



TE AHUREI TOI O TĀMAKI
AUCKLAND
ARTS FESTIVAL



Belle

A Performance of Air

 Digital Show Programme

Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre, Aotea Centre

6–9 March 2025

Belle – A Performance of Air

Credits

Director, Producer

Malia Johnston

Production Designer

Rowan Pierce

Aerial Apparatus Design,

Aerial Choreographer, Costume Designer

Jenny Ritchie

Composition

Eden Mulholland

Anita Clark

Jolyon Mulholland

Lighting Operation

Elekis Poblete Teirney

Live Musician (Vocals & Violin)

Anita Clark – MOTTE



1hr no interval

Suitable for all ages. Contains strobe lighting, bright light and haze.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Credits

Aerialist & Apparatus Specialists

Katelyn Reed

Imogen Stone

Ellyce Bisson

Rosita Hendry

Movement & Dance Specialists

Kia Jewell

Isabel Estrella

Anu Khapung

Brydie Colquhoun

Hayley Crisp

Rigging Team

Tom Hoyle

Antony Goodin – YOOOCrew

Nic Balkum – YOOOCrew

Benjamin Williams – YOOOCrew



Belle – A Performance of Air

Credits

Stage & Cast Management

PRODUCTION AND STAGE MANAGEMENT

Michael Lyell-O'Reilly

DEPUTY STAGE MANAGER

Gina Heidekruger

Producer (of Touring)

Rose McGrannachan

Photography

Andi Crown



Belle – A Performance of Air

Acknowledgements

***Belle – A Performance of Air* at Te Ahurei Toi o Tāmaki Auckland Arts Festival is supported by**



Movement of the Human would like to thank:

The entire team from Te Ahurei Toi o Tāmaki Auckland Arts Festival for making this season of *Belle* a possibility.

We thank the many generous, dedicated artists and crew that have supported the development of this work and we would also like to acknowledge the incredible support and contributions from Creative New Zealand, Ministry for Culture & Heritage, YOOCrew, World Of WearableArt, Christchurch Circus Trust, Ian Hammond, Alex Leonhartsberger and Aotearoa New Zealand Festival of the Arts.

Previous cast acknowledgements include: Jemima Smith, Mim Conyers, Julia Harvey, Lydia Barbour, Ariel Cronin, Aleeya McFadyen-Rew, Nadiyah Akbar and Tiana Lung.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Creative Notes



**“Give me matter and motion,
and I will construct the universe.”
— René Descartes**

Belle was created in a time of uncertainty,
amidst the fragility of our social constructs.

What began as an exploration of elevating physical apparatus and circus performers through contemporary design practice soon revealed itself as something more — a conduit to transcend the unease of the present moment. The uncertainty that this period brought carried a foreboding sense of anxiety — both immediate and for what the future might hold. In turn, it instilled a deep drive within the team to create a work that serves as an agent for both its creators and audiences to experience humanity’s capacity to both feel and create the sublime.

In a hall, by the sea, filled with smoke and little light, we came together and began to play.

Belle – A Performance of Air

Creative Notes

Belle is a multimedia performance experience harnessing the skills of nine dance and aerial artists from across Aotearoa and beyond. At its core, it is a work deeply rooted in light design, serving as a meditation on our physical and spatial constructs and the realms that exist beyond them. *Belle* takes a cosmic approach to the inhabitation of aerial apparatus and choreography, where circadian rhythms and ancestral connections shape the emotional landscape of the work. Featuring an all-female cast, it celebrates human strength, agility, and unity.

“Circus creates an environment where the spectator can observe the performer from a distance, like an unfamiliar object of wonder, isolating its essence and reminding us that in order to see the world, we must break with our familiar acceptance of it.”



Belle – A Performance of Air

Creative Notes

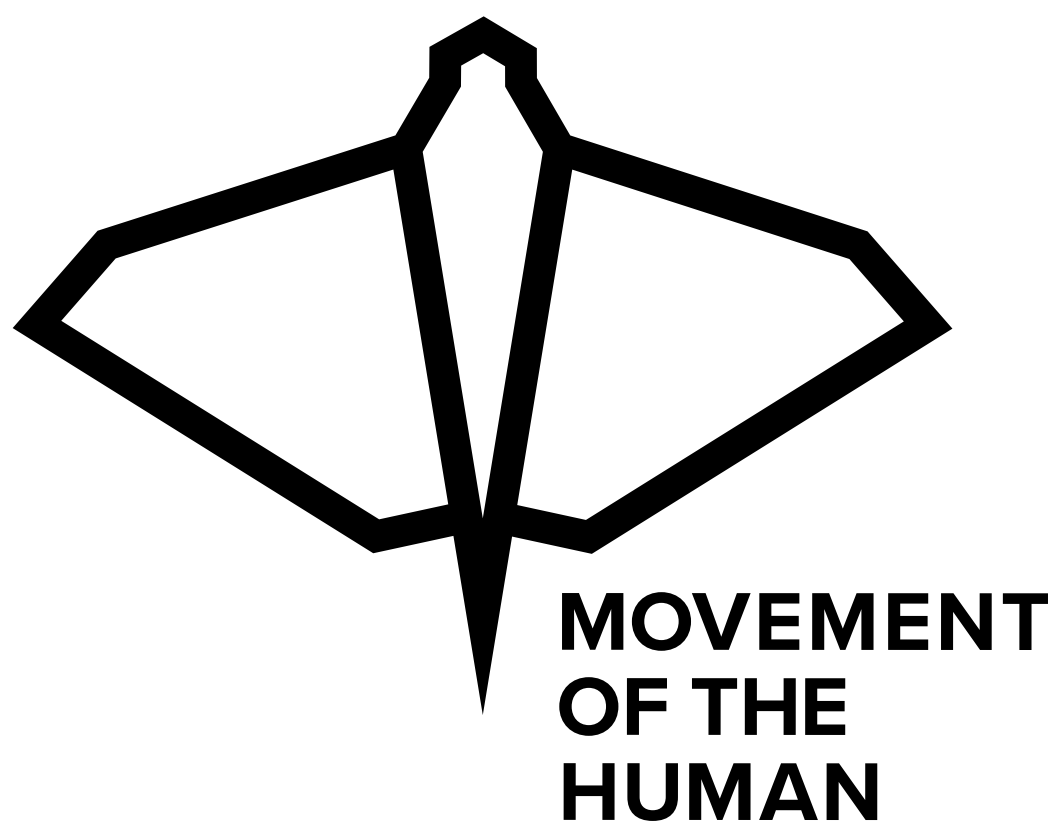
The bespoke aerial apparatus in *Belle* are designed and choreographed by Jenny Ritchie, with the collection also featuring the *libellule* — an exquisite creation by Swiss performance artist Mädir Eugster (1955–2023) of Rigolo. Rowan Pierce's spatial and light design interacts with the very laws of physics, dissolving walls and materialising light into ephemeral architectures. This work both collides and collaborates — where dance, aerial performance, and circus intersect with the art of light.

Music is composed by Eden Mulholland Anita Clark and Jol Mulholland. The composition explores cyclic, melodic textures that regenerate and continuously morph, bringing forth the construct of evolution. The layering of multiple time signatures is designed to give a feeling of constant motion.



Belle – A Performance of Air

About the Company



Movement of the Human (MOTH) is a collective based in Aotearoa that prioritises artistic expression, cultural exploration and social experience. MOTH's movement interests blend

traditional and contemporary art forms, including dance, music, visual arts and storytelling. Founded by a diverse group of long standing collaborators, the collective seeks to advance their creative collaborations and focus on ideas that have impact and meaning.

MOTH is well known for creating immersive experiences that challenge and celebrate diversity and interconnectedness. With a focus on social cohesion and the environmental impact of the live experience, the collective aims to empower artists and audiences alike. While deeply grounded in the cultural tapestry of Aotearoa, MOTH also maintains a global perspective. The artists that work at MOTH believe in the transformative potential of art as a force for unity and enlightenment.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Creative Team



Belle – A Performance of Air

Creative Team



Malia Johnston

Artistic Director, Movement of the Human (MOTH)

Malia Johnston is a prolific director and choreographer who has been part of the Aotearoa live performance landscape for over 25 years. She is known for her collaborative, boundary pushing work, seamlessly blending movement, theatre, and design to craft compelling, immersive experiences. Johnston thrives on collaboration, working across disciplines with performers, musicians, designers, and aerialists to create dynamic, cross-form productions.

Her direction has led to acclaimed works, including *Meremere*, *Mana Wahine*, *Owls Do Cry*, *Hurihuri* and *Rushes*. She has helmed over 20 productions for the World of WearableArt Awards and directed high-profile ceremonies such as the FIFA Women's World Cup Opening (2023) and the World Choir Games Opening (2024). In 2024, her latest commission, *IMPRINT*, toured Holland, Germany and New Zealand with the New Zealand Dance Company.

From large-scale spectacles to civic events through to intimate storytelling, Johnston's work captivates audiences, pushing the limits of contemporary performance. She thrives on a challenge and loves to explore how movement artistry can connect, inspire, and transform.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Creative Team



Rowan Pierce Production Designer

Rowan Pierce is an award-winning performance designer with a background in live video and sound design. Raised in Feilding, Aotearoa, with ancestral

ties to Scotland and England, he integrates video, sound, light, and object into immersive performance environments. His designs are known for their visceral impact, enhancing shared audience experiences.

Pierce's work has been widely presented internationally to critical acclaim. Recent notable works include *He Huia Kaimanawa* (Auckland Arts Festival, Kia Mau Festival 2023) and *Pōhutu* (Kia Mau Festival, Tempo Dance Festival 2019; Te Raukura ki Kāpiti 2022). He has been a core collaborator with Movement of the Human since its inception, contributing to productions like *Meremere* and *Rushes*.

Passionate about creating emotionally resonant, multi-sensory experiences, Pierce continues to push the boundaries of performative design.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Creative Team



Jenny Ritchie

**Aerial Apparatus Design,
Aerial Choreographer,
Costume Designer**

Jenny Ritchie is a multidisciplinary artist specialising in aerial apparatus design, choreography, and costume. With over 20 years in contemporary circus, live performance, and film, her career spans a wide range of creative disciplines.

Ritchie has worked internationally as a movement artist for Robert Lepage's company Ex Machina for works at the Metropolitan Opera of New York, as a choreographer and performer with Zurich's experimental contemporary circus company Rigolo, and as aerial director for the World of WearableArt. She also contributes costume designs to New Zealand film and television.

Her expertise lies in collaboration and creating innovative intersections between bodies and design. Ritchie thrives on crafting visually stunning, physically engaging works that elevate performance through her unique multidisciplinary approach.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Creative Team



Edén Mulholland (Ngāti Porou) Music Composition

Edén Mulholland is a celebrated composer and collaborator for theatre and screen. His compositions

have been licensed and performed worldwide, earning numerous arts and music awards. Mulholland's unique background as a gifted contemporary dancer and multi-instrumentalist informs his distinctive, intuitive approach. Recent works include compositions for the FIFA Women's World Cup Opening Ceremony, TVNZ's *The Pact*, Perth Festival's *Archives of Humanity*, Royal NZ Ballet's *To Hold*, Alternative Sound Library's *Semidormant* and Redleap's *Owls Do Cry*. Mulholland is the Musical Director of World of WearableArt. He is a vital part of the Aotearoa and Australian music landscape and is passionate about making music that moves the air and moves the soul.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Creative Team



Anita Clark

Music Composition, Live Musician

Anita Clark is a violinist and composer based in Tāmaki Makaurau. Performing under the moniker MOTTE, she uses violin, sampled sound, synth and voice to create richly textured soundscapes. She has released three solo albums: *Songs For Movies*, *Strange Dreams* and *Cold + Liquid*. Clark has composed for the Royal New Zealand Ballet, the New Zealand Dance Company and Movement of the Human, alongside working on film scores. Her first feature-length documentary score, *Building Bridges: Bill Youren's Vision of Peace*, premiered at Whānau Mārama: New Zealand International Film Festival (2023), winning 'Outstanding Original Score' at Documentaries Without Borders. She is also a touring musician, playing with Don McGlashan & The Others and The Phoenix Foundation/Luke Buda, continually bridging the worlds of classical and experimental composition.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Creative Team



Jolyon Mulholland (Ngāti Porou) Music Composition collaboration

Jol Mulholland is a name well-known amongst music appreciators. Having come from a musical family, it's in his blood, but his love for music really started to show when he found a guitar on the side of the road at age 11. As well as performing and releasing his own music, for over 20 years, the self-taught multi-instrumentalist, composer, Tui award-winning sound engineer and producer has created music with a very long list of some of Aotearoa New Zealand's most well-known artists.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Creative Team



Elekis Poblete Teirney Lighting Designer & Artist

Elekis Poblete Teirney is a Chilean-born lighting designer and artist based in Aotearoa. Known for her innovation and strong collaborative skills,

she has worked with esteemed artists and companies across New Zealand, creating impactful lighting designs that elevate the work and inspire dialogue. Recent collaborations include *LOVE/LOVE/LOVE/LOVE/LOVE* (Tessa Redman), *14 Malone Road* (Tupua Tigafua), *Stage of Being* (New Zealand Dance Company) and *I Pull Our Body Out of a Dead Animal* (CONJAH). In addition to her work in performance, Poblete Teirney has produced several light-based installations that explore human experiences through light. Notable installations include *A Study In Light: Postmemory*, *Stoppage* and *Corporate Bleach*.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Performing Artists – Aerialists



Belle – A Performance of Air

Performing Artists – Aerialists



Katelyn Reed (Ngāti Porou)

Katelyn Reed is a circus artist of Ngāti Porou descent, specialising in corde lisse, hand balance, contortion, and floor acrobatics. Known

for pushing the boundaries of movement, she blends these disciplines in unique ways both in the air and on the ground. With a degree in Applied Arts, Reed has performed for prestigious companies such as COLOSSAL, Inverted Citizens, The Dust Palace, Te Pou and Movement of the Human. Her recent work includes performing as an aerialist for World of WearableArt (2024) and continues to influence the Aotearoa circus scene.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Performing Artists – Aerialists



Imogen Stone

Imogen Stone is a multi-disciplinary artist from Pōneke, with a career spanning 10 years and numerous global festivals, including the Edinburgh Fringe and Glastonbury.

Specialising in aerial rope, Stone also collaborates in puppetry and film. She is a founding member of the award-winning circus troupe Laser Kiwi and serves as the creative director of COLOSSAL Productions. Stone's passion for creating fresh, audience-connecting work has seen her collaborate with leading companies such as Wētā Workshop and World of WearableArt, pushing the boundaries of her craft.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Performing Artists – Aerialists



Ellyce Bisson

Ellyce Bisson (she/her), born and raised in Ngāmotu (of Te Āti Awa), is an aerialist, dancer and acrobat currently based right here in Tāmaki Makaurau.

After her foundation in dance, majoring in commercial jazz, In 2017 she dived headfirst into the circus industry, developing a specialty in aerial hoop, with skills in adagio/ partner acrobatics, aerial pole, contortion and corde lisse. Over the past seven years Bisson has held space across the many realms of performative movement —from creature and stunt work within the Aotearoa film industry (*Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power, Spartacus*) to contemporary, spectacle and cabaret theatre on both local and international stages. She has worked and collaborated with companies such as The Dust Palace, Luck and Schooney, Diamond and most recently Movement of the Human.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Performing Artists – Aerialists



Rosita Hendry

Rosita Hendry is an accomplished performer with a background in gymnastics, circus, music and dance.

She studied Musical Theatre at Apollo Theatre School in

Auckland and Circus Arts at the National Institute of Circus Arts in Melbourne. After further training at École Nationale de Cirque in Montreal, she graduated in 2017, specialising in aerial rope and Cyr wheel. Hendry's career took off with Cirque du Soleil, where she played the lead role in *STONE*. She has also performed with Cirque Éloize on *Cirkopolis* and *Saloon*, and in the 2015 Pan American Games opening ceremony. In 2020, she joined Cirque du Soleil's *TOTEM* and in 2023 was with Circus Monti for their Switzerland tour before rejoining Cirque du Soleil on their production of *Messi10*. Based in Aotearoa when not touring, Hendry enjoys performing locally, connecting with her community and sharing her love for circus with audiences in her home country.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Performing Artists – Dancers



Belle – A Performance of Air

Performing Artists – Dancers



Kia Jewell

Kia Jewell, a South African born, New Zealand-raised dancer, is now based in London. A versatile performer skilled in contemporary, commercial, ballet and

tap, she graduated from the New Zealand School of Dance in 2018. In 2019, Kia Jewell performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival with Java Dance Theatre and joined the prestigious P.A.R.T.S contemporary training programme in Brussels. She has performed in the World of Wearable Arts Award Show in 2012, 2016 and 2023. In 2023, Jewell took part in the FIFA Women's World Cup Opening Ceremony with pop stars Bennee and Mallrat at Eden Park. In 2024, Jewell was the lead aerialist for the *Taki Rua tour of Hatupatu / Kurungaituku: a forbidden love* before relocating to London. She has choreographed and danced in music videos for Drax Project, including 'Crazy' and 'Firefly,' and featured in videos with Empara Mi and Parmish Verma. She has also starred in campaigns for ROKA LONDON and AWN.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Performing Artists – Dancers



Isabel Estrella

Isabel Estrella is a contemporary dance artist based in Eora (Sydney), with a professional practice that spans dance, physical theatre and circus.

Estrella completed full-time training in contemporary dance at the New Zealand School of Dance (2014–2016). After graduating she began performing in the contemporary dance sphere across Australia and Aoteroa. Some of the works you may have seen her in include *Torua* by Movement of the Human, *Double Beat* by Sara Black and *Mana Wahine* by Okareka Dance Company. In 2022 she expanded her practice into the realms of physical theatre and durational performance, such as *THAW* by Legs on the Wall and *Like a Knife, The Horizon* by Hamish McIntosh. Most recently Estrella has taken a dive into the circus space by joining Gravity and Other Myths, touring as an acrobat in shows such as *The Mirror* and *The Pulse*.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Performing Artists – Dancers



Anu Khapung

Anu Khapung, New Zealand's only Nepalese contemporary dancer, combines her cultural heritage with modern dance techniques. Her dynamic performances have earned

her recognition, particularly during her three years with Footnote New Zealand Dance. Known for her grounded, fluid, and explosive movement style, Khapung's work is deeply rooted in her Nepalese upbringing, which informs her artistic expression. She continues to push the boundaries of contemporary dance, offering fresh perspectives and a commitment to self-expression within the New Zealand dance community.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Performing Artists – Dancers



Brydie Colquhoun (Ngāti Kawa, Ngāpuhi)

He uri ia nō Ngāti Kawa,
Ngāpuhi. Colquhoun grew up
in Ahipara, kei reira tōna ūkaipo.
She graduated from the New
Zealand School of Dance in

2012 and has loved navigating a life of movement and
creation amongst the dance community of Aotearoa.

Colquhoun is passionate about accessibility and
inclusivity in dance, physically emotionally and spiritually.
She is passionate about sharing our Māori stories of
Aotearoa. Some memorable performances are a huge
mix of rural towns, schools and prisons throughout
Aotearoa, and in the USA, *Jacob's Pillow* and New York
showcases. She was honoured to be added to the New
Zealand School of Dance distinguished graduates
board last year, a mihi to her contribution to dance.

Over the past 11 years Colquhoun has worked with
Black Grace dance company, Footnote New Zealand
Dance company, the New Zealand Dance Company,
Atamira Dance Company, Java Dance, Okareka, Takirua,
Red Leap Theatre and Movement of the Human.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Performing Artists – Dancers



Hayley Crisp

Hayley Crisp is a performer of Noongar Wadandi descent and was raised on Dharawal country in NSW, Australia. She joins the *Belle* cast during her second year of study at the New Zealand School

of Dance, majoring in contemporary dance. Crisp is an Indigenous artist from Australia, who is inspired to share her culture through a fusion of traditional and contemporary styles. She also has strong hip hop, improvisation, tap and street style foundations that she continues to explore.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Production Team



Belle – A Performance of Air

Production Team



Tom Hoyle

Rigger & Aerial Specialist

Tom Hoyle is a seasoned rigger with 17 years of experience, specialising in human aerials and live performance. A

lifelong climber, he thrives in the challenges of counter-balancing performers and working as 'animated ballast'. Hoyle has contributed to numerous highprofile productions in New Zealand, including *Māui – One Man Against the Gods*, *World of WearableArt* and *Hurihuri*. He has worked extensively with Movement of the Human, supporting their innovative projects, including the development of *Belle*.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Production Team

Michael Lyell

Production & Stage Manager

Michael Lyell is a stage manager and production specialist with a background in performing arts management and technical production. A 2023 graduate of Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School, he has worked across stage management, production management, lighting, staging, rigging, video and sound. Recognised for his leadership and technical expertise, Lyell was awarded the 2022 Emerging Practitioner Award by his peers at Toi Whakaari.

Since 2023, he has served as the production and stage manager for *Belle – A Performance of Air* by Movement of the Human, including its debut at the Aotearoa New Zealand Festival of the Arts. In 2024, he travelled to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, managed the development of Binge Culture's latest work, and continues to collaborate with Movement of the Human on projects through 2025.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Production Team



Rose McGrannachan Co-Producer

Rose McGrannachan is an accomplished producer and event manager, currently serving as the Head of Business & Operations for the Nelson

Arts Festival. Originally from Tairāwhiti, McGrannachan brings a wealth of experience in logistics and event management, honed through roles at renowned festivals such as Adelaide Festival, Adelaide Film Festival and Dark Mofo. She has also led programme management for the Te Tairāwhiti Arts Festival, showcasing her deep passion for the arts. A fan of all art forms, McGrannachan thrives when diverse creative disciplines intersect to create something fresh and exciting.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Production Team



Gina Heidekruger

Deputy Stage Manager & Production Coordinator

Gina Heidekruger is an experienced and passionate stage manager and production/event coordinator based in

Pōneke, raised in Tāmaki Makaurau. A Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School alumni, Heidekruger centres her practice around challenging and developing her skill, supporting productions to fulfil their creative potential and bringing communities together. While Gina's day-to-day consists of production coordination at Te Auaha, she has worked across many live arts sectors such as Classical Music, Musical Theatre, Circus and Contemporary Dance.

Recent projects include *Beyond Words* (Aotearoa New Zealand Festival for the Arts and Auckland Arts Festival 2024) and *The Butterfly Who Flew into the Rave* (Nelson Arts Festival 2024). Heidekruger has been a part of the development of *Belle – A Performance of Air* since 2021 in a production/stage Management capacity.



Belle – A Performance of Air

Production Team

Antony Goodin & Benjamin Williams

Rigging & Technical Production

Specialists – YOOOCrew

Bringing over 25 years of combined experience in rigging, lighting, and stage operations Antony Goodin and Benjamin Williams are expert riggers and production technical specialists. Both graduates of Toi Whakaari, Goodin is known for his time as Head Mechanist of the Royal New Zealand Ballet and more recently as Second Rigger on World of Wearable Arts and a Senior Rigger at YOOOCrew, while Williams has built a reputation for designing and delivering complex event structures during his time as the Technical Manager and more recently Technical Sales Advisor for Metro Productions. Together, they provide exceptional production support across a range of events, from festivals and concerts to stage productions and corporate functions throughout New Zealand. Their combined technical expertise ensures seamless execution of complex productions.



About the Festival

Who We Are

Te Ahurei Toi o Tāmaki Auckland Arts Festival is a melting pot of shared experiences, whakaaro, live entertainment and kōrero every March.

Our lifeblood is arts and culture in contemporary Tāmaki Makaurau. We care deeply about celebrating artists both here in Aotearoa and from around the world, serving the creatives and communities behind the works we present, honouring te reo and te ao Māori in all that we do, and contributing to a better city and society. That's us.

Every March you'll see a big reunion with our city's arts community — many of whom we consider our whānau whānui, our extended family — alongside our mahi towards better accessibility and education opportunities for our audiences. We're also passionate about the works we curate and our collaboration with the many people who make those experiences happen. We strive to celebrate with generosity; human connection and manaakitanga will always be at the heart of what we stand for.

When we're on, we're on a mission to make Auckland an amazing place to socialise and be entertained in. Whether you're discovering the city for the first time or rekindling your love for its hidden gems, we truly believe there's something for everyone at the Festival.

The Auckland Festival Trust Ph +64 09 309 0989 Email info@aaf.co.nz

Ground Floor, 48 Greys Avenue, Auckland 1010

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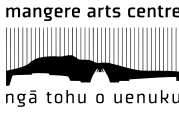
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Digital Show Programme





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