



## Media release

**\*\*STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 10AM SATURDAY 5 NOVEMBER, 2016\*\***

# AUCKLAND ARTS FESTIVAL UNVEILS 2017 LINE-UP

## 2017 FESTIVAL OPENS 8-26 MARCH AT LOCATIONS ACROSS AUCKLAND

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From **8-26 March 2017**, the Auckland Arts Festival will once again envelop the city in creativity, beauty, light and sound, emotion, horror, comedy and dazzling brilliance. The 2017 programme is a superb, can't-stay-away line up of performance and visual arts.

Over **19** days the 2017 Auckland Arts Festival (AAF) will present over **45** individual events, exhibitions and performances by artists and companies from the **UK, Canada, The Netherlands, Scotland, Ireland, Taiwan, Serbia, the USA, France, Mexico** and **Aotearoa**.

The 2017 Festival presents **seven** world premieres and **23** New Zealand premieres and events exclusive to Auckland. The programme includes works performed in **English, Māori, Cantonese, Sāmoan, Tongan, Spanish, French, Serbian**, as well as **audio description** and **New Zealand Sign Language**.

Artistic Director **Carla van Zon** says, of her final Auckland Arts Festival, "This year we are bringing to Tāmaki Makaurau a variety of performances and events rarely seen together in New Zealand and, in doing so, we honour some of the best artists from New Zealand and around the world. This includes those who have been in the industry for many years alongside those at the start of their journey.

"I'm extremely proud to have played a part in the evolution of the Auckland Arts Festival which is now firmly embedded in Auckland's arts calendar and has, for many international artists and organisations, put Auckland on the map as an arts-loving city, comparable with the likes of Melbourne, Adelaide and Toronto."

Auckland Arts Festival Chief Executive, **David Inns** says, "The 2017 Auckland Arts Festival is an incredibly diverse programme of world-class arts events, both free and ticketed, that everyone in the region can access in some way. Geographically, the 2017 programme travels even further across Auckland and there are more opportunities than ever for people and communities to get involved."

Auckland Arts Festival 2017 highlights:

Major international works include a beautiful and highly innovative one-of-a-kind one-man show currently wowing audiences on Broadway. Through the use of cutting-edge aural technology and virtuosic storytelling, **The Encounter**, by British theatre company Complicite and conceived by Complicite Artistic Director Simon McBurney, tells the gripping true story of a *National Geographic* photographer who got lost in a remote valley of the Brazilian Amazon.

Jakop Ahlbom's **Horror**, playing at The Civic, is a spine-tingling and hilarious stage show that pays homage to the horror-movie genre (complete with spurting blood and dismembered body parts). Ahlbom is a genius theatre maker and master of special effects whose shows garner rave reviews and play to sell-out houses everywhere they go.

For dance lovers, **RICE**, by one of the world's longest standing, ever glorious dance companies, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan, is a stunning depiction of the life cycle of rice, and humankind, told through astounding contemporary dance. **Natalia Osipova & Guests** is a triple bill of contemporary dance by three major international choreographers that showcases the prima ballerina's incomparable talents, along with those of Sergei Polunin (*Take Me To Church*), Jason Kittelberger and James O'Hara.



Consummate composer-performer **Rufus Wainwright** is bringing selections from his debut opera, *Prima Donna – A Symphonic Concert*, and his famous tribute to Judy Garland, *Rufus does Judy*, to Aotea Centre's ASB Theatre for one night of magical musical alchemy.

The world premiere of new New Zealand opera, *The Bone Feeder* by Gareth Farr, is one of the highlights of the New Zealand music programme. Commissioned by Auckland Arts Festival, with libretto by Renee Liang and directed by Sara Brodie (*Nixon in China*), *The Bone Feeder* is performed in Maori, English and Cantonese with Western and Chinese instruments, and taonga pūoro.

Also in classical music, a one-night-only rediscovery of Jack Body's *Passio* will raise the roof of Auckland's Town Hall. Produced by AAF, performed by the Auckland Chamber Orchestra and Voices New Zealand Chamber Choir with Madeleine Pierard, and conducted by Dr Karen Grylls and Peter Scholes, *Passio* will be a rare, immersive musical experience.

For the family, *Power Plant* is a captivating nocturnal bush walk of enchanting light and sound installations that will illuminate the Auckland Domain for 11 nights; Cirque Eloize's *ID* is a stunning family-friendly event in which mind-blowing circus meets urban performance, trick biking, break dancing and more; *Lost at Sea* is the latest masterpiece by the maestros of theatre for young people, Scotland's Catherine Wheels; and the University of Auckland season of *Nanogirl's Explosive Science World*, is a super science show filled with experiments and experiences that get keen young minds all sparked up.

Film lovers can relive the magic of the silver screen with *Raiders of the Lost Ark: Film with Live Orchestra* – a showing of the original Indiana Jones adventure accompanied live by the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra.

Also in theatre, the world premiere of Miriama McDowell, Rob Mokaraka and Jason Te Kare's *Cellfish* will take audiences behind the walls of a New Zealand Correctional Facility in a funny, insightful and gripping dark comedy with a thrilling twist.

*The Biggest*, a new New Zealand work written by pioneering playwright Jamie McCaskill and the third part in his *Thames Trilogy*, is a raw glimpse at hard-case rural men navigating their way through life in small town Aotearoa.

The famous Spiegel tent is the most FOMO-provoking venue in the Festival, with many people streaming in after work during the lazy Summer nights of the Festival. Headlining the Spiegel tent in March 2017 is the Colenso BBDO season of *La Soirée*, a smash-hit, adults-only contemporary cabaret, featuring the crème de la crème of performers from around the world.

Also in the Spiegel tent is *Respect*, in which Aaradhna, Annie Crummer, Bella Kalolo and Esther Stephens celebrate the Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin, and her smash-hit, civil rights anthem, with a line-up of funk, soul and R&B originals and classics. On the flipside, *Revolutions* is the coming together of Moana Maniapoto, Warren Maxwell, Rob Ruha and Jon Toogood who will give their spin to the un-thought of possibilities, relationships, poetry and politics that have spun the wheels (and turntables) of generations.

The Spiegel tent will also house a band that has quickly become a global phenomenon, **Mexrrissey** - a seven-piece super-group of Mexican musicians who pay homage to the iconic The Smiths frontman with Spanish reworkings of Morrissey songs; and **Paris Combo**, fronted by the charismatic vocals of chanteuse Belle du Berry, who mix French chanson with gypsy jazz and lashings of joie de vivre.

For one night at The Civic, Serbia's **Emir Kusturica and the No Smoking Orchestra** will entertain, provoke and amuse with their genre-defying, 'unza, unza'-Balkan versions of rumba, rock and gypsy music.

The vast visual arts programme is headlined by *Picturing Asia: Double Take – The photography of Brian Brake and Steve McCurry*. In this NZ-exclusive exhibition at Te Uru Waitakere in Titirangi, stunning images by two of the great masters of documentary photography come together in a fascinating artistic conversation.



Auckland Arts Festival partner Te Tuhi presents *Transit (Arrival)*, a large scale, walk-through sculpture by one of New Zealand's most exciting young artists, Yona Lee, that explores the structure and pulse of civilisation.

Also in the visual arts line-up is a partnership between Auckland Arts Festival, Auckland War Memorial Museum and the Wallace Foundation, *Antarctica – while you were sleeping*, in which visual artist Joseph Michael, in collaboration with composer Rhian Sheehan, has created a cinematic spectacle like no other – a one-to-one scale of an Antarctic iceberg projected on the surface of the mighty Auckland Museum complete with sound score.

The AAF wouldn't be complete without the hugely popular **White Night** when, for one night only, a huge group of artists take over the city presenting a diverse range of art, music and theatrical events at over 100 locations, including galleries, venues, laneways and in the streets. More info [www.whitenight.co.nz](http://www.whitenight.co.nz).

*Whānui* is a major new project produced by Auckland Arts Festival. Taking place in Auckland's north, south, east and west, *Whānui* is collection of participatory arts projects - creative collaborations between established artists and the community - in which an amazing mix of people who call Auckland home create, join in with and experience artworks in the many spaces and places that form our neighbourhoods. More info and to get involved [www.aaf.co.nz/whanui](http://www.aaf.co.nz/whanui).

Another Festival staple is **SmArtsFest**, in which students come face-to-face with life-changing theatre, dance and music from Aotearoa and the world. In partnership with Auckland Airport, the SmArtsFest programme comprises schools-only matinees, special events and discounted tickets to public shows.

The Auckland Arts Festival Garden at Aotea Square, home to the famous Spiegel tent and the iHeartRadio sound stage, is open throughout the Festival, from early afternoon until the last show finishes. The Festival Garden is a vibrant hub at the heart of the city where visitors can enjoy food and refreshments, visual artworks, free performances and fun for the whole family.

The Auckland Arts Festival takes place 8-26 March 2017. For the first time, Festival Lovers can buy Early Bird discounted tickets for most shows until 16 November. Full programme at [www.aaf.co.nz](http://www.aaf.co.nz).

## **ENDS**

### **Auckland Arts Festival 2017**

Locations across Auckland | 8-26 March, 2017

**Web:** [www.aaf.co.nz](http://www.aaf.co.nz) | **Facebook:** AklFestival | **Twitter:** AklFestival

**Trailer:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cxrRTpSEIfk&feature=youtu.be>

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### **About Auckland Arts Festival**

Taking place annually in March, the Auckland Arts Festival is a globally recognised event that celebrates people and culture, and showcases the unrivalled location, cultural diversity and vibrant energy of New Zealand's largest city. Over 1.6 million people have attended the Festivals to date.

Auckland Arts Festival is governed by the Auckland Festival Trust. Trustees are John Judge (Chair), Rick Carlyon, Evan Davies, Sarah Judkins, Tarun Kanji, Margaret Kāwharu MNZM, Jim Moser, Ben Taufua and Fred Ward. 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.

The Executive Team comprises Chief Executive David Inns and Artistic Director, Carla van Zon.

Significant support for AAF 2017 is received from Foundation North, Pub Charity, NZ Community Trust and The Lion Foundation.

### **For more information, images and interviews, please contact:**

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