

CELLFISH

AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

T.O.A PRODUCTIONS

WRITTEN BY MIRIAMA MCDOWELL, ROB MOKARAKA
AND JASON TE KARE

DIRECTED BY JASON TE KARE



FREE PROGRAMME



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SILO THEATRE

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**CELLFISH
T.O.A PRODUCTIONS**

Q THEATRE, LOFT

WEDNESDAY 8 MARCH 7.30PM
THURSDAY 9 MARCH 6.30PM
FRIDAY 10 - SATURDAY 11 MARCH 7.30PM
SUNDAY 12 MARCH 2.00PM & 7.00PM

TE ORO, GLEN INNES

THURSDAY 16 - FRIDAY 17 MARCH 7.00PM
1 HOUR 20 MINS NO INTERVAL

POST SHOW TALKS: THURSDAY 9 & 16 MARCH

**NAU MAI HAERE MAI KI TE AHUREI TOI O TĀMAKI MAKĀURAU
Welcome to the 2017 Auckland Arts Festival**

Great artists cause controversy, start revolutions and little by little change the world. Festivals like ours are a catalyst for change creating opportunities for artists to communicate with audiences and audiences to respond to artists' work. Throughout the Festival you will find small threads that deal with our world today. We hope that the work in the Festival can make you think, laugh, scream a little and perhaps even cry.

Cellfish is an important new theatre work by Miriama McDowell, Rob Mokaraka and Jason Te Kare. Last Festival they showed scenes as part of our RAW season. I and my team were all very taken with the work – it has lots to say but does it with aroha and humour. Thanks to everyone involved whose vision, hard work and passion made it happen. Congratulations to the entire T.O.A whānau and to Sophie, Jess and Silo for coming on board with us.

The Festival's CEO David Inns (my partner and collaborator of many years), our Board and staff, hope you have a fabulous Festival. We hope that you enjoy the beauty and complexity of the art presented and value its importance in our society. Join the revolution.

Carla van Zon, David Inns and the Festival Team

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Tēnā koutou katoa and thank you for coming to see the premiere season of *Cellfish*.

In 2013 I was asked by Rob and Miriama to work as dramaturg on *Cellfish*. From the very beginning, I was struck by the delightful way the subject matter was handled—the use of humour to open up a conversation. It was contemporary, equal parts charming and challenging, and it spoke of an urban Māori experience that I recognised.

I grew up in a halfway house for youth at risk run by my mother. The characters in *Cellfish* remind me of many of the young people I lived with over the years; complex, charming and at times volatile. In that environment, I experienced first-hand the way a young person's perspective on life can become skewed, so crime and violence are idolised. I also experienced how potent parental and whānau love can be and witnessed what happens when that love is either missing, or is tainted by some of those views.

One of the things that struck the creative team when we began the researching phase were the statistics. The over-representation of Māori in the



WITH SUPPORT FROM

prison population is so well known it seems like we've become deaf to it but Māori being three times more likely to be arrested, three times more likely to be incarcerated and three times more likely to receive a longer sentence for the same crime? It was heart-breaking to discover.

Then as we built *Cellfish*, it felt like the news headlines would follow its progression. Serco and the fightclubs at Mt Eden Prison, the historical abuse of those in state care and the way compensation fast-tracking seemed to leverage off the damage from the abuse – many couldn't afford legal representation, and found it was easier to take the money and apology offered. Even as the play premieres there's been news that forty percent of the current prison population went through state care; our prison population has hit 10,000; and the government has announced it intends to spend \$2.5 billion on new prisons in the next five years.

Right from the beginning, the creative team wanted to push ourselves in the creation of *Cellfish*. As three experienced theatre practitioners, we were excited to work together and challenge each other. Thank you, Rob and Miriama for sticking with this kaupapa the whole way through. We tested each other and the ideas brought to the table. We interrogated not only the ideas but the way we would deliver them theatrically. It took a lot of honesty and trust. To Mark Ruka who joined the creative team for this season thank you for the hard work. The play demands a lot from the two performers and you and Miriama are a great team. Thank you also to Ross McCormack for lending us your talents to achieve the dance sequence. I promise one day we'll find a project where we can collaborate properly.

We've aimed to create something that would start conversations, and we wanted to make it as hard as possible for people to ignore those conversations. To do this, we recognised we needed to walk a tightrope in telling this story. We have unashamedly focused on the perpetrators of crime, but we knew to be effective in creating conversations we needed to respect the perspective and impact crimes have on the victims. The most common thing victims of crime want from the Justice and Corrections systems is to ensure that it doesn't happen to anyone else. The reoffending rate shows the systems are not delivering.

This is why I would like to use my final words to acknowledge the good people who work in the areas of rehabilitation and healing both inside our correctional facilities and in our communities. Our intention in writing *Cellfish* is to interrogate the systems, not those who have to work within it.

Ngā mihi nui,

Jason Te Kare

CREATIVE TEAM

Director

Jason Te Kare

Writers

Rob Mocaraka
Mirama McDowell
Jason Te Kare

Set and Lighting Designer

Jane Hakaraia

Sound Designer

Thomas Press

Costume Designer

Kristin Seth

Production Manager

Kate Burton

Stage Manager

Youra Hwang

Lighting and Sound Operator

Stephen Paul

CAST

Mirama McDowell
Mark Ruka

SONG CREDITS

Ma Te Kahukura

Hohepa Tamehana

Sensitive to a Smile

Herbs

Smoke Gets In Your Eyes

The Platters

PRODUCED IN ASSOCIATION WITH SILO THEATRE

BY ARRANGEMENT WITH



CREATIVE TEAM AND CAST BIOGRAPHIES



MIRIAMA MCDOWELL WRITER + ACTOR

Miriama has worked extensively in NZ theatre, TV and film since she graduated from Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School in 2002. Her first job out of drama school was at Christchurch Men's Prison with Jim Moriarty. She has worked as an actor with some of Aotearoa's most esteemed playwrights including Hone Kouka, Briar Grace Smith and Albert Belz. This is the first play she has written. She has just directed *Much Ado About Nothing*

with The Pop Up Globe and was awarded Best Actress in this year's NZ Film Awards for her role in *The Great Maiden's Blush*. In 2015 Miriama won the Chapman Tripp for Most Promising New Director for her production of *Ngā Pou Wāhine*, and she recently travelled to France to study with clown teacher Philippe Gaulier. Miriama's recent screen credits include *Mahana*, *Dark Horse* and *Terry Teo*.



MARK RUKA ACTOR

Mark is a graduate of Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School with iwi affiliations to Ngāpuhi and Raukawa. Mark has performed extensively on stage working for award winning production companies including Tawata, Taki Rua, Silo and ATC. As a screen actor Mark has worked with international filmmakers including Taika Waititi, Lee Tamahori, Vincent Ward, Roger Donaldson and Alison Maclean. Mark is co-director, writer and

producer of TeNati Indigenous, an independent film company based in NZ and Tahiti. TeNati's core aim is to support emerging indigenous actors, writers and directors across film TV and documentary disciplines. TeNati is also the team behind the T-Tahiti International Film Festival.

Mark would like to acknowledge the support of his whānau and friends, The Theatre of Auckland whānau, Silo whānau, the Auckland Arts Festival, the creative team behind *Cellfish* and finally, Emily-Rose for helping her dad learn lines for no pocket money.



ROB MOKARAKA (Ngāpuhi, Ngāi Tūhoe) WRITER

Rob, alongside Paolo Rotondo, is the co-writer/actor of the award winning play, *Strange Resting Places*. In 2007 it won a Chapman Tripp Award for Outstanding Playwrights which propelled the work on to international festivals in Australia, Singapore, London and the 2014 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Film achievements include being directed by Academy Award nominees Ben Somborgaart on *Bride Flight*, and Taika Waititi on

Tama Tu. Rob received Best Actor awards at Wairoa Film Festival and T-Tahiti Film Festival for the short film *INC'd*. Two years in a row Rob won Outstanding Performance of the year, first for his role in Witi Ihimaera's play, *All Our Sons* and then for his one man play, *SHOT BRO-Confessions Of A Depressed Bullet* – a black comedy based on Rob's real fight with his depression and a bullet. Rob is also co-writer and co-actor of the new Māori musical comedy webseries *The Māori Side Steps*.



JASON TE KARE (Ngāti Maniapoto, Tainui) WRITER +DIRECTOR

Born and bred in Auckland, Jason has fond memories of summers doing Maidment Youth Theatre and helping to establish the original Basement Theatre. He made his professional acting debut in Hone Kouka's seminal work *Waiora* in the 1996 NZ International Festival of the Arts, which went on to tour nationally and internationally. In Wellington, Jason performed at Taki Rua Depot and won best newcomer

for his role in Brair Grace-Smith's *Flatout Brown*; graduated from Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School; and worked at RNZ as a drama producer. He directed *I, George Nepia* the first Māori play to win Production of the Year. It also won Best New Director, Director of the Year and Best Actor for Jarod Rawiri. Jason is currently the programmer at Te Oro, an Auckland Council music and arts facility focused on youth in Glen Innes, the neighbourhood where he grew up.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge our co-producers Auckland Arts Festival and Silo Theatre, especially Carla van Zon, David Inns, Jessica Smith, Sophie Roberts, Angela Green, Dolina Wehipeihana and Tama Waipara. The wonderful people of Te Oro, Q Theatre, Banana Boat, Playmarket, Vincent Herbert Design, Betsy & Mana Productions, Te Rakau Hua o te Wao Tapu and The Pump House Theatre. As well as Ross McCormack, Ngirimu Blair, Tim Blake, Salesi L'eota, Linda Cartwright, Stanley Andrew Jackson, Gabrielle Vincent, Michael Bennett, Martin Kupa, Kiwa Huakau, Sienna Mackinlay, Andi Crown, Jacqui Moyes, Jim Moriarty, Talanoa Fraser, Kowhai Rose Mokaraka, Shavique Atareti Parker, Barbara Te Kare, Ona Ofamo'oni, Mosese & Teuila Ah Hi, Zana & Joash Price.

CELLFISH RECEIVED DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FROM PLAYMARKET



JANE HAKARAIA (Ngāti Kapumanawawhiti, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Te Āti Awa, Ngāti Pākehā)

SET + LIGHTING DESIGNER

Jane Hakaraia is a freelance theatre and TV designer. Most of her work is lighting related. She has worked with Bullet Heart Club, Silo Theatre, Massive Company and Auckland Theatre Company among many others. Her latest designs include the set and lighting for *My Party Song* for Blue Bach

Productions and Māori TV, garden designer for *Summer in the Square* at Auckland Live and lighting Playground Collective's *Rime of the Modern Mariner*.



THOMAS PRESS SOUND DESIGNER

Thomas is a graduate of the New Zealand School of Music with a Bachelor of Music in Composition (2009) and Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School with a Diploma in Entertainment Technology (2005). Since 2004, he has worked on countless professional theatre and dance productions, as well as numerous art installations. At the 2014 Auckland Theatre Awards he won the People's Choice Best Music award and at the 2015 Auckland Theatre Awards he received an

Excellence Award in Sound Design and Music. He is also a five time nominee of the Wellington Theatre Award for Sound Designer of the Year. In 2016, Thomas created an original sound design for Auckland Theatre Company's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time* and toured the return season of Silo Theatre's *The Book of Everything* which included his original sound design.



KRISTIN SETH COSTUME DESIGNER

Kristin is a leading Costume Designer. Over many decades she has worked with some of New Zealand's top directors, producers and talent and on some of NZ's best film ventures. Kristin has worked across many genre on projects such as *Hunt For The Wilderpeople*, *Lambs*—winner of Best Short Film at the NZ Film Awards in 2012—and more recently the remake of the cult classic *Pork Pie*. Kristin's skill and

artistry were acknowledged when she received a nomination at the 2014 New Zealand Film Awards for Best Costume Design for the multi-award winning feature *The Dark Horse*. Kristin was nominated at this year's film awards for *Hunt for the Wilderpeople*. *The World in Your Window*, a short film by Zoe Macintosh featuring Kristin's design recently won an award at the Clermont Film Festival in France.

Cellfish is Kristin's second theatre production. In 2016, she designed the costumes for Silo Theatre's *Medea*.



KATE BURTON PRODUCTION MANAGER

Kate Burton is a Production Manager and Lighting Designer. She was a Lighting Technician at Auckland Live (formerly The EDGE) for twelve years and after having a family, returned to the industry as Q Theatre's Production Coordinator from 2012 to 2014. Since 2014, Kate has been Silo Theatre's Production Manager. Kate has worked on every Auckland Arts Festival since 2003.



YOURA HWANG STAGE MANAGER

Youra Hwang is a stage manager based in Auckland. She graduated Unitec in 2014 with a Bachelor of Production Design and Stage Management. She has worked with Silo Theatre, Auckland Theatre Company, NZ Opera, Theatre Stampede and Nightsong Productions since she graduated. Her recent stage management works are *Boys Will Be Boys* (2016) produced by Silo, *Billy Elliott* (2017) produced by Auckland Theatre Company as Assistant Stage Manager and *Spirit House* (2017) by Theatre Stampede and Nightsong Productions.



REHEARSALS, DECEMBER 2016. PHOTOGRAPHS: DAVID ST GEORGE

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