

**TE AHUREI
TOI O TĀMAKI**

4—21 MĀEHE 2021

**AUCKLAND
ARTS FESTIVAL**

4—21 MARCH 2021

Media release

Sunday 28 February 2021

AUCKLAND ARTS FESTIVAL 2021

ALERT LEVEL 3 COVID UPDATE

Te Ahurei Toi o Tāmaki | 4-21 March 2021

The Auckland Arts Festival/Te Ahurei Toi o Tāmaki (AAF) team is working through the implications of Auckland's return to lockdown for its 2021 programme, following the announcement that Tāmaki Makaurau would enter Alert Level 3 at 6am this morning, Sunday 28 February.

The Festival will not be able to launch as anticipated on Thursday 4 March, and performances planned for the first few days of AAF will not be able to go ahead. However, the team is energised and working swiftly, with confidence that many of the 2021 AAF works will be brought to audiences in the near future.

A full update of the Festival's plan for this and subsequent weeks, including information regarding specific shows, will be communicated in the coming days.

AAF is fully committed to keeping its artists, crew, staff, and audiences safe. The ticket refund policy in the event of show cancellation due to COVID is available [here](#).

After cutting its 2020 season short due to COVID-19, the 2021 Auckland Arts Festival/Te Ahurei Toi o Tāmaki was due to open on Thursday 4 March and run through 21 March 2021.

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Four important AAF exhibitions, [The Dawn Raids – Educate to Liberate](#) at Studio One; [A Very Different World](#) at Te Tuhi and Papatūnga; [Edith and George: in our sea of islands](#) at Corbans Estate Arts Centre; and [The Thrum of the Tide](#) at Te Uru have already opened, ahead of the Festival's official launch.

The Festival's 100% Aotearoa line-up was revealed on 25 November 2020 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 2021 theme of Aroha.

The 2021 Festival is the first of four with Shona McCullagh (MNZM) in the role of Artistic Director. 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.

"We are incredibly sad that our opening week cannot proceed as it was planned, but we are working closely with our artists and venue partners to reschedule some events as soon as possible. We send aroha to our colleagues at Auckland Pride Festival, Auckland Fringe, Basement Theatre, Q Theatre, Auckland Unlimited, Auckland Theatre Company – and all the independent artists, producers and crew who are also affected by Auckland's return to Level 3. The messages of support we have received from all over the world have touched us deeply and we have absolute faith in the professionalism of the arts sector, and the commitment of our audience, funders and sponsors in Aotearoa to get through this," says McCullagh.

AAF Chief Executive David Inns adds, *"We are thankful to our artists, patrons and audiences for their ongoing support and patience at this crucial time. The AAF team is committed to honouring all the hard work and energy that has already been invested into making our 2021 Festival happen."*

ENDS

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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.

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, NZ Community Trust and Four Winds Foundation. The Festival's Gold Sponsor is *The New Zealand Herald*, and the Silver Sponsors are Colenso BBDO and Auckland Airport.

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

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

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