

The New Zealand Film Commission Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga
in association with Te Māngai Pāho and Rialto Distribution

presents a **FALA MEDIA** production

a film by **Whetū Fala**

TAKI RUA THEATRE BREAKING BARRIERS

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY
WHETŪ FALA

FEATURING

AMANDA NOBLETT JASON	PHILIPPA CAMPBELL
TE KARE EDS ERAMIHA	SUNNY AMEY
ROIMATA FOX	RANGIMOANA TAYLOR
SCOTTY COTTER MIKA X	TAMA KIRIKIRI
BRIAR GRACE-SMITH MERE	
BOYNTON KARA PAEWAI	
RENA OWEN	WITH KAUMATUA
HONE KOUKA	KERI KAA
TINA COOK	TUNGIA BAKER
MAILA URALE	RONA BAILEY
TANEMAHUTA GRAY	WI KUKI KAA
TONI HUATA	

AND **NANCY BRUNNING**

PRODUCED BY
WHETŪ FALA
SELINA JOE

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS
REIKURA KAHİ
GAYLENE PRESTON

RUN TIME
80 minutes



LOGLINE/SHORT SYNOPSIS

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers tells the story of our unofficial Māori national theatre

and the 30 year struggle to create a truly bicultural force in live theatre and society, and the wāhine toa and activists who agitated for a better world. From humble beginnings, Taki Rua presents a depth of talent powerful enough to take the voice of Māori across the nation and to the world.

SYNOPSIS

What began as a bold experiment in bicultural partnership between Māori and Pākehā grew into Taki Rua Theatre, the unofficial national Māori theatre company of Aotearoa New Zealand. Against the odds, Taki Rua has survived financial struggles, creative disputes, earthquakes, intolerance, and internal conflicts.

As the latest ensemble of young artists tour the motu (country) performing the latest Māori language theatre production, we witness the deeply personal and politically visionary story of a 30-year struggle to create a truly bicultural force, and the wāhine toa and activists who agitated for a better world.

Observation, interviews and rare archival footage are combined with fresh adaptations of scenes from groundbreaking Taki Rua dramas including *Te Hokina*, *Purapurawhetū*, *Whatungarongaro*, and *Ngā Tangata Toa*. These plays originally shocked audiences with raw and incisive social commentary, and remain just as relevant today. Roimata Fox, Eds Eramiha, Amanda Noblett, Jason Te Kare, Cian Elyse White, and Scotty Cotter lead a stellar cast.

Fast forward to the present day and Taki Rua's *Te Kuia Me Te Pūngāwerewere* brings Patricia Grace's beloved tale to life in a groundbreaking immersive play. Starring Amanda Noblett and Jason Te Kare, this te reo Māori production captivates children of all ages and language levels, igniting pure joy and cultural connection.

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers is an inspiring documentary that chronicles how a daring ensemble of artists and activists shattered cultural norms, broke barriers and pioneered a bicultural partnership. Their bold vision revitalises Māori language for new generations and has launched our creatives onto the world stage.

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND THEATRICAL RELEASE

Taki Rua Theatre - Breaking Barriers is out in cinemas across Aotearoa from Thursday 17 October 2024.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The film began itself.

"Taki" is a movement in traditional Māori weaving. "Rua" means two, so this story of making things by going in pairs is as old as my 1,000-year-old Māori language and culture.

When Tungia Baker renamed the white theatre company the New Depot to "Taki Rua," it was a deliberate reminder to all that this artistic endeavour was to be about partnership between native Māori, and Pākeha, the dominant culture of Aotearoa New Zealand.

At a dawn ceremony in 1991, Maaka Jones, the then leader of the Māori religion Ringatu church, blessed the theatre, opening the portals of our imaginations as Māori and Pākeha to the endless possibilities of performing arts collaboration.

"Broken Barrier", made by the inimitable John O'Shea and Roger Mirams of Pacific Films, was the only film made in Aotearoa, New Zealand, in 1952. It caused an uproar in Aotearoa at the time as it was the story of a romance between a Pākeha and Māori. I wanted to carry a part of that film's legacy into the future with our film so others could understand the enduring nature of this partnership journey in our country.

Wellington, where the theatre is still based, is the capital of Aotearoa New Zealand. The people of this city, like John O'Shea and his contemporaries, the late Harry Seresin and Rona Bailey, supported the performing arts in very real ways. They were intellectuals, avid theatre-goers, administrators, volunteers, and ushers.

Māori scholars, artists, and activists such as Keri Kaa, Tama Poata, Tungia Baker, and Wi Kuki Kaa were widely recognised in Māori arts, and protest movements. They could hold their own from Turangawaewae to the Beehive ballroom. Together, these movers and shakers from within the Wellington arts scene combined their expertise and goodwill to form Taki Rua Theatre. Led by a group of women, it was the first professional theatre in the country to have Māori as treaty partners.

The Māori experts' stories and wisdom along the way has been neglected, inaccessible, and missing.

More than thirty years after Maaka Jones' 1991 dawn blessing, this film is made from the point of view of the Māori partner on the beginnings of Rua Theatre, sharing their stories in their own languages.

'Ma te reo ka puawai te kōrero!'

'It is by speaking that stories flourish!'

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers Production Notes

INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR WHETŪ FALA

How did that idea come about for “Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers”?

Whetū:

Kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua. The past is the present and the future is now. (Māori proverb)

I was inspired by an idea in this proverb to explore how this film could show this concept of time that we are all part of the flow, from our ancestors to us to our future generations, all together. I wanted to merge the current theatre productions with the heady times of the eighties and nineties when artists, actors, writers, and activists came together for revolution.

Why does your film have Kaumatua and those that have passed on at the centre of your film? How are they important?

Whetū:

The film seeks to bring further light to the idea that without knowing who we are, from those that have gone before us, how can we navigate what is to come? Keri Kaa, Rona Bailey, Tungia Baker, Wi Kuki Kaa were mentors to many, including the late Nancy Brunning. The worlds and work that they were able to achieve in their lifetimes, allow present and future generations of Māori, Tangata Tiriti performing artists a glimpse of what is possible.

This homegrown source of inspiration is a much needed wellspring for current Māori and tangata tiriti performing artists in the many platforms that are now available to us. It provides a window to opportunities that they may not have considered or even known about.

What can you tell us about the early days of theatre and activism in Aotearoa New Zealand?

Whetū:

1991 when the formidable Maaka Jones, Ringatu priest and mentor of Keri Kaa, Tungia Baker, blessed “Taki Rua” as the new name and future for a bi-cultural theatre in Wellington it was considered radical by the Aotearoa NZ theatre and general arts scene.

The New Depot Collective pioneered in 1983 the idea of a theatre that would perform only Aotearoa NZ works. But in essence it was a white pākeha run and controlled theatre. There

was no Māori language, no Māori culture in this place. Many of the collective had been active in the 1981 Springbok tour against apartheid rugby of South Africa, they were forced out of their world views, and they were looking at what that 1981 experience meant for their lives as active performing artists, writers, producers, directors. The Springbok tour had shown that there was racism alive in Aotearoa and so where were the Māori artists? Why had only a handful taken part in their collective for all?

1991 taking on the new name of 'Taki Rua' with Māori artists as equal partners in the running and control of the theatre was a radical bridge too far for many. The exodus of tangata tiriti artists to other theatre left a deficit of artists willing to perform at the new Taki Rua theatre. The

3

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers Production Notes

bi-cultural collective left behind set about creating new artistic partnerships and making a new norm for Aotearoa theatre.

Rona Bailey, supported by Kate Harcourt, led the pākeha side in ensuring Māori had a seat at the decision-making side of the theatre. Keri Kaa, busy in the leadership group at Ako Pai marae Wellington College of Education, alongside her Tungia Baker and Wi Kuki Kaa, they brought the te reo, me ona tīkanga Māori to the theatre. Nan Wehipeihana joined me as the Māori caucus, our sole job was to source revenue and to commission new Māori writers and makers of performing arts.

With two such formidable groups of well respected Māori and pākeha leaders and advocates supporting the bi-cultural kaupapa, Taki Rua flourished and in time became what is thought of as Māori theatre.

The warmth and wisdom of these kaumatua how relevant are they today?

Whetū:

This film was an opportunity to introduce the founding kaumatua and have them share their thoughts in their own words.

Our Māori elders, in particular, their contribution to providing the Māori language and strategic direction to a whole generation of successful Māori performing artists had not been clearly articulated and was in danger of being lost.

Your film showcases a diverse group of actors, creatives, writers and theatre producers – past and present. Can you talk about the new wave of emerging talent?

Whetū:

Ko te kaupapa nui kei mua i a tātou, ka tae he reanga matatau i ngā ao katoa. I tēra ringa he ao Māori, i tēra ringa he ao hangarau, kiriata, whare tapere, nui ngā mea toi.

Mehemea ka pirangi rātou ki te mahi i te reo Māori ka mahia rātou, mehemea ka pirangi rātou ki te whai etahi ao ano ka mahia! He miharo ki te kite a rātou whakaaro

You have revived and filmed a selection of groundbreaking Taki Rua plays from a time when gritty social realist theatre dominated. Could you tell us what inspired you about

these plays?

Whetū:

The plays in the film are presented chronologically and were significant artistic works at the time they were shown. To help me choose, I took advice from performing arts colleagues, Māori, Pākehā, and Samoan, regarding the start-up years of Taki Rua 1991 - 1997. In addition, I read through the Rona Bailey archives and also drew on my own experiences at that time as a working actor, writer and director of theatre.

Aotearoa New Zealand theatre companies from the past would employ a group of actors for anything from one to three years and this company would perform all the shows that the theatre

4

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers Production Notes

would put on. So I also considered plays, that one group of actors could perform, echoing the theatre companies of the past.

How would you describe the cinematographic language of the film?

Whetū:

The challenge for our film was that of capturing our kaupapa or essence of the film, is all about live performance. Theatre is a 360 experience and is inherently ephemeral.

While we were unable to pursue a 360 immersive presentation of Taki Rua and lived within the confines of the accepted 180 rule of cinematographic capture we were able to access sound and visual tools that supported the live theatre idea of being ‘larger than life.’

Our filmed interviewees are framed where possible and lit to create a sense of cathedral-like background scape background settings, even in the confines of our traditional Wharenui Māori carved houses. A large cinema screen to start with was amplified by presenting interviewees visually in a way that suggested the bigger worlds beyond them lay ahead of the viewer.

In addition, we lessened the visual distinction between present interviewees, live theatre performance, past interviewees. The only real visual change was the positing of the significant plays from the past that were introduced formally - much like a theatre curtain going up - but in our case the use of an old silent movie introduction frame to get us into the cinematic story of the past play scenes.

This visual seamless-ness also served our kaupapa of time that is ‘the past is the present and the future is now.’

Where was the film shot?

Whetū:

We filmed in Christchurch schools, Wellington Te Papa Tongarewa marae, Hannah Playhouse, Paekakariki St Peters Hall, Otaki Anglican Māori Church Otaki, Whanganui Bason Botanic Gardens in Rapanui, Waipapa Marae Auckland University Tāmaki Makaurau.

What are your aspirations for te reo Māori, and how can we inspire tamariki and rangatahi through theatre?

Whetū:

Mā te kōrero ka puawai te reo! Ko taku wāwata mo te kiriata nei hei tautoko ngā piringā o ngā rangatahi katoa mehemea ka whai rātou he mahi toi.

It's by speaking Māori that it will flourish. I hope this film supports the desires of all rangatahi who pursue an artistic life.

5

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers Production Notes

THE KAUMATUA

Keri Kaa

(Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Kahungunu)
1942 - 2022

Children's book author, Māori translator, poet, Māori dance choreographer, actor, producer in theatre, film and television. Keri was born in Rangitukia near the East Cape, the tenth child of the Rev. Tipi and Hoho Kaa. She was educated at Rangitukia Māori School, Queen Victoria School, Auckland Girls' Grammar School, and in 1961 was an American Field Service Scholar. (Komako) Keri's theatre work included co-director and co-creator of the seasons of award winning theatre productions with Jan Bolwell and Sunny Amey "Wahine Toa", "Taktoru" and "Sing Whale: He Apakura." Her television work included "The Governor" as an actor, Trustee Te Manuka Trust and Executive Producer for "E Tipu e Rea" drama series, the first drama series written, directed and produced by a Māori for television in Aotearoa. Keri secured the funding for the series development from the New Zealand Film Commission and Television NZ.

Tungia Baker

(Ngāti Raukawa, Te Ati Awa, Kai Tahu)
1938 – 2005

Actor, composer, writer, in theatre, film and television, Tungia practised a wide range of artistic pursuits. In theatre, she worked alongside Keri Kaa as Tāmaki members in early Ngā Puna Wahanga productions in the 1970's, staging productions at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre inner city Māori Anglican ministry. In television she had roles in "The Governor". In film she was the Production Manager for the documentary "Making Utu" directed by Gaylene Preston, the assistant producer for the Antarctica documentary "A Whale out my Window" directed by John Anderson and produced by Alli Webber. In film she had roles in "The Piano" directed by Jane Campion, "Johnny Lingo" directed by Mitch Davis, and she was a founding member of Te Manu Aute Māori in film and Haeata Māori women writers collective.

Rona Bailey

(Roseneath Wellington)

1914 - 2005

Rona was born in Whanganui and grew up in Gisborne. She played a key role in establishing modern dance studies in New Zealand universities. After attending teachers colleges in Auckland and Christchurch, she furthered her studies at the University of California, Berkeley, and Columbia University in New York. According to the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, she is considered one of the most important figures on the radical left in twentieth-century New Zealand. Rona was a communist and actively organised protest movements against the Vietnam War, apartheid, and racism.

Wi Kuki Kaa

(Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Kahungunu)

1938 - 2006

Actor, writer, and director in film, television and theatre in Australia and Aotearoa, New Zealand, from the 1970s onwards. He was from Rangitukia near the East Cape. In the 1970's 6

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers Production Notes

he starred in theatre productions with Richard Campion then moved to Australia, where he worked in theatre with, among others, Lester Bostock. His acting work in feature films included "Utu" directed by Geoff Murphy, "Mutiny on the Bounty" directed by Roger Donaldson, "Ngati" directed by Barry Barclay, and "River Queen" directed by Vincent Ward. His television work in Australia included "The Sullivans", and in Aotearoa "The Governor". His te reo Māori theatre directing work featured at Taki Rua, including his work with Peter Hambleton at Circa Theatre Wellington. His short films as an actor include the iconic "Turangawaewae", directed by Peter Burger, "Mataora", directed by Sally-Anne Kerr, "Linda's Body", directed by Harry Sinclair; and his music video work includes "Little Things" by Trinity Roots, directed by Chris Graham. Wi Kuki was a sought-after te reo Māori and English speaker and acknowledged nationally for his skill, wit, and ability to improvise on all occasions, from political debates to opening speeches for international film festivals.

AND

Nancy Brunning

(Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāi Tahu)

1971 - 2019

Nancy was born and raised in Taupo. At 18, she moved to Wellington to study at Toi Whakaari NZ Drama School. Her 1989 class was a significant watershed moment for Aotearoa as it was the largest intake of Māori students that the national acting school had ever taken, then considered a radical move. Rona Bailey and principal Sunny Amey were part of the selection panel. Nancy graduated in style, earning a coveted core cast role in "Shortland Street," a brand new drama series that has become the longest running soap opera in our television history. Her accolades and award-winning work as a writer, director, and actor are well chronicled.

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers Production Notes

THE ACTORS

Amanda Noblett

Amanda Noblett (Tainui, Waikato, Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Pākehā) is an actor and performer. She graduated from Whitireia Performing Arts with a Bachelor of Applied Arts and has since worked on numerous productions with prominent theatre companies. Noblett has been involved in six productions with Taki Rua, as well as collaborating with Tawata Productions, Le Moana Dance, Hāpai Productions, and Te Rākau Hua o Te Wao Tapu Trust. She played the role of the kuia in “Te Kuia me te Pūngāwerewere,” a te reo Māori production by Taki Rua that toured New Zealand schools. Noblett is passionate about performing and considers it a privilege to share Māori language and stories with audiences across Aotearoa. Her work extends beyond the stage, as she has also narrated stories for RNZ's Storytime program.

Jason Te Kare

Jason Te Kare is a director, playwright, and actor of Ngāti Maniapoto and Tainui descent. He graduated from Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School in 2001 with a Bachelor of Performing Arts in Acting. Te Kare has made significant contributions to New Zealand theatre, co-writing and directing the acclaimed play "Cellfish". He has performed in various productions, including a te reo Māori version of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at the Pop-up Globe. Te Kare has received multiple awards, including the Most Promising Male Newcomer and Director of the Year at the Chapman Tripp Theatre Awards. He served as a drama producer for Radio New Zealand for ten years and was appointed as an Artistic Associate at Silo Theatre in 2018. Te Kare continues to make theatre through his company T.O.A. – Theatre of Auckland.

Roimata Fox

Roimata Fox has since built a diverse career spanning stage and screen. She is known for her roles in notable productions like "Muru" (2022), "Cowboy Bebop" (2021), and "Waru" (2017). Roimata has also appeared in popular New Zealand television series such as "Shortland Street," "The Brokenwood Mysteries," and "Outrageous Fortune". Her work often showcases her connection to Māori culture, as evidenced by her role in "Muru," which deals with the 2007 Tūhoe raids. Roimata is on the cusp of a major international career with recent roles in prestige Hollywood productions, "Chief of War" and "Wrecking Crew."

Edmund 'Eds' Eramiha

Edmund Eramiha, also known as Eds Eramiha, is a multi-talented actor of Ngāpuhi descent. He has established himself in various fields, including acting, modeling, kapa haka performance, Muay Thai fighting, and television presenting. Eds gained recognition for his roles in "The Dead Lands" (2014), "The Legend of Baron To'a" (2020), and "Kairaakau" (2016-2024). In 2021, he portrayed gang leader Kingi Duncan in the TV series "Vegas". Eds' diverse skill set and compelling performances have made him a high profile performer in our entertainment industry.

Scotty Cotter

Scotty Cotter is an award-winning Māori actor with over two decades of experience in the entertainment industry. He has showcased his talent in various roles across television, film, and theatre. Scotty is known for his performances in TV series such as "Shortland Street," where he played Uncle Trev, "Kura," and "Not Even." His film credits include "Kawa" and "The Rehearsal". Scotty has also been recognised for his work in comedy, receiving a nomination for Best Supporting Actor at the NZ Television Awards. Scotty's talent extends to visual arts,

8

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers Production Notes
having featured in Shannon Te Ao's project "My Life as a Tunnel".

Rangimoana Taylor

Rangimoana Taylor is a celebrated actor, theatre director, and storyteller with over 35 years of experience in the industry. Born in Te Whanganui-a-Tara to Reremoana Taylor (Shelford) and journalist Melvin Taylor, he is of Ngāti Porou, Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, and Taranaki descent. Rangimoana graduated from Toi Whakaari New Zealand Drama School in 1975, becoming one of the first Māori graduates. He founded the contemporary Māori theatre company Te Ohu Whakaari in the 1980s and was instrumental in developing Marae-Theatre, incorporating cultural concepts into performances. Taylor has performed nationally and internationally, including a lead role in the 2011 film "Hook Line and Sinker". He has also taught at Toi Whakaari and lectured at Takitimu Performing Arts School. In 2023, Taylor received the prestigious Te Tohu Aroha mō Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu supreme award for his contributions to Māori arts.

Tina Cook

Tina Cook is renowned for her work in film, television, and theatre with a career that spans over three decades. She gained recognition for her role in the 2008 film "Second Hand Wedding" and has appeared in various productions, including the 2020 film "This Town" and the television series "The Strip" (2002). Her talent and contributions to New Zealand's performing arts scene

have established her as a well-respected figure in the country's acting community. Tina has been active in theatre, working as a producer for Taki Rua Theatre. Her work demonstrates her ability to take on diverse roles across different mediums, showcasing her versatility as an actress.

Cian Elyse White

Cian Elyse White is a multi-talented actor, director, and writer of Te Arawa, Ngāti Pikiao, Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa, and Ngāi Tūhoe descent. Born and raised in Rotorua, she graduated from Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School in 2009. White has since built a successful career in film and television, with notable roles in "800 Words," "Vegas," and "Cousins". She wrote and directed the award-winning short film "Daddy's Girl" and has also written plays, including "48 Nights on Hope St" for Auckland Theatre Company. A fluent te reo speaker, White is passionate about telling stories that empower Māori voices. She founded WAITĪ Productions, a Māori production company, and continues to contribute to indigenous storytelling in New Zealand

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers Production Notes

THE FILMMAKERS

Whetū Fala

WRITER-DIRECTOR



“Toi tu te kupu, toi tu te mana, toi tu te whenua e!”

Hold fast to our ways!

Whetū Fala is a film writer, director, and producer with a background in performing arts and theatre. Born a native Māori from Aotearoa New Zealand with Samoan heritage, she grew up in an English-speaking monolingual system with trilingual parents. As a result, Whetū specialises in work that opens up the stories from the minority worlds of native Māori and immigrant Samoa living in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Her first documentary, “Te Upoko o te Ika – Making Waves,” a day in the life of the first Māori language radio station in the world, became part of a ground-breaking native television series, the first international doco series produced by Māori independent filmmakers.

Another documentary Whetū wrote, directed and produced “Kōtahi mano Kaika, Kōtahi mano Kaika” charted the beginning of a tribal initiative for the reclaiming of native language for an entire generation of people.

Whetū’s “30 Years of Bastion Point” documentary interrogated the issues of land struggle of Ngāti Whātua ki Ōrākei in NZ’s largest urban city Tāmaki Auckland sometimes called the Polynesian capital of the world.

Her tongue-in-cheek “Wahine Toa Party” comedy series, co-written and created for the NZ elections, examined the politics of power from the point of view of the most impoverished Māori women.

As a producer Whetū has made over 25 short films from first time Māori writer and directors, they included short documentary, short drama of all genre including sci-fi, and horror.

Her own short films as director, “Mokopuna”, “The Hibiscus” and “Hei Tiki” have screened around the world at Sydney Film Festiva, Dreamspeakers Canada, Pacific Festivals of the Arts Rarotonga, Samoa, and Kanaky.

10

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers Production Notes

Taki Rua Theatre - Breaking Barriers is Whetū’s debut feature. She has been an invited guest and speaker on native film development panels for the Melbourne International Film Festival, FIFO Tahiti Documentary Festival, Montreal Film Festival, ImagineNative Film Festival, Wairoa Māori Film Festival, and Whānau Marama New Zealand International Film Festival.

Filmography

2019 “Nomads of the Sea: Te Wai Ngunguru”, Short, Producer

2018 “My Brother Mitchell”, Short, Executive Producer

2017, “Laundry”, Short, Executive Producer

2016 “Ukaipo Whenua”, Short, Executive Producer

2015 “Elevation”, Short, Executive Producer

2015 “Ow What!”, Short, Executive Producer

2013 “Waiheke Waiata Mai!”, Short, Director, Producer

2013 “Pumanawa: The Gift”, Short, Executive Producer

2012-2013 “Marae DIY”, TV Series, Director

2008 “Kotahi Mano Kaika, Kotahi Mano wawata”, Director, Producer

2008 “Raising Bi-lingual Tamariki”, Short, Producer

2007 “Ruki’s Voice”, Short, Director, Producer

2006 “Ngai Tahu Future Aspirations”, Short, Producer

2006 "Ngai Tahu Claim Settlement", Short, Producer
2006 "Ngai Tahu Creation story", Short, Producer
2005-2007 "Waka Reo", TV Series, Series Producer
2004 "Haka & Siva", Short, Director
2004 "Kakano i roto", Short, Producer
1999 "He Tiki", Short, Director, Producer
1998 "Ahi Ataahua: Beautiful Fire", Short, Director
1996, "The Hibiscus", Short, Director
1995 "Tala Pasifika", TV Drama, Director
1993, "Mokopuna", Short, Director
1990, "Te Upoko o te Ika: Making Waves", TV Series, Director

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers Production Notes

Christina Asher

TUAKANA / CASTING DIRECTOR

Christina Asher is a filmmaker, casting director, actress, and choreographer with a career spanning over three decades. Of Tuwharetoa and Ngāi Te Rangi descent, Christina was born in Wanganui and has made significant contributions to our film and television industry, beginning her career as a choreographer for Lotto commercials before transitioning into casting, acting and directing. Her first feature film as casting director was for "Te Rua" in 1991, directed by Barry Barclay. She has earned accolades including the 2017 WIFT Mana Wāhine award and the 2021 2021 New Zealand Film Commission Te Aupouamu Māori Screen Excellence Award. Christina continues to be an active force in the industry, working on major productions and nurturing new talent in New Zealand cinema.

Siobhan Houkamau

EDITOR

Siobhan Houkamau is an experienced editor and media professional based in Papaioea. She is

a current co-owner and co-director of a film company and has been working as an Editor since July 2017. Prior to this, Houkamau worked as a Senior Editor at Kura Productions for over six years. Her background includes roles in post-production and as an assistant editor.

On the completion of “Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers,” Siobhan has the distinction of being the first wāhine Māori to edit a feature film in Aotearoa.

Selina Joe

PRODUCER

Selina Joe is committed to films that make a difference. Action-drama “Muru” (2022) directed by Tearepa Kahi and starring Cliff Curtis was a humbling experience as a producer – the commitment to a bold creative vision and working with the community. The film went on to become the top-grossing New Zealand film at the local and Australian box office in 2022, achieving international A-List selections at Toronto International Film Festival and Busan International Film Festival. “Muru” had the honour of being New Zealand’s entry for Best International Feature Film ‘Oscars’ Academy Awards 2023.

Television series include bringing New Zealand Chinese history to life through food stories in “Sik Fan Lah!” (TVNZ, 2023), and revisiting the psychological and cultural impacts of the Tūhoe Raids on the community in factual series “Into the Valley” (2023). Art projects include the installation “Nomads of the Sea” shot in UHD 3D at Stone St Studios for renowned artist Lisa Reihana (Biennale of Sydney 2020). Selina holds a MSc Hons in Psychology (University of Canterbury) and a MA Hons in Documentary Filmmaking studying with Annie Goldson (University of Auckland).

Reikura Kahi

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Reikura Kahi is an outstanding leader and active role model for emerging Māori in the screen industry. Most recently, Reikura’s leadership on action-drama feature “Muru” ensured the successful completion of a deeply significant and important kaupapa Māori story, true to the community and its values, and highly ambitious in its creative vision and production.

One of the first generation kōhanga reo, kura kaupapa and wharekura graduates Reikura Kahi has been appointed by the Government to Te Mātāwai Board as co-Chair.

12

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers Production Notes

She produced feature documentary “Poi E” (NZIFF 2016, Berlinale 2017), which proved to be a local box office winner with broad audience appeal. In 2019, she completed on feature documentary “Herbs: Songs of Freedom” (NZIFF 2019) featuring iconic Pacific band Herbs.

Reikura has been working in the screen industry for over 25 years, as a presenter, actor, producer, Te Reo Māori consultant and Māori Television programme commissioner. She has produced over 30 television and film projects. She has a set of strong values, which reflect the many kaumātua who have educated and guided her since childhood.

Gaylene Preston

CONSULTANT EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

An adventurous, pioneering innovator, Dame Gaylene Preston has made some of the most enduring popular classics of New Zealand cinema, presenting serious subjects with humour

and warmth.

Her genre-bending spirit is reflected in feature films, documentaries, and television series as diverse as *Mr Wrong*, *Home By Christmas*, *Perfect Strangers*, and *Hope and Wire* – and in her memoir *Gaylene's Take*, longlisted for the 2023 Ockham New Zealand Book Awards.

She is the New Zealand Arts Foundation's inaugural Filmmaker Laureate, the inaugural recipient of the Lifetime Achievement award from Documentary Edge, a SPADA Industry Champion and a recipient of the Premium Moa award for services to cinema.

A lifetime honorary member of Women In Film and Television, in 2019 she became a Dame Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit.

Fred Renata

CINEMATOGRAPHER

Fred Renata is a renowned award-winning cinematographer who began his career on Merata Mita's film "Mauri" in 1987 and has since worked on numerous feature films, documentaries, and TV series. Fred's notable works include "Fracture," "Mt Zion," "Poi E: The Story of Our Song," and "Muru." Fred is known for his technical expertise and artistic vision, drawing inspiration from artists like Ralph Hotere. Currently residing in Maungaturoto, his hometown, Renata continues to contribute to New Zealand's film industry while also pursuing music and storytelling.

Matt Henley

CINEMATOGRAPHER

Matt Henley is an accomplished Director of Photography with a diverse portfolio spanning short films, music videos, special effects, and animation. His career gained momentum after his work on the 2008 short film "Manslaughter" received recognition at the Clermont-Ferrand festival in France. Matt has since contributed his cinematography skills to notable projects such as "Coming Home in the Dark" (2021), "Charmer" (2018), and "Workshop" (2020). His expertise extends to television series, including "Wellington Paranormal" where he served as director of photography. In 2023, Henley's talent was further acknowledged when he was named the NZ Cinematographers Society's Cinematographer Of The Year. Based in Wellington, Matt continues to make significant contributions to the film industry, showcasing his ability to enhance storytelling through his visual artistry.

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers Production Notes

Richard Bluck

CINEMATOGRAPHER

Richard Bluck is a highly experienced New Zealand cinematographer with over 25 years in the film industry. He made his debut as a feature film director of photography with Jonathan King's "Black Sheep" in 2006, which presented numerous challenges. Richard is known for his work on major productions such as "The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers" (2002), "District 9" (2009), "What We Do in the Shadows," and "Avatar." His versatility is evident in his roles as cinematographer, camera operator, Steadicam operator, and focus puller. Richard also has a reputation as a specialist in underwater cinematography.

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers Production Notes

TECHNICAL DETAILS

FEATURE DOCUMENTARY
2024
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

RUN TIME: 80 min

Languages: Te reo Māori and English, with English subtitles

Film Shooting Format: DIGITAL 2k

Aspect Ratio: 1998 x 1080 (1.85:1)

Sound: 5:1

FPS: 24

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers Production Notes

CREDITS

Fala Media
in association with the New Zealand Film Commission
Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga present

A film by Whetū Fala
with the assistance of Christina Asher

Produced by
Whetū Fala
Selina Joe

IN MEMORIAM
Keri Kaa 1942-2020
Nancy Brunning 1971-2019
Wi Kuki Kaa 1938-2006
Rona Bailey 1914-2005
Tungia Baker 1935-2005

FILMED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF
Patricia Grace • Jamie McCaskill • Taki Rua Productions

Director Whetū Fala
Tuakana Christina Asher
Writer Whetū Fala
Editor Siobhan Houkamau
Produced by Whetū Fala
Selina Joe
Executive Producer Reikura Kahi
Consultant Executive Producer Gaylene Preston
Cinematographers Fred Renata
Matt Henley
Richard Bluck
Supervising Sound Editor Ray Beentjes
Sound Recordist Tim Brott
Music by Woodcut

IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE AS THEMSELVES

Amanda Noblett
Keri Kaa
Roimata Kirikiri
Kara Paewai
Tina Cook
Whetū Fala
Roma Potiki

Roimata Fox
Cian Elyse White
Jim Moriarty
Christina Asher
Wi Kuki Kaa
Tama Kirikiri
Tere Harrison
Tanemahuta Gray
Jason Te Kare
Philippa Campbell
Mere Boynton
Apirana Taylor
Gaylene Preston
Maila Urale
Mika X
Toni Huata
Rena Owen
Roimata Baker
Tungia Baker
Hera Taute
Mike Hollings
Sunny Amey
Jan Bolwell
Harriet Crampton
Rangimoana Taylor
Riwia Brown
Rona Bailey
Nancy Brunning
Colin McColl
Hone Kouka
Tanea Heke
Briar Grace-Smith
Halle Taite-Pihama
Te Kairangi Paki

TAKI RUA PRODUCTIONS

Toni Huata • Adrian Wagner • Tama Kirikiri
Simon O'Connor • Roimata Kirikiri • Pearl Sidwell
Tolis Papazoglou

Chief Executive Tanemahuta Gray

TAKI RUA PLAYS

Casting Director Christina Asher

“TE KUIA ME TE PŪNGĀWEREWERE”
STAGE PLAY BASED ON STORY BY PATRICIA GRACE
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBYN KAHUKIWA
Playwright/Theatre Director Jamie McCaskill
Te Reo Māori translation Hōhepa Waitoa

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers Production Notes

Schools Touring Cast Amanda Noblett
Jason Te Kare
Awhimai Sweetman
Isaac Te Reina
Stage Manager Olivia Chan
Music by Maaka McGregor

“WHATUNGĀRONGARO”

BY HE ARA HOU

He Ara Hou Writers Roma Potiki
Briar Grace-Smith
Hemi Rurawhe
Makerita Matapelu
Wiremu Grace
Perry Piercy
Lionel Walker
Taupihi McLetchie
Lizzie Pengelly
Ngarupiki Reid
Huna Eds Eramiha
Huia Roimata Fox
Dean Scotty Cotter
Mata Cian Elyse White

“TE HOKINGA”

BY RIWIA BROWN

Dolly Tina Cook
Roimata Cian Elyse White
Girlie Roimata Fox

“NGĀ TANGATA TOA”

BY HONE KOUKA

Rongomai Cian Elyse White
Te Wai Roimata Fox

“NGĀ PURPURAWHETŪ”

BY BRIAR GRACE-SMITH

Hōhepa Rangimoana Taylor
Mata Scotty Cotter

First Assistant Director Joe Nolan
Second Assistant Directors Michelle Scullion
Siobhan Houkamau

First Assistant Camera Andreas Mahn
Lucy Burns
Additional Camera Te Hemara Rauhihi
Sevrin Noakes
Whetū Fala
Camera Assistants Ethan Renata
Elyse Phee

Raj Patel

18

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers Production Notes

DIT Loren Kett
Rina Patel

Still Photographers Bruce McKay
Hana Tawhai

Additional Sound Recordists Tony Spear
Danny Watts
Boom Operator Tane Hipango

Art Director Alex Faulkner
Greens Hamish Young
Graphic Artist David Silvester

Key Hair and Makeup Erin Kelly
Additional Hair and Makeup Gina Barclay
Kareen Holland

Gaffer Sophie Lloyd
Dolly Grip Jan Kleinheins
Best Boy Mark Papali'i
Gaffer/Grip Lee Scott
Aitken Lau
Alan Wilson
McKay Findlay
Zac Beckett-Knight

Line Producer Sandra Richmond
Production Coordinators Kahukore Bell
Vanessa Patea
Production Interns Hana Tawhai
Matilda Boese-Wong
Jade Mill
Te Atawhai Ponga

Legal Services provided by Karen Soich

Production Accountant Rick Fala

POST PRODUCTION PICTURE, SOUND MIXING AND
MASTERING BY PARK ROAD POST PRODUCTION
Re-Recording Mixer Tim Chaproniere
Creative Supervisor Picture
and Colourist" Jon Newell
Senior Online Editor Rob Gordon
Technical Director Ian Bidgood
Assistant Technical Director David Russell
Media Operators Mathieu Fraser
Rajeev Mishra

Data Wranglers Oliver Christie-Limbrick
Wattana Moeung
Projectionist Paul Harris
General Manager Dan Best
Post Producer Peter Carson

19

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers Production Notes

Production Assistant Adam Stonehouse

Consultant Editors Annie Collins
Te Rurehe Paki

Mentoring Post Editors Alex Boyd
Amanda Mulderry

Locations Manager Ian Otten
Driver & Parking Coordinator Ariana Waitai Ponga

Caterers Aroha Rozska
Jonella Simons-Tume
Jane Peeti
Billie Mill

Catering Assistant Te Rangitauira Rozska

Health & Safety Officer Robert 'Gibbo' Gibson
Gila Factory Limited

Covid Compliance Officer Karsten Meldgaard

Rights and Clearances for Theatre Plays Playmarket New Zealand
General Manager Murray Lynch

ARCHIVES

Archival Footage courtesy of Getty Archives

Television New Zealand

Ngā Taongā Sound and Vision Archives

NZ On Screen

Aotearoa NZ Film Heritage Trust - Te Puna Ataata

Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School Library

Alexander Turnbull Library

“Bastion Point: Day 507”

Courtesy of Hawke whānau, Merata Mita whānau

©Joseph Parata Joe Hawke (1978)

“Shortland Street”

Courtesy of South Pacific Pictures

©Nancy Brunning, Nurse Manu (1992)

“Backchat”

Courtesy of Gibson Group

©Waimihi Hotere, ©Rawiri Paratene, ©Gareth Reeves Blue Smoke (1995)”

“Protestors”

Courtesy of Tony Issacs Estate and Rowley Habib Literary Estate
©Rangimoana Taylor, Detective (1979)

"The Gathering"
Courtesy of NZ On Screen
©Tungia Baker, Auntie Reta (1978)

"E Tipu e Rea' Thunderbox"

20

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers Production Notes
Courtesy of Te Manuka Trust
© Wi Kuki Kaa, Thunderbox (1989)

Photographs courtesy of Sylvia Kaa
Meg Bailey
Tungia Baker whānau
Hirini Kaa
Alexander Turnbull Library
Capital Times
Taki Rua Productions
Briar Grace-Smith
Whetū Fala
Sunny Amey & Jan Bolwell

"International Dance Education Hui Otaki New Zealand"
©1984 Gil Hanly New Zealand
Courtesy of Hanly whanau

"Tungia Baker photographs"
Keri Kaa & Tungia Baker
© 1979, 1992 John Miller
Courtesy of John Miller Trust NZ"

NEW ZEALAND FILM COMMISSION
Chief Executive Annie Taima Murray
Head of Development and Production Leanne Saunders
Head of Marketing (Acting) Philippa Mossman
Pou Whakahaere Te O Kahurangi Karen Waaka
Film Materials Executive Amanda Heatley
Thanks to Mladen Ivancic
Jasmin McSweeney
Vicki Jackways
Marc Ashton
Kathryn Graham
Christina Andreef
Dale Corlett
Hayley Weston

TE MĀNGAI PĀHO
Kaihautū Chief Executive Larry Parr
Pou - Tuku Pūtea Lynne Kruse Parr
Kaitohutohu Matua - Tuku Pūtea Ruth Katene

RIALTO DISTRIBUTION
Chief Executive Kelly Rogers
General Manager Kevin Gordon

Camera Equipment provided by Rocket Rentals
Fred Renata
Imagezone
Grip & Lighting Equipment provided by Sophie Lloyd
First Pencil
Jan Kleinheins

21

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers Production Notes

Drone Cinematography by Koniahia Productions
Te Reo Māori Test Screening
Research & Evaluation Nan Wehipeihana - Weaving Insights
Insurance provided by Crombie Lockwood
Production Banking ANZ
Sound Stages provided by Park Road Post Production
Production Vehicles Hire it Rentals Whanganui

SONGS

"Paikea"

Traditional Māori song performed by Ngāti Porou tribal members for Iwi Anthems
TV production used by courtesy of Raukatauri Productions

"Maumahara Noa"

Performed by Brannigan Kaa
Written by Brannigan Kaa and Keri Kaa
Courtesy of Phlax Wax Digital NZ Limited

"Mareikura"

Performed by Modern Māori Quartet feat. Awhimai Fraser
Published by Concord Music Publishing New Zealand Pty Ltd
Licensed courtesy of Modern Māori Quartet"

THE PRODUCERS WISH TO THANK

Paul & Marcia Williams • Mary Wakefield • Piki Waretini
Keria Ponga • Jane Peeti • Mariana Waitai
Dale & Percy Edwards • Cheryl Smith • Linda Tuhiwai Smith
Graham Smith • Jane Zusters
Emma Bugden & Lou Tyson Walker - Film Whanganui
Terry Dowdswell Bason Botanic Gardens
Siena Motor Lodge Whanganui • Kai-iwi Beach Holiday Park
Esmee Mitchell Hire-it Rentals • Elsie Ellison
Adrienne & Gary Waaka • Gabrielle Huria & Te Maire Tau
Janine Morrell-Gunn • Michelle Mahanga • Brenda Warren
Ani Haula • Meg Bailey • Downstage Theatre
Waipapa Marae University of Auckland • Damon Salesa

Kane Asher • Stephanie Wilkin • Hineani Melbourne
Ella Henry • Leonie Pihama • Lanita Ririnui
Ngā Aho Whakaari • Peter Lucas Jones • Keoni Mahelona
Kylie Brown • Micah Fala • Jaimee Otten • Rebecca Fala
Dulcie Tauri • Duncan Stuart • Ariana Namana • Rosa Hall
Marg Slater • Janine Dickins • Catherine Madigan
Tausi'si'i Uelese-Muaau • Nathan McKendry
Waka Attewell • Rajeev Mishra • Peter Barrett
Wendy Bainbridge & Whanganui District Council
Lighthouse Cinema • Pātaka Art+Museum • Geoff Pinfield
Sharon Hawke • Gabrielle Rikihana • Kuini Rikihana-Hyland
Rev Ramari (Marie) Collin • Jasmine Nyx • Lope Ginnen
Kura Forrester • Matu Ngaropo

22

Taki Rua Theatre – Breaking Barriers Production Notes

Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Whānau Tahī
St Anne's Catholic Primary School Ōtautahi Christchurch
Rolleston College Ōtautahi Christchurch
St Bede's College Ōtautahi Christchurch
Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Kura Whakapūmau i te Reo Tūturu ki Waitaha
Ara Tū Whakatā Gilberthorpe School
Te Waka Unua School Ōtautahi Christchurch
Our Lady of Victories School Ōtautahi Christchurch

SPECIAL THANKS TO
Ian Otten • Keith Jack Wong
Catherine Fitzgerald - Blueskin Films
Megan Fala Smith
Te Akuira o te Rangi Rauhihi
Brenda Soutar • Tearepa Kahi
Shun Hing Joe • Joe whānau
Charlize Otten

This film was completed with the assistance of the New Zealand's Government's Screen
Recovery Fund

FALA MEDIA LIMITED
Copyright 2024
All Rights Reserved

