel costumes and familiarise themselves with visual and sensory materials in the performance. Touch tours are for visually impaired patrons and their companions only.

### Audio-Described Performance Dates

**The Heartbreak Choir** Sun 26 Feb, 4pm  
**Witi's Wāhine** Sun 14 May, 4pm  
**King Lear** Sun 25 June, 4pm  
**Basmati Bitch** Sun 23 Jul, 4pm  
**Things That Matter** Wed 23 Aug, 7pm  
**Switzerland** Sun 1 Oct, 4pm

Auckland Theatre Company – 2023 Season

# Corporate Memberships

Join a powerful network of professional thinkers looking to do things differently. Auckland Theatre Company warmly welcomes the business community of Tāmaki Makaurau to special events curated exclusively for innovative professional leaders.

Our annual corporate memberships help you connect, create, and cultivate. Located in the heart of Wynyard Quarter, ASB Waterfront Theatre is a thriving hub of arts and culture.

Join us and let your team leverage the creativity of this space to expand their innovative professional thinking.

## Reasons to Join

- Access year-round opportunities for corporate entertaining, with theatre shows presented at world-class scale.
- Enjoy exclusive special networking and speaker breakfasts two or three times a year.
- Stimulate executive leadership leveraging skills from the arts: from presenting techniques to nurturing a creative culture.
- Sustain Tāmaki Makaurau's vibrant arts industry and contribute to the well-being of the community.

## How to Join

A 12-month membership gives you access to a range of benefits and the flexibility to make them work for you and your organisation.

Simply sign up at  
[atc.co.nz/membership](https://atc.co.nz/membership)

or email  
[membership@atc.co.nz](mailto:membership@atc.co.nz)



# 2023 Season Calendar



**The Heartbreak Choir**  
by Aidan Fennessy

ASB WATERFRONT THEATRE				
Preview	Tue	14 Feb	7pm	
Preview	Wed	15 Feb	7pm	
Opening night*	Thu	16 Feb	7pm	
	Fri	17 Feb	8pm	
	Sat	18 Feb	8pm	
Sunday Forum**	Sun	19 Feb	4pm	
💰	Tue	21 Feb	7pm	
	Wed	22 Feb	7pm	
	Thu	23 Feb	7pm	
	Fri	24 Feb	8pm	
	Sat	25 Feb	2pm	
🎧	Sat	25 Feb	8pm	
AD 🗎	Sun	26 Feb	4pm	
	Tue	28 Feb	7pm	
	Wed	1 Mar	7pm	
	Thu	2 Mar	7pm	
	Fri	3 Mar	8pm	
	Sat	4 Mar	8pm	

\* Opening night tickets are not available for purchase



**Witi's Wāhine**  
by Nancy Brunning

ASB WATERFRONT THEATRE				
Preview	Tue	2 May	7pm	
Preview	Wed	3 May	7pm	
Opening night*	Thu	4 May	7pm	
	Fri	5 May	8pm	
	Sat	6 May	8pm	
Sunday Forum**	Sun	7 May	4pm	
💰	Tue	9 May	7pm	
	Wed	10 May	7pm	
	Thu	11 May	7pm	
	Fri	12 May	8pm	
	Sat	13 May	2pm	
	Sat	13 May	8pm	
AD 🗎	Sun	14 May	4pm	
	Tue	16 May	7pm	
	Wed	17 May	7pm	
	Thu	18 May	7pm	
	Fri	19 May	8pm	
🎧	Sat	20 May	8pm	

\*\* Sunday Forum starts immediately after the performance



**King Lear**  
by William Shakespeare

ASB WATERFRONT THEATRE				
Preview	Tue	13 Jun	7pm	
Preview	Wed	14 Jun	7pm	
Opening night*	Thu	15 Jun	7pm	
	Fri	16 Jun	8pm	
	Sat	17 Jun	8pm	
Sunday Forum**	Sun	18 Jun	4pm	
💰	Tue	20 Jun	7pm	
	Wed	21 Jun	7pm	
	Thu	22 Jun	7pm	
	Fri	23 Jun	8pm	
🎧	Sat	24 Jun	8pm	
AD 🗎	Sun	25 Jun	4pm	
	Tue	27 Jun	7pm	
	Wed	28 Jun	7pm	
	Thu	29 Jun	7pm	
	Fri	30 Jun	8pm	
	Sat	1 Jul	8pm	

\*\*\* Touch Tour takes place 90 minutes prior to the performance



**Basmati Bitch**  
by Ankita Singh

Q THEATRE, RANGATIRA				
Preview	Tue	11 Jul	7pm	
Preview	Wed	12 Jul	7pm	
Opening night*	Thu	13 Jul	7pm	
Matariki				
No performance	Fri	14 Jul	-	
	Sat	15 Jul	7pm	
Sunday Forum**	Sun	16 Jul	4pm	
💰	Tue	18 Jul	7pm	
	Wed	19 Jul	7pm	
	Thu	20 Jul	7pm	
	Fri	21 Jul	7pm	
	Sat	22 Jul	2pm	
🎧	Sat	22 Jul	7pm	
AD 🗎	Sun	23 Jul	4pm	

- AD Audio-Described
- 🗎 Touch Tour \*\*\*
- 🎧 NZSL-Interpreted
- 💰 Pay What You Wish



**Things That Matter**  
by Gary Henderson

ASB WATERFRONT THEATRE				
Preview	Fri	11 Aug	7pm	
Preview	Sat	12 Aug	2pm	
Opening night*	Sat	12 Aug	7pm	
💰	Tue	15 Aug	7pm	
	Wed	16 Aug	7pm	
	Thu	17 Aug	7pm	
	Fri	18 Aug	8pm	
	Sat	19 Aug	8pm	
Sunday Forum**	Sun	20 Aug	4pm	
	Tue	22 Aug	7pm	
AD 🗎	Wed	23 Aug	7pm	
	Thu	24 Aug	7pm	
	Fri	25 Aug	8pm	
	Sat	26 Aug	2pm	
🎧	Sat	26 Aug	8pm	



**Switzerland**  
by Joanna Murray-Smith

ASB WATERFRONT THEATRE				
Preview	Tue	19 Sep	7pm	
Preview	Wed	20 Sep	7pm	
Opening night*	Thu	21 Sep	7pm	
	Fri	22 Sep	8pm	
	Sat	23 Sep	8pm	
Sunday Forum**	Sun	24 Sep	4pm	
💰	Tue	26 Sep	7pm	
	Wed	27 Sep	7pm	
	Thu	28 Sep	7pm	
	Fri	29 Sep	8pm	
	Sat	30 Sep	2pm	
🎧	Sat	30 Sep	8pm	
AD 🗎	Sun	1 Oct	4pm	
	Tue	3 Oct	7pm	
	Wed	4 Oct	7pm	
	Thu	5 Oct	7pm	
	Fri	6 Oct	8pm	
	Sat	7 Oct	8pm	



# 30 Years and 30 More

Thirty years ago, when Simon Prast decided the only way “was forward and up” forming a theatre company with “faith, passion, friends and relatives”, it was the backing and belief of Auckland’s philanthropic community that helped make it possible. We invite you to help secure our next 30 years.

In those early days, 100 bold people formed the Founding 100 gifting substantial donations to support our Theatre Foundation trust to achieve its objective: establish professional theatre on a permanent basis in Auckland. As we mark 30-years of theatre making we are renewing the promise of that founding vision and launching The Theatre Foundation 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fund. We invite you to be part of the next 30-years of Auckland’s theatre story and consider a special gift to become one of our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fund supporters.

## 30 Year Star

\$10,000 each year  
over the next  
five years

## 30 Year Lead

\$5,000 each year  
over the next  
five years

## 30 Year Ensemble

\$1,000 each year  
over the next  
five years

## 30 Year Understudy

All other gifts

With 30 proud years behind us, our hearts and minds are brimming with creative ambition for the decades ahead. All gifts to the fund are tax deductible.

For more information, contact our Development Coordinator Natalya Mandich-Dohnt | [natalya@atc.co.nz](mailto:natalya@atc.co.nz)

We invite you to support the creative ambition of Auckland Theatre Company and make a donation with your subscription or ticket purchase.

## Heartfelt thanks to our 2022 Supporters

### ATC PATRONS GROUP 2022

**Patrons Co-Chairs** Lady Dayle Mace MNZM and Hon Justice Anne Hinton KC

**Patrons** Margot & Alastair Acland, Margaret Anderson, John Barnett CNZM, Anne Batley Burton & Richard Burton, Betsy & Michael Benjamin, Louise & Mark Binns, Patrick Bourke, Barbie & Paul Cook, Mary-Ann & Roger Dickie, Nicole & Guy Domett, Kim & Annette Ellis, Jan & Trevor Farmer, Antonia Fisher & Stuart Grieve, Virginia & Stephen Fisher, Ruth Foreman & Rob Nicholson, Friedlander Foundation, Andrew Gelonese & Michael Moore, Anna Gibbons & Brian Gaynor, Dame Jenny Gibbs DNZM, Stephanie & Michael Gowan, Joséphine & Ross Green, Sue Haigh, Alister Hartstonge & Roy Knill, Anne & Peter Hinton, Dame Rosie Horton DNZM & Michael Horton CNZM, Julie & Rod Inglis, Sally Jackson, Heather & Len Jury, Anita Killeen & Simon Vannini, Paulette & Ross Laidlaw, Chris Lambert & Philippa Smith Lambert, Margot & Paul Leigh, Sir Chris Mace KNZM & Lady Dayle Mace MNZM, Peter Macky, Stella McDonald, Pip Muir & Kit Toogood KC, Christine Nolan & Derek Nolan KC, Matthew Olde & Jacqui Cormack, Prue Olde, Heather Pascual, Barby Pensabene, Dame Judith Potter, Robyn & Malcolm Reynolds, Fran & Geoff Ricketts, Lady Philippa Tait, Julie & Russell Tills, Noel & Kerrin Vautier, Susan & Gavin Walker, Carol Weaver & Greg Blanchard, Lynne Webber & Priscilla McGirr, Ian Webster, Dona & Gavin White, Fran Wyborn, Annemarie Yannaghas & Andy Morris

### YOUTH COMPANY SUPPORTERS 2022

**Co-leaders** Peter Macky and Joan Vujcich

**Saints** Dame Jenny Gibbs DNZM, Joséphine & Ross Green, Peter Macky, Jane & Mark Taylor, Wall Fabrics

**Angels** Andy Eakin & Paul Boakes, Chris Lewis & Diane Hunt, Angela & Richard Seton, Joan Vujcich, Ian Webster, Anonymous (1)

**Cherubs** Ron Elliott & Mark Tamagni, Helen Klisser, Prue Olde

**Friends** David Alison & Gerard Murphy, Brenda & Stephen Allen, Margaret Anderson, Libby & Andrew Barrett, Patrick Bourke, Jeanne Clayton & Lisa McCarty, Nicki De Villiers, Kristen Flannery, Martin & Sarah Gillman, Debbie Graham, Bridget Hackshaw & Michael Savage, Alister Hartstonge & Roy Knill, Michelle & Dean Joiner, Stephanie & James Kellow, Greg Larsen & Mark Corrigan, Louise Pagonis, Josephine Stewart-Te Whiu, Lesley Thompson, Kerry Underhill, Anonymous (3)

### SUPPORTING ACTS 2022

**Standing Ovation Supporters** Sandy & Alan Bulmer, Shane & Richard Compton, Raewyn Dalziel, Peter Macky, Anonymous (1)

**Curtain Call Supporters** Pat Collings, Beverley & Geoffrey Davidson, Jillian & Geoffrey Irwin, Don & Lyn Jaime, Christine & Brian Jones, Rosemary Langham, Judy McDonald, Arend Merrie & Fiona Turner, Karen Price, Ian Simpson, Brian & Pam Stevenson, Ray’s ATC Theatre Crew, Kay Wight Theatre Group, Ruth’s Theatre Group, Anonymous (4)

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# About Us

Auckland Theatre Company presents an annual season of theatre alongside extensive participation and new work development programmes.

## History

Founded in 1992 by Simon Prast, Auckland Theatre Company opened our first production at the Watershed Theatre in 1993, the world premiere of David Geary's *Lovelock's Dream Run*, directed by Raymond Hawthorne ONZM. From 2003 to 2021, the Company was led by acclaimed Artistic Director Colin McColl ONZM and, in 2016, we opened our new home, ASB Waterfront Theatre in the Wynyard Quarter. Since 2021, we have been led by Artistic Director & CEO Jonathan Bielski. In 2023, Auckland Theatre Company celebrates 30 years of storytelling.

## Participation

Our commitment to contemporary New Zealand theatre is reflected in our Participation programme.

**Acts of Imagination** is our education programme for schools and kura featuring dedicated performances especially for young people, alongside workshops, Q&A forums with the artists, education packs and digital resources.

**Youth Associates** are passionate young people from Tāmaki Makaurau aged 14 to 25 who join Auckland Theatre Company for a year-long programme: a smorgasbord of workshops, masterclasses and the chance to meet other young creatives.

**Youth Company** is our training company for actors aged 18 to 25. The Youth Company is a free programme for young performing artists. We connect Youth Company members to the productions we make and the wider creative industry, cultivating craft and creating new work.

## New Work

The backbone of our programme is new work by New Zealand playwrights. In 2023, we are delighted to be collaborating with SquareSums&Co to commission *Basmati Bitch* by Ankita Singh, and to present the world premiere of *Things That Matter* by Gary Henderson.

Recent new work we have developed includes *The Made* by Emily Perkins (2022), *The Haka Party Incident* by Katie Wolfe (2021), *Yang/Young/杨* by Sherry Zhang and Nuanzhi Zheng (2021), *Black Lover* by Stanley Makuwe (2020), *Under the Mountain* by Maurice Gee, adapted by Pip Hall (2018), *Rendered* by Stuart Hoar (2018), *Shortland Street – The Musical* (2018) and *Still Life with Chickens* by D.F. Mamea (2017).

## AUCKLAND THEATRE COMPANY

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Vivien Sutherland Bridgwater MNZM (Chair)  
Karen Fistonich  
Isaac Hikaka  
Katie Jacobs  
Derek McCormack  
Graeme Pinfold

### LEADERSHIP

Artistic Director & CEO: Jonathan Bielski

### ARTISTIC

Associate Artist (Interim): Benjamin Henson  
Youth Company Co-Leaders:  
Keagan Carr Fransch, Matthew Kereama,  
Sam Phillips, Gabrielle Solomona

### ARTISTIC OPERATIONS

Director, Artistic Operations & Deputy CEO:  
Anna Cameron  
Producer: Philippa Neels  
Director, Production: Antonia Richardson  
Company Manager: Elaine Walsh  
Participation Coordinator: Sam Phillips  
Company Coordinator: Eliza Josephson-Rutter  
Tautai Oceania Intern: Seluvaia 'Iloahefaiva

### MARKETING & TICKETING

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Marketing Manager: Kate Shapiro  
PR Manager: Vanessa Preston  
Graphic Designer: Wanda Tambrin  
Marketing Executive: Camila Araos Elevancini  
Ticketing Manager: Gary Barker  
Ticketing Administrator: Bruce Brown  
Box Office Team Leader: Gary Hofman  
Ticketing Assistants: Molly Curnow, Lucas Haugh,  
Jake Parsons, Talia Pua, Sophie Roberts,  
Sophie Watson, Rachael Yelder

### FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Director, Finance: Tania Stanford  
Accountant: Reena Mudliar  
Head of Strategy: Natasha Pearce  
Development Coordinator:  
Natalya Mandich-Dohnt

### ASB WATERFRONT THEATRE

Director, ASB Waterfront Theatre: Sharon Byrne  
Event Operations Manager: Lucy Gardner  
Front of House Manager: Ralph Corke  
Venue Technical Manager: Johnny Chen  
Senior Venue Technician: Dom Halpin  
Technical Team: Nathaniel Bristow,  
Tayla Brittliff, Rafferty Dobson, T.J Haunui,  
Zach Howells, Michael Keating, Max Manson,  
Steve Morrison, Joseph Noster  
Front of House Supervisors: Lucas Haugh,  
Sofi Issak-Zade, Sania Jafarian, Dario Kuschke,  
Rachael Yelder  
Front of House: Cara Allen, Ivy Alvarez,  
Billy Blamires, Joshua Bruce, Ruben Cirilovic,  
Jack Clarkson, Izzy Creemers, Mia Crossan,  
Molly Curnow, Eva Fulco, Mary Grice,  
Jackson Harper, Kirsty Leggett, Prakritik Mal,  
Tobias Mangelsdorf, Pearl McCracken, Sam McRae,  
Kate Meere, Carla Newton, Jake Parsons,  
Fraser Polkinghorne, Talia Pua, Sophie Roberts,  
Ailsa Scott, Anushka Sequeira, Emily Smith,  
Joshua Tan, Sophie Watson, Ming Wei Cheong,  
Kate Wicks, Theo Younger

Auckland Theatre Company – 2023 Season

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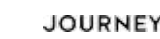


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# Acknowledgments



*Things That Matter* by Gary Henderson.  
Adapted from the memoir by David Galler.

## 2023 BROCHURE

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The background is a composition of large, overlapping geometric shapes. A large blue shape forms the base and right side. Overlapping this from the top left is a purple shape. A large orange shape is positioned in the center, overlapping both the blue and purple shapes. The orange shape is composed of several rectangular blocks of varying sizes, some of which are offset to create a 3D effect. The year '2023' is printed in a light orange color on one of the central orange blocks.

2023