

TE AHUREI  
TOI O TĀMAKI

4—21 MĀEHE 2021

AUCKLAND  
ARTS FESTIVAL

4—21 MARCH 2021

Media release

Strictly embargoed until 7.30pm Wednesday 11 November 2020

AUCKLAND ARTS FESTIVAL 2021  
FESTIVAL REVEAL – FIRST THREE SHOWS ON SALE  
Te Ahurei Toi o Tāmaki | 4-21 March 2021

The vision and the first three shows for Auckland Arts Festival/Te Ahurei Toi o Tāmaki (AAF) 2021 have been revealed.

**Taonga Moana, Pūmanawa, and Che-Fu and The Kratez** were all announced tonight in a video streamed on AAF's [Facebook page](#) and [YouTube channel](#), along with the Festival's 2021 theme, Aroha. The video featured a backstage performance of 'Waka' by Che-Fu and his father, former Polynesian Panther Minister of Arts and Culture, Tigilau Ness.

The full programme will be released online on Wednesday 25 November 2020 at 7pm. Attendees are invited to RSVP and register for related notifications via the Facebook event page:

<https://fb.me/e/2dXnqBbvH>

After calling its 2020 season short due to COVID-19, Auckland Arts Festival 2021 will feature a 100% Aotearoa collection of more than 70 multi-art shows and events at theatres, galleries and unique indoor and outdoor venues across Tāmaki between 4 and 21 March 2021.

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 committing to a 100% Aotearoa artist-led Festival in*

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*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 Shona.*

A key shift introduced by McCullagh is thematic programming, and in 2021 the Festival theme will be **Aroha**. As Ataahua Papa, AAF Kaihautū Māori explains, *“Often thought of as just meaning love, aroha is so much more. The word aroha actually encompasses all five senses, as well as the ego and intellect – and we celebrate them all throughout the 2021 Festival.”*

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

Representing aroha ki te taiao and presented by Voices New Zealand, **Taonga Moana** is a breathtaking musical, movement and visual homage to the beauty and vulnerability of our oceans, tracing the flight of the godwit from the Arctic to Antarctica. This one-night only performance is conducted by **Dr Karen Grylls**, with direction and choreography by Arts Foundation Laureate **Sara Brodie**, and features music by a range of international composers, including New Zealand’s own **Warren Maxwell** (Trinity Roots, Little Bushman).

Signalling aroha ki te tangata, **Pūmanawa** brings together four brilliant kapa haka who embody the idea of legacy, talent and dedication to a centuries-old way of celebration. This performance by **Te Rōpū Manutaki, Te Iti Kahurangi, Tūwhitia kia Angitu** and 2019 Te Matatini winners **Ngā Tūmanako**, will be incredibly powerful and is particularly important as the annual kapa haka competition Te Matatini has been postponed until 2022.

Flying the flag for aroha ki ngā kōrero, is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary concert of **Che-Fu**’s seminal second album, **Navigator**, which the artist released 20 years ago and will perform at an all-ages show at Auckland Town Hall with his band The Kratez. When Che released *Navigator* in 2001, he opened a new chapter for New Zealand music – dropping genre-crossing tracks like ‘Misty Frequencies’ and ‘Fade Away’ that brought Polynesian sounds and stories to the masses and swiftly took their place as kiwi classics. The show headlines the Festival’s **Polynesian Panthers 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** programming, which will be announced in full on 25 November.

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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.

*“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 thank our world-class artists for their support during lockdown, 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 a world-class Festival and continue to support the arts in Aotearoa.”* – **David Inns, Chief Executive**

ENDS

## Show information

### **Taonga Moana**

*The outstanding national chamber choir of Aotearoa, **Voices New Zealand**, presents a breathtaking musical and visual homage to the beauty and vulnerability of our oceans.*

Celebrating our moana as precious taonga with uplifting music from around the globe, this beautiful concert accompanies the flight of the kuaka/godwit, from icy northern seas all the way down to a fragile sanctuary in Antarctica.

Starting in the North with a new work by eclectic Finnish composer **Jaakko Mäntyjärvi** about the Arctic

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Ocean, we encounter whales, turtles and mysterious serpents on this musical journey following the great Māori navigator Ui-Te-Rangiora on his quest to save the oceans. Travelling through Latvia, Canada, the US and Indonesia, we arrive at a sanctuary – the majestic Antarctic captured in a new work by New Zealand’s **Warren Maxwell**, and inspired by his own, personal experiences on the ice.

Conducted by **Dr Karen Grylls**, with elegant direction and choreography by Arts Foundation Laureate **Sara Brodie**, *Taonga Moana* is set to a stunning landscape of projected moving images.

This spectacular theatrical event is an ode to the power and poetry of oceans – essential, now more than ever, to survival on our planet.

**Where:** Great Hall, Auckland Town Hall

**When:** Sat 6 March, 7.30pm

**Images + background:** <https://bit.ly/36ILx9N>

## **Che-Fu and The Kratez**

*When Che-Fu released his second album **Navigator** in 2001, he brought forth tracks that have become kiwi classics, crossing genres and bringing hip hop to the masses.*

Mixing Polynesian sounds with reggae, soul and hip hop, singles ‘Misty Frequencies’ and ‘Fade Away’ are still some of the most played tracks on local radio. *Navigator* is a bonafide classic, and we celebrate its 20-year anniversary with Che and his band **The Kratez** in this Auckland Arts Festival **exclusive**.

Opening are Che’s top picks, **Team Dynamite** and **Rubi Du**, with **DJ Manuel Bundy** on the decks throughout the night.

Don’t miss this once-in-a-lifetime concert honouring one of “New Zealand’s most eloquently soulful vocalists” and his landmark *Navigator*, which Nick Bollinger calls “not just a beautiful album, but an important one.”

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**Where:** Great Hall, Auckland Town Hall

**When:** Saturday 13 March, 8pm

**Images + background:** <https://bit.ly/2UamHUT>

## **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.*

Kapa haka is an avenue to express and showcase heritage and cultural identity through song and dance, and a way to celebrate who and where we are in the world. The concept of legacy and mātauranga tuku iho – knowledge handed down through generations – is powerful as we remember those who have come before us.

*Pūmanawa* brings together four brilliant kapa haka who embody the idea of legacy, talent and dedication to a centuries-old way of celebration. Join **Te Rōpū Manutaki**, **Te Iti Kahurangi**, **Tūwhitia kia Angitu** and 2019 Te Matatini winners **Ngā Tūmanako** as they sing and haka with full voices, fierce wairua and boundless energy.

This performance is particularly special as Te Matatini has been postponed for 2022.

Hosted by Wī and Wā of Taringa Huruuru.

**Where:** Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre, Aotea Centre

**When:** Sun 21 March, 3pm

**Images + background:** <https://bit.ly/32wqu3d>

## **About Auckland Arts Festival**

Auckland Arts Festival/Te Ahurei Toi o Tāmaki champions change-making, the environment, ambitious

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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.

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 The 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>