

TE AHUREI
TOI O TĀMAKI

4—21 MĀEHE 2021

AUCKLAND
ARTS FESTIVAL

4—21 MARCH 2021

Media release

Strictly embargoed until 7.30pm Wednesday 25 November 2020

AUCKLAND ARTS FESTIVAL 2021

FULL PROGRAMME LAUNCHED

Te Ahurei Toi o Tāmaki | 4-21 March 2021

The full programme for the Auckland Arts Festival/Te Ahurei Toi o Tāmaki (AAF) 2021 has been launched.

The 100% Aotearoa line-up was revealed tonight in a video streamed on AAF's [Facebook page](#) and [YouTube channel](#), following an initial reveal on 11 November that announced *Taonga Moana*, *Pūmanawa*, and *Che-Fu & The Kratez*, along with the Festival's 2021 theme, Aroha.

After cutting its 2020 season short due to COVID-19, in 2021 the Festival will take place between **4 and 21 March 2021** and feature a selection of more than 70 multi-art shows and events at theatres, galleries and unique indoor and outdoor venues across Tāmaki Makaurau.

Event details can be found on the Festival's brand new website (<https://www.aaf.co.nz/>), including everything from dance to theatre, live music to comedy, visual and digital art, talks and debate, community participation projects and more. The programme includes a wide-ranging series of free and ticketed shows, installations and exhibitions designed to unify, uplift and inspire. **Early Bird** discounts are available on most events until **Thursday 31 December 2020**.

The Festival has commissioned world premieres of several new works, resuscitated some that were cancelled in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and will provide employment for over 1,000 artists and 150 production and administration staff.

All 2021 activity falls into three strands related to the overarching theme of **Aroha**: aroha ki ngā kōrero – the respect we hold for our stories; aroha ki te tangata – kindness, compassion and goodwill toward people; and aroha ki te taiao – our love and care for our natural environment – air, land and water.

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In support of the Festival's 'access for all' kaupapa, the programme features more free activities than ever before, including events on **International Women's Day** and **New Zealand Children's Day**. The **Aroha Art Project** will be an opportunity for all members of the public to contribute to a collaborative artwork in the Festival Garden in Aotea Square.

In 2021 the AAF's **Toitū Te Reo** programme is integrated into all aspects of the Festival, ensuring that te reo Māori is seen and heard every day. Featured events include the Festival opening ceremony **Te Tīmatanga**; kapa haka extravaganza **Pūmanawa**; and the moving poetry of Maya Angelou translated into te reo, delivered by a host of language warrior women from across Aotearoa in **Wāhine Toikupu**.

The Civic Club is a brand new concept for the Festival that will see audiences seated onstage at much-loved Auckland landmark and entertainment venue The Civic, enjoying intimate, limited capacity performances. The Club line-up will feature a collection of New Zealand's top music acts, including **Reb Fountain**, **Dixon Nacey**, **Delaney Davidson** with **Shayne Carter** – and **Hine!**, a showcase of four breakthrough wāhine toa performers led by **Betty-Anne Monga** of Ardijah fame. Hubbing it all is **The Tom Sainsbury Love Hour**, a comedy talk show with a star-studded array of celebrity guests including **Hilary Barry** and **Chlöe Swarbrick** discussing their best break-ups, make-ups and obsessions. The Club will also host **Heavenly Bodies**, a dazzling cabaret which sees a constellation of New Zealand's finest circus superstars, urban acrobats and outrageous curiosities descend from The Civic's glittering rafters.

Other Festival highlights include the 20th anniversary celebration of **Che-Fu's** seminal album **Navigator**, which the artist will perform at an all-ages show at Auckland Town Hall with his band The Kratez, headlining the Festival's **Polynesian Panthers 50th Anniversary** programming. The Panthers were an activist group known in particular for their protests against the notorious dawn raids of the 1970s, and 2021 marks 50 years since their formation. AAF will feature exhibitions, talks, play readings and the creation of a mural honouring the Panthers' legacy, as well as a performance in the Festival Garden by Che-Fu's father, Panthers activist and reggae musician **Tigilau Ness**, with special guests.

True to form, AAF 2021 offers a plethora of engaging and brilliant theatre, music and dance performances. **Taku Tau Kahurangi: An Aotearoa Love Story** is a collection of classic New Zealand love songs, performed by the stunning Ria Hall; **Strasbourg 1518** is a powerful tribute to the dancing plague of 1518,

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directed and choreographed by Lucy Marinkovich, composed by Lucien Johnson and featuring Michael Parmenter; from the creators of *The Factory*, Vela Manusaute's ***Tropical Love Birds*** premieres, bringing the tortured love tussle between electrifying beast of a league star Sani and his island queen Sheena to life; ***The Artist*** calls international circus sensation Thomas Monckton back from abroad to share his latest masterpiece with a home crowd; and ***Jack and the Beanstalk*** is a hilarious romp through this classic tale with a kiwi twist, written, directed and starring the legendary thespian Michael Hurst.

Six of the finest pianists from Aotearoa, including Michael Houston, will grace the stage – with six grand pianos – at the Auckland Town Hall to bring renowned composer John Psathas' immersive world premiere of ***Voices at the End*** to life. The Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra celebrates International Women's Day with a selection of women composers in ***Shoulder to Shoulder***; and BalletCollective Aotearoa premiere their company in an exciting new chapter in contemporary ballet with a trio of new work titled ***Subtle Dances***, featuring NZTrio playing live. For a special treat on the big screen, we present the Australasian premiere of ***E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial in Concert***, complete with John Williams' Academy Award®-winning score performed live by the APO.

These are just some of the **70+ live performances and events** that comprise Auckland Arts Festival/Te Ahurei Toi o Tāmaki 2021. A full list of activities is included below.

The 2021 Festival will be the first of four with new **Artistic Director Shona McCullagh (MNZM)** at the helm. Arts Foundation Laureate McCullagh founded and led The New Zealand Dance Company as Chief Executive/Artistic Director since its establishment in 2012, and joined AAF in March 2020.

"Auckland Arts Festival is committed to playing a key role in the post-COVID recovery of the arts sector in Tāmaki and the rest of New Zealand, by proudly delivering a 100% Aotearoa artist-led Festival in 2021. I'm beyond excited about the calibre and breadth of the programme we have been able to curate – we really have been spoilt for choice," says McCullagh.

AAF 2021 proudly showcases the world-class artists of Aotearoa, launching at a time when venues in many other countries are still unable to open. It is an opportunity to champion the crucial role of the arts in providing solace, energy and hope in difficult times.

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“The irreplaceable essence of live performance binds and bonds us. We really wanted to capture a sense of gratitude – uplifting and creating a centre-stage platform to show aroha to our world-class artists for their support during lockdown, and nourishing our hearts, minds and understanding of the world we live in.” – **Shona McCullagh, Artistic Director**

“At a time when the performance sector is in flux around the world, we are extremely pleased to be able to confirm Auckland Arts Festival will be back in 2021. A huge thanks to our partners, sponsors and supporters, who play a crucial role in ensuring we are able to deliver an extraordinary Festival and continue to support the arts in Aotearoa.” – **David Inns, Chief Executive**

ENDS

SHOW DETAILS

All AAF 2021 shows are listed below. Visit www.aaf.co.nz from 7pm tonight for full show details and ticket links.

Aroha ki ngā kōrero

Che-Fu & The Kratez: Return of the Navigator: Celebrate the 20-year anniversary of Che-Fu’s seminal album *Navigator*, which he’ll perform with his band The Kratez in this Auckland Arts Festival exclusive.

Educate to Liberate – Panthers Mural: To be painted during the Festival, this vibrant mural project is a visual celebration of the connection between the Polynesian Panther Party of Aotearoa and the Black Panther Party, as positive inspiration for future generations.

E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial in Concert: Experience the magic of Steven Spielberg’s beloved movie with John Williams’ Academy Award®-winning score performed live by the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra.

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Jack and the Beanstalk: Legendary thespian Michael Hurst's interpretation of the classic tale, featuring a giant ant, a crazy chase, the Sky Tower and an alien invasion.

Love to say goodbye: This public reading of Oscar Kightley's critically acclaimed play *Dawn Raids* features as part of a homecoming season of theatre classics and new works from No. 3 Roskill Theatre, directed by Tanya Muagututi'a (Pacific Underground).

Pouwātū: Active Presence: Celebrating the dynamic 40-year career of tohunga whakaahua (photographer) John Miller (Ngāpuhi), Pouwātū is a statement of active presence. This exhibition is a collaboration with kaihoahoa whare (architect) Elisapeta Heta (Ngātiwai, Waikato Tainui).

Sing to Me: Inspired by the Pania of the Reef legend, this intoxicating modern romance by Taki Rua Theatre explores the challenges of cross-cultural relationships, against the backdrop of a climate in crisis.

Sorry For Your Loss: Exciting up-and-coming theatre-maker Cian Gardner ponders curly life questions in this one-woman show about growing up with a mostly absent dad.

Strasbourg 1518: A story of revolution through dance, this electrifying production explores one of history's most fascinating mass movements – the dancing plague of 1518.

The Artist: International circus sensation Thomas Monckton returns with his latest and greatest solo show, a physical theatre comedy masterpiece about a nutty painter with an almighty creative block.

The Dawn Raids – Educate to Liberate: An exhibition documenting and honouring the courageous activities of the Polynesian Panthers and their place in the social and cultural history of Aotearoa.

The Griegol: Trick of the Light Theatre's new show – an eerie, elegant tale without words about death, love, grief and monsters from the creators of *The Bookbinder*.

The Haka Party Incident: Relive the eventful day a group of University of Auckland engineering students rehearsing their annual tradition of a mock haka were confronted by the activist group He Taua. Crafted by filmmaker and theatre director Katie Wolfe.

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Tropical Love Birds: The world premiere of Niuean/Samoan writer-director Vela Manusaute's latest play ventures into the often-muted world of domestic violence, using the gravitas of humour to uplift courage and alofa.

Aroha ki te tangata

A Very Different World: Renowned Māori curator Ngahiraka Mason presents a platform to focus on wellbeing and a much-needed glimmer of hope for the future.

Activities in the Square: Enjoy free live music and family-friendly fun in our vibrant Festival Garden. Lots to see, make, do and eat! Look out for the full schedule in February 2021.

Acts of Love: A series of free weird, wonderful and whacky pop-up surprises and delights for the whole family, on street corners and in shop windows, public squares and the waterfront during Festival time.

Amui 'i Mu'a – Ancient Futures: Led by contemporary masters Dagmar Vaikalafi Dyck and Sopolemalama Filipe Tohi, this landmark exhibition includes new paintings, prints and sculpture displayed with historic artefacts in response to an engagement with Tongan collections overseas.

Are the Arts Essential?: Six of New Zealand's stars of the stage, screen and media come together to debate the value of culture, creativity and the arts. Expect to be challenged and entertained, as the two teams provoke, pontificate, brag, brawl and banter to make their case.

Aroha Art Project: Weaving together contributions from schools, kura, aged-care facilities, and community and cultural organisations around the city, this large-scale collaborative art project asks the people of Auckland to 'make together', inspired by our theme of Aroha.

Arts + Climate Innovation: Coexistence with our Natural World: An illuminating kōrero with renowned artists and scientists Dr Daniel Hikuroa, Bernard Makoare, Aigagalefili Fepulea'i-Tapua'i and Professor

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Dame Anne Salmond, exploring how the cultural knowledge, artistic expression and storytelling of humans are inextricably linked to the natural world.

Edith and George: in our sea of islands: A photography exhibition bringing together the portrait work of artists Edith Amituanai and the late George Crummer, and presenting important conversations around colonisation, migration, settlement and identity in the Pacific.

K-pop Party: Curated by international dancer, choreographer and star of TV's *K-pop Academy* Rina Chae, this all-ages party will feature performances, prizes for the best outfits, photobooths and a dance cover competition.

Kia ora, Tāmaki!: Shake your tail feathers to the sounds of Betty-Anne Monga and Friends as we wind up the Festival and say thank you to everyone with a rip-roaring celebration in the Festival Garden.

Legacy Vogue Ball: In partnership with FAFSWAG, the Auckland Vogue scene invites you to strut up to the Auckland Town Hall for an extravagant evening of runway divas, stunty vogue battles, gaggy effects, seductive sex sirens, competition and cash grand prizes.

level up: an intergenerational discussion: Roar into International Women's Day with a *let's-change-the-world* breakfast kōrero led by Miriama Kamo, brought to you in partnership with the YWCA.

Living with Uncertainty: Join Dr Hinemoa Elder, Chlöe Swarbrick, Liam Forde, Susie Spiller and Pita Turei as we explore how we can live with the uncertainty and rapid pace of change in the world around us.

Open Stage: Scenes From a Yellow Peril: Playwright Nathan Joe and director Jane Yonge invite audiences to a rehearsed reading of scenes from their script, which violently smashes performance poetry, documentary theatre and political discourse together to create a kaleidoscopic vision of contemporary identity politics.

Pūmanawa: On the last day of the Festival, revel in the uniquely Aotearoa artform that is kapa haka with performances from four of our finest Māori cultural groups: Te Rōpū Manutaki, Te Iti Kahurangi, Tūwhitia kia Angitu and 2019 Te Matatini winners Ngā Tūmanako.

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Shoulder to Shoulder: This vibrant programme highlights women composers ranging from the mystic brilliance of 12th century pioneer Hildegard von Bingen, to multi-faceted musician, writer, and taonga puoro practitioner Ruby Solly (Kai Tahu, Waitaha, Kāti Māmoe).

Siva Afi Festival: Experience the phenomenon of siva afi ailao as South Auckland hosts a fire knife competition between local secondary schools alongside a free festival of wāhine toa afi performances.

Subtle Dances: A trio of new work from exciting new dance company BalletCollective Aotearoa, performed in collaboration with the prodigious NZTrio.

Taku Tau Kahurangi: An Aotearoa Love Story: Come together with Ria Hall and friends for an opening Festival concert celebrating aroha with a collection of beloved songs from Aotearoa.

Te Timatanga: Join Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei as they lead us in launching the 2021 Festival with karakia and ceremony. Sing along with Pere Wihongi and Maaka Pohatu to Māori songs that you grew up with.

Tekau! Celebrating 10 Years of Sistema Aotearoa: Celebrate a decade of Sistema Aotearoa unleashing the potential of tamariki, whānau and the Ōtara community through orchestral music.

#TĀMAKIBEATS: Over the first two weekends of the Festival, dance crews will go head-to-head and singers will flex their vocal prowess, each vying for a spot in the finals – which will be headlined by multi-award-winning bilingual artist Rei and World Hip Hop dance champions Prestige.

Voices at the End: We present internationally renowned New Zealand composer John Psathas' immersive world premiere featuring six of the country's finest pianists, onstage together with six grand pianos. Includes a performance of Steve Reich's *Six Pianos*.

Wāhine Toikupu: Celebrate International Women's Month with a selection of poems from *The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou*, which have been translated into te reo Māori.

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Aroha ki te tangata – The Civic Club

Anna Coddington – *Beams*: Acclaimed musician and songwriter Anna Coddington launches her brand new album in conjunction with a striking live visual art show.

Carnivorous Plant Society: Merging filmic soundscapes and lush orchestral pop to sublime effect, Carnivorous Plant Society is a gang of New Zealand's most accomplished musicians performing psychedelic jazz across an astounding array of instruments.

Chelsea Jade / deryk: Tickle your pop fancy at this very special double bill performance, featuring two of New Zealand's most exciting original songwriters – Chelsea Jade and breakout artist deryk.

Digital Stage Artworks: Hosted on the Festival's digital stage in Aotea Square, Thai-Australian artist Kawita Vatanajyankur presents *Shuttle*, literally inserting herself into the work; and Māori artist and designer Johnson Witehira presents the animated piece *Te Kai a te Rangatira*.

Estère – Into the Belly of Capricorn: With a flair for exploring uninhabited and stunning sonic terrain, the captivating Estère weaves her velvety vocals, heavy basslines and hooks into a transfixing new performance concept.

French for Rabbits: Preview new material from the dream-pop luminaries' forthcoming album under the starry atmosphere of The Civic Club.

Gitbox Rebellion: Honouring the beautiful character of acoustic guitar, Gitbox Rebellion's exuberant blend of jazz, rock, folk and classical will have you in sonic raptures.

Heavenly Bodies: A constellation of New Zealand's finest circus superstars, urban acrobats and outrageous curiosities descend from the night sky for a stellar cabaret of truly cosmic proportions.

Hine!: Betty-Anne Monga (Ardijah) appears alongside young and talented musicians Amy Boroevich, Disciple Pati, Jhasmyne and Emily Muli for a supreme showcase of musical prowess.

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Julia Deans: Deans graces the stage in a stripped back trio, presenting new material from an upcoming album, alongside favourites from her critically acclaimed *We Light Fire* and *Modern Fables*.

Reb Fountain & The Black Quartet present The Boy Next Door: Reb Fountain brings her acclaimed tribute to Nick Cave back to the stage, joined by New Zealand's premier string quartet, The Black Quartet.

Spell On You: Marvel as Delaney Davidson, Shayne Carter, Theia and friends weave a spell, dragging old songs into the present and new songs back into the past.

The Dixon Six: Dixon Nacey & Friends: Journey through New Zealand's best jazz from the past two decades, featuring some of New Zealand's top jazz and pop musicians.

The Tom Sainsbury Love Hour: Laugh and learn about the mysteries of love with man of the hour Tom Sainsbury, who welcomes a star-studded line-up of Kiwi personalities including Hillary Barry and Chlöe Swarbrick.

Aroha ki te taiao

He Owaha Matarua – Hauntology of Inheritance: Suzanne Cowan and Rodney Bell lead this unique, sensorial performance walk of connectivity that explores whakapapa, history and a deepening experience of the beautiful forest at Byers Walk, Piha.

Ka mua, ka muri: A sound and moving image installation from artist Shannon Te Ao, exploring our experience of time, history and song.

New Moon Folk Ball: A night of celebratory social dance in the vibrant folk tradition of the village fête and the raucous city dance-hall, featuring master-of-dance Michael Parmenter.

My Name is Moana: Beloved singer-songwriter Moana Maniapoto is joined by her sister Trina, Pitch Black's Paddy Free and ace guitarist Cadzow Cossar for a heartfelt musical and narrative tribute to the ocean and Aotearoa.

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Rail Land: Mixing song, narrative, personal memoir, historical research, and a poetic but tangible public transport journey, *Rail Land* is songwriter and performer Anthonie Tonnon's latest theatrical show. Includes a tram ride to MOTAT!

Taonga Moana – A love letter to the oceans: Aotearoa's outstanding national chamber choir, Voices NZ, presents a breathtaking musical and visual homage to the beauty and vulnerability of our oceans.

The Air Between Us / A Figure Exhales: *The Air Between Us* is a captivating outdoor aerial dance event performed mid-air between trees by Rodney Bell and Chloe Loftus, while *A Figure Exhales* is a site-specific outdoor performance with considerable visual impact by performance artist and choreographer Zahra Killeen-Chance.

The Thrum of the Tide: This unique exhibition delves into the 20th century story of Te Ana Ru cave a.k.a 'the ballroom cave' and brings it back to life with a performance by Michael Parmenter and Claire O'Neil.

About Auckland Arts Festival

Auckland Arts Festival/Te Ahurei Toi o Tāmaki (AAF) champions change-making, the environment, ambitious ideas, powerful voices and inspirational experiences that open our eyes, our hearts and our minds.

A globally recognised celebration of art and culture taking place each March in New Zealand's largest city, AAF will be presented for the 13th time in 2021. The Festival has attracted more than two million visitors to date.

Auckland Arts Festival is governed by the Auckland Festival Trust. Trustees are John Judge (Chair), Rick Carlyon, Angela Clatworthy, Evan Davies, Sarah Judkins, Graham Tipene, Fred Ward and Angela Watson.

The executive team is led by Chief Executive David Inns and Artistic Director Shona McCullagh.

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The Trust receives core funding from Auckland Council through the Auckland Regional Amenities Funding Act and Creative New Zealand through the Toi Tōtara Haemata programme.

Significant support is received from Foundation North, Pub Charity and Four Winds Foundation. The Festival's Gold Sponsor is *The New Zealand Herald*, and the Silver Sponsor is Colenso BBDO.

In the event of cancellation due to COVID-19, ticketholders will be refunded in full.

For further information, images and interview requests, please email:

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Access the AAF 2021 Media Kit here: <https://bit.ly/3khgMaT>