

# Regional News

*Eyes on Weston*

Issue 279

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# Jump to page

- Music news 5
- Close-up 9
- Money matters 10
- Discover NZ by bike 11-12, 14-16
- Discover NZ 13
- Buy – build – renovate 17-23
- Go Green Expo 25
- Wellington sculpture series 28
- Gallery news 29
- Exceptional services 30-31
- Halloween news 33
- Puzzles 34
- Reviews 35
- What’s on 37-39

## News

### All killer, no filler



Photo by Sacha Stejko

Rhys Mathewson is your favourite comedian’s favourite comedian. Most people know him as a familiar face on the telly as a regular on *7 Days*, a contestant on *Guy Montgomery’s Guy Mont-Spelling Bee*, and a roving reporter on *Seven Sharp*. But he’s been doing stand-up for longer and has won both of Aotearoa’s most prestigious comedy awards.

With over two decades of material, Rhys thought it was time for the nation to get *Up To Speed* in this two-hour mega show where he brings all his best jokes to the table in an all-killer-no-filler night of comedic brilliance.

“I can do it all: big laughs, heartwarming moments, silly jokes, dirty jokes and spur-of-the-moment jokes, and everything in between,” Rhys says. “If people find that arrogant, I would encourage them to buy a ticket anyway and enjoy being proven wrong or being proven right!”

The first half of the show features bangers from Rhys’ wellspring of material. “Sometimes a joke is like clothes that you pull out of the wardrobe and think, ‘Oh I loved wearing this, let’s bring it back out tonight.’”

Then audiences will have a chance to catch their breath before the second half, where he’ll perform his show *10<sup>th</sup> Rodeo*, which premiered in the 2024 NZ International Comedy Festival and won the Director’s Choice Award.

“I don’t want to presume the audience’s current level of knowledge of Rhys Mathewson, but I will say I am the world’s leading expert on Rhys Mathewson and will happily fill in all of their Rhys-related knowledge gaps.”

Rhys will perform *Up To Speed* on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October at The Hannah. Having started running last year, he adds, “The worst part of it by far is doing the running and the best part is getting to see people out and about engaging with their city. I’d love if people used the show as an excuse to get out of the house and live and feel connected to where they live.”

### Rulers of grunge



Photo by Emily Rieman.

“When it comes to grunge or even just Seattle,” Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam said there was “one band that made the definitive music of the time...”

“It wasn’t us or Nirvana, but Mudhoney. Nirvana delivered it to the world, but Mudhoney were the band of that time and sound.”

Formed in 1988, they quickly became the flagship act for the legendary independent label Sub Pop, who signed Nirvana and Soundgarden in the early 90s and whose roster today includes Fleet Foxes, Flight of the Conchords, Father John Misty, Sleater-Kinney, and more. Mudhoney have over 25 official releases through Sub Pop across a career spanning nearly four decades. Their raw, primal debut single *Touch Me I’m Sick* and 1992’s breakthrough *Suck You Dry* set their trajectory as pioneers of a sound that would change the world of rock music forever. Their output today – including their latest and 11<sup>th</sup> acclaimed studio album *Plastic Eternity* (2023) – solidifies that status and shows they have no intentions of slowing down. Mudhoney’s blazing energy, razor-sharp songwriting, and uncompromising approach remain as vital as ever.

Fans won’t be a fraction surprised to hear that tickets for Mudhoney’s upcoming New Zealand tour dates flew out the door faster than hot cakes. Due to overwhelming demand, Wellington’s venue has been upgraded to Meow Nui so more Mudheads can experience a band who are “not trading on legacy” but are still “dangerous, mosh-pit commanding” (*Pitchfork*). Thursday the 29<sup>th</sup> of October is the day; don’t miss their first tour of the country in over a decade.

Cover: *The Sleeping Beauty*, Royal New Zealand Ballet.

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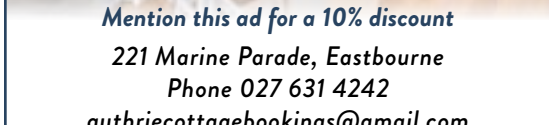
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# True love's kiss



Enter the enchanted world of *The Sleeping Beauty* this spring before the curtains close on the Royal New Zealand Ballet's (RNZB) 2026 season.

Greg Horsman's acclaimed production of the famous fairytale is one of the company's most cherished works, telling the age-old story of Princess Aurora, whose destiny is altered when she pricks her finger and falls into an enchanted sleep that can only be broken by true love's kiss.

Horsman's elegant choreography honours the grandeur of the classical tradition, while bringing warmth, humour, and humanity to one of ballet's greatest masterpieces. Combined with the breathtaking and richly detailed sets and costumes designed by former artistic director Gary Harris, audiences are transported to a storybook kingdom full of glittering courts, bewitched forests, and unforgettable fairytale characters.

Pyotr Tchaikovsky's iconic score is brought to life by the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra under the direction of conductor Hamish McKeich. Magical elements created by Wellington's Wētā Workshop add an unmistakable Kiwi touch that, when paired with Jon Buswell's atmospheric lighting design, create an immersive and visually exquisite production that will captivate audiences.

Horsman's *The Sleeping Beauty* had its triumphant premiere in 2011 and saw over 42,000 people experience the magic on its RNZB nationwide tour. It then travelled across the Tasman after Horsman joined Queensland Ballet in 2012, where it has been staged several times to widespread critical acclaim, cementing its reputation as one of the most beautiful contemporary interpretations of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century classic.

Speaking about the return of *The Sleeping Beauty* to Aotearoa, RNZB artistic director Ty King-Wall says, "We look forward to a new generation of dancers taking on these coveted roles as this much-loved story awakens once more."

Performing at St James Theatre from the 29<sup>th</sup> of October to the 7<sup>th</sup> of November, *The Sleeping Beauty* is perfect for first-time balletgoers, devoted dance lovers, and whānau looking to share an experience that is overflowing with romance, adventure, dazzling choreography, unforgettable music, and extraordinary talent.

# Deadly folk music



Photo by Den O'Keeffe.

Sitting comfortably at the crossroads of Americana, bluegrass, and classic folk, the Aotearoa Music Awards-nominated five-piece ensemble Butter Wouldn't Melt are gearing up for the release of their new single *Nettle Song*, out on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October.

A Kiwi ode to the fragility of life, *Nettle Song* was inspired by the hidden dangers that lurk in the Aotearoa bush, specifically the deadly native tree nettle ongaonga (*Urtica ferox*), which has been linked to the cold case deaths of hikers.

"Often they were found lying peacefully with no visible injuries and for many years no one could explain how they'd died, because the poison from the nettle's sting wasn't showing up in post-mortems," the band explains.

*Nettle Song* was recorded live at the studio with no amplification, "just acoustic instruments and voices" – which includes guitars, mandolin, fiddle, double bass, and harmonies from four exceptional voices. The song's mellow and moody sonics have been brought to life with a video of the ensemble performing in the forest at Ōtari Wilton's Bush, capturing an old-school folk aesthetic.

What stands out about Butter Wouldn't Melt is the emotional depth of their songwriting and harmonies, which *Red Raven* describes as "strangely comforting while coated in melancholia, like early mists over the mountains awaiting dispersion by the morning sun".

Likened to Gillian Welch and The Punch Brothers and known for their high-energy performances, Butter Wouldn't Melt are celebrating the new song with a single release party at The Undercurrent on Saturday the 31<sup>st</sup> of October.

## SNIPS

### Rates changes

Wellington City Council has put five proposals forward for public feedback about how rates are set. They are: changing to land value rather than capital value as the rating base; changing the general rates differential for businesses; extending the vacant land differential area; a commercial differential for Tiaki Wai; and rates remissions for earthquake-prone buildings. Have your say at [wcc.nz/rating-policies-review](http://wcc.nz/rating-policies-review) until the 15<sup>th</sup> of November.

### Gumboot Friday

I Am Hope's national day of action for youth mental health is on Friday the 6<sup>th</sup> of November. Communities across the motu will gumboot up and kick into gear to raise funds, awareness, and support for Aotearoa's young people. Get involved at [www.gumbootfriday.com](http://www.gumbootfriday.com)

### Next gen

The BFS Next Generation Artists programme is open for emerging artists aged 25 and under to apply to exhibit, sell, and be discovered at the 2027 NZ Art Show in Wellington. Apply at [artshow.co.nz/emerging-artists](http://artshow.co.nz/emerging-artists)

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# You'll never guess...



Our story begins in Dartmoor, England. Here, “at the stylish weekend retreat of the affluent Derek and Janet Taylor,” Concord Theatricals teases, “both adultery and murder are in the air”.

In Rupert Holmes’ *Accomplice*, four characters enter, but only three leave. One is the murderer, one is the accomplice; one is the hunter, one is the hunted. Can you guess who is who? We dare you to try, because “all is *never* as it seems in this electrifying game of trickery and misdirection”.

Described as the “best fooler since *Sleuth* and twice as clever” by the *L.A. Times*, Holmes’ comedy-thriller won the Mystery Writers of America’s coveted Edgar Allan Poe Award for Best Play in 1991. Full of deception and dark humour, it is fiendishly clever, intricately deceptive, and wildly unpredictable.

With a mission statement centred on drama and fun, Wellington Repertory Theatre has chosen the perfect play for its centenary season.

“With more twists and turns than the Remutaka Hill, the show has been a great challenge for myself and the cast”, director Neil Brewer says.

“We are putting on the finishing touches, so we’re ready when we open. You will never guess what’s coming, so come along for the ride. We’re going to entertain you.”

Join Wellington Repertory Theatre for this perfectly executed game of cat and mouse and take a stab at who is pulling the strings at Gryphon Theatre from the 28<sup>th</sup> of October until the 7<sup>th</sup> of November.

## Where we lay our scene



***Te Kura O Wilford performing As You Like It. Photo by Brian Scurfield, Memory of Light Photography.***

Every year, hundreds of primary and intermediate-aged children take part in Shakespeare Globe Centre New Zealand’s (SGCNZ) Primarily Playing with Shakespeare (PPWS). “The Shakespeare performance was definitely my favourite thing this year”, Rico said of the programme in 2025. Meanwhile, Frida loved performing Shakespeare for two years running. “It was definitely one of my highlights of the year. I also love the language.”

PPWS sees tamariki aged between five and 13 rehearse then perform an hour-long tailored version of a brilliant Bard play for the public to behold. For 2026, it’s *Romeo and Juliet* – right up to the tomb scene.

On Friday the 6<sup>th</sup> of November from 12:30pm to 1:30pm at Tāwhiri Warehouse in Newtown, almost 120 students from Crofton Downs Primary School, Karori West Normal School, Miramar North School, Northland School, and Ridgway School will present their two scenes each, interspersed by the narrator filling in the gaps between.

On Wednesday the 11<sup>th</sup> at the same time at VUW Memorial Theatre in Kelburn, a further 110 from Clifton Terrace Model School, Kenakena School, Samuel Marsden Collegiate School, Te Aro School, and Te Kura o Wilford will perform their renditions.

SGCNZ CEO Dawn Sanders says PPWS is ideal for building confidence. “Through delivery of their lines, they ‘eyeball’ their fellow actors, listen to each other, and embrace their audience – exceptionally important skills to gain from this young age, getting them off screens and having fun interacting with full inclusivity instead.”

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The year consists of 11 months of 30 days  
Novem, followed by December that has 36 days  
(making 366 total days).  
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5 weeks of 6 days each (5x6 = 30 days), with  
Thursdays skipped so people work 4 days out  
of 6. Fixed Calendar: Every month starts on a  
Sunday the 1st. Because every month has the  
same format, all calendar pages look identical.  
Leap Year out: Instead of adding extra leap days,  
December reverts to a standard 30-day month  
every 8 years to adjust for solar time. 800 sync.  
i agree that the Gregorian calendar fails  
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whereas Don system keeps recurring meetings  
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## A wave of stories



Photo by Mataara Stokes.

A taonga of the Aotearoa music industry, Stan Walker (Tūhoe, Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāti Pūkenga, Tūhourangi, Ngāti Wāhiao, Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Whakaue, Ngāi Tahu) is heading to Pōneke on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November with his live band and a full orchestra in tow. Performing at TSB Arena, Walker will reinvent his biggest hits and classics alongside new music like his latest single *Kāinga* in a captivating symphonic experience.

“When I do other shows, it’s like welcoming people into the front room of my house, but you haven’t even seen the kitchen or the backyard yet. A *Symphonic Experience* is that. A full tour of my whole whare,” he says.

After performing to sold-out crowds in Tāmaki Makaurau and Ōtautahi, Walker added a third stop in Te Whanganui-a-Tara. “Pōneke is home to some of the greatest musicians in Aotearoa and the crowds are always electric. I can’t wait to bring the full experience of this show to the capital.”

With almost 50 people on the stage, *A Symphonic Experience* is the largest show yet from the *Māori Ki Te Ao* singer.

“I hope [people] leave feeling like they’ve gone to an epic, cinematic, musical, emotional, spiritual, cultural experience. I just want them to be met with a wall of sound, a wall of emotions, a wall of culture, a wall of storytelling. Like a tidal wave. I want people to leave forever changed.”

## It’s all about connection

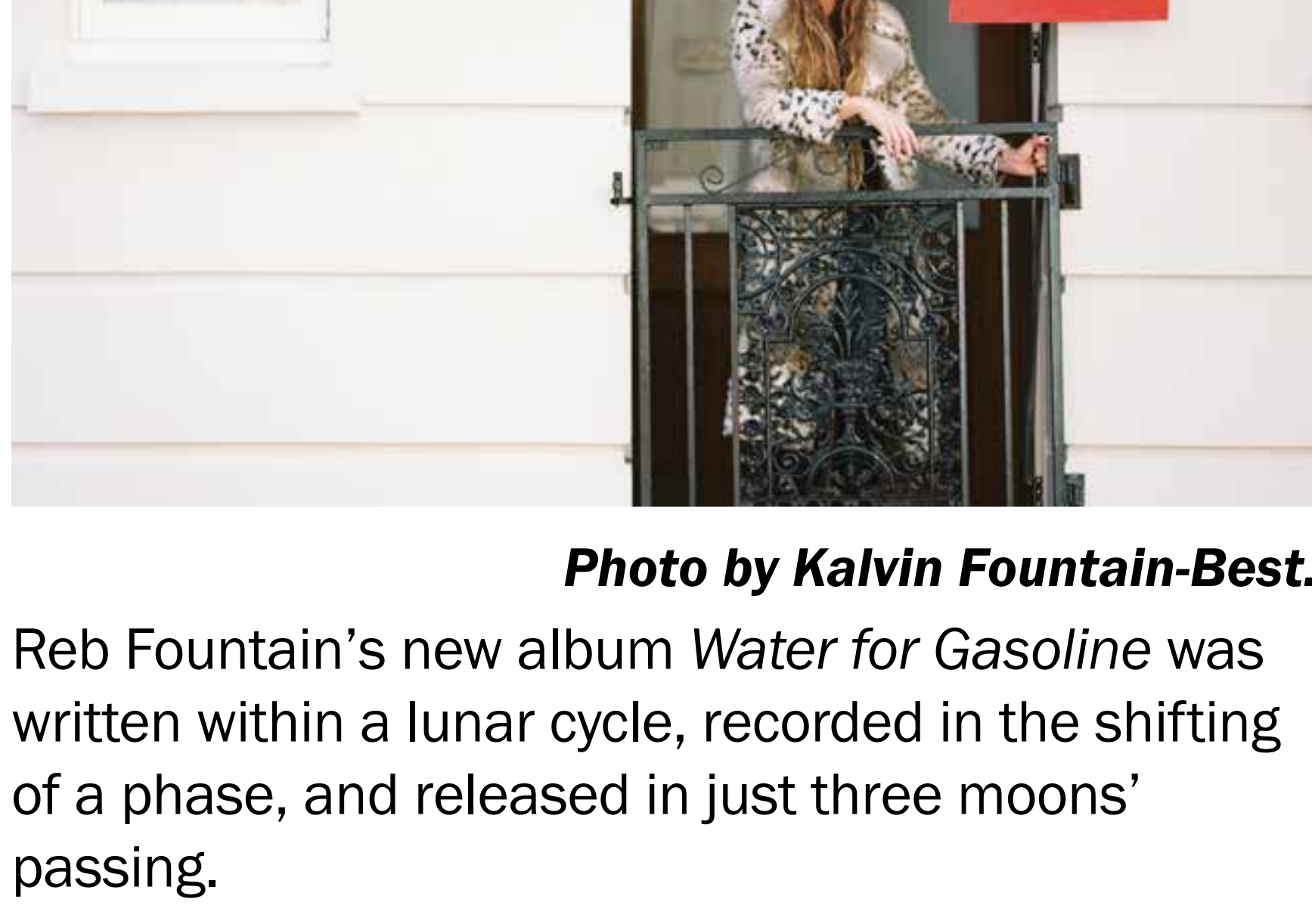


Photo by Kalvin Fountain-Best.

Reb Fountain’s new album *Water for Gasoline* was written within a lunar cycle, recorded in the shifting of a phase, and released in just three moons’ passing.

“We made a record a few months ago in my garage studio”, Fountain said while announcing the release. “I wrote the songs in the weeks before we recorded. Almost every song was recorded in one take, live in the room. *Water for Gasoline* was created in and for our current times and that same imperative has driven us to share it today.”

The record might be immediate, but it wasn’t instantaneous.

“It was steeped in years of experience, connection, community, and a conscious choice to make art and meaning.”

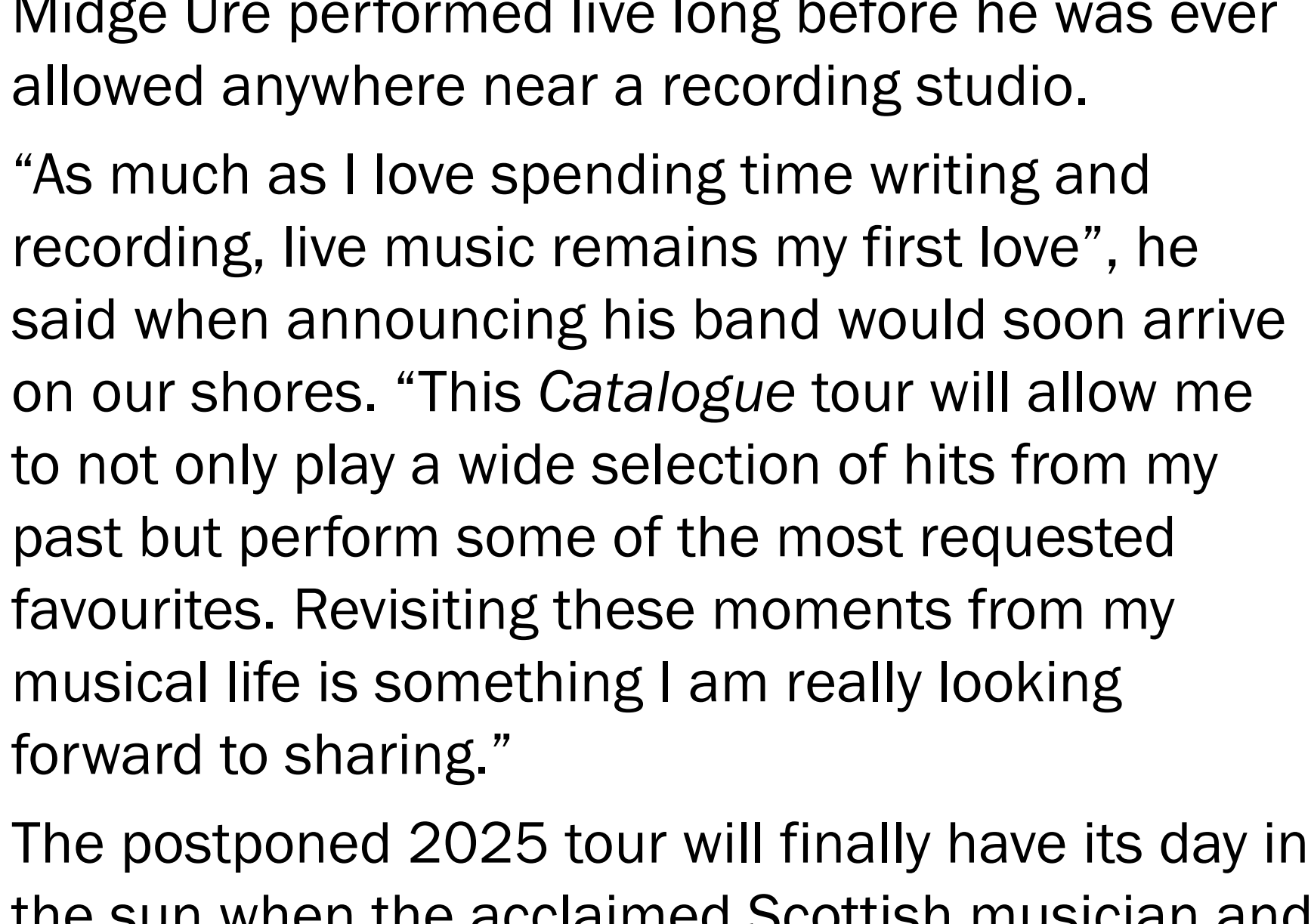
Standing as a message of hope and resilience, *Water for Gasoline* is an allegory for love and life, its songs as real and present as they are metaphor and memory. It’s mythic yet grounded in creative instinct and mined experiences.

“There was so much going on, in my life and in the world. I felt so pent up that when the floodgates opened the process was clear and unwavering”, Fountain says. “I don’t know how people cope without art to express how it feels to be in the world. Art feels essential to me... not easy, but an instinctive way to make sense of myself and the goings on.”

See one of our most acclaimed contemporary artists at her most assured when she asks, “How come we’re asking for water and getting gasoline?”

at Meow Nui on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October.

## The rhythm is calling



Midge Ure performed live long before he was ever allowed anywhere near a recording studio.

“As much as I love spending time writing and recording, live music remains my first love”, he said when announcing his band would soon arrive on our shores. “This *Catalogue* tour will allow me to not only play a wide selection of hits from my past but perform some of the most requested favourites. Revisiting these moments from my musical life is something I am really looking forward to sharing.”

The postponed 2025 tour will finally have its day in the sun when the acclaimed Scottish musician and songwriter plays Meow Nui on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October. *Catalogue* spans tracks from his accomplished solo career like *If I Was* and *Breathe*, as well as his work in bands like The Rich Kids (*Marching Men*), Thin Lizzy (*The Boys Are Back in Town*), Visage (*Fade to Grey*), and Ultravox (*Vienna, Dancing With Tears in My Eyes, Hymn*).

Ure has featured in significant musical moments dotted throughout history. His work co-writing and co-producing *Do They Know It’s Christmas?* with Bob Geldof for Band Aid, and their subsequent role in Live Aid, enshrined him as one of the most important figures in British music. Since co-organising the super concert, which raised over \$125 million in famine relief funds and featured performances from the likes of Queen, David Bowie, Elton John, and Paul McCartney, Ure’s career as a touring artist has continued to flourish.

This decade, he marked his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday with a one-night-only live music event at London’s iconic Royal Albert Hall titled *Celebrating 7 Decades: A Life In Music*. The party continues in *Catalogue: The Hits Tour*.

## A blockbuster album



Photo by Abby Stewart.

Anthonie Tonnon’s new album *Cinematographer* is “part film, part francophile performance lecture, part disco club set”.

“It’s a world that we’ve built for this new music, exploring some newfound passions – the French avant-garde, cinema, urban politics of the 1960s, turn-of-the-millennium dance culture and documentary films, and the glorious, mystifying city of Whanganui”, the Taite Music Prize-winning songwriter says.

Marking a bold new creative chapter, Tonnon’s upcoming tour will be just as cinematic as the album, with two ambitious audio-visual performances at 6:45pm and 9:15pm at The Hannah on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October.

The *Cinematographer* chapter kicked off with *Executive Assistant*, Tonnon’s first new music in three years, mixed by Bevan Smith (Glass Vaults) and created alongside Jonathan Pearce (The Beths).

“*Executive Assistant* was a breakthrough for Jon and I because it gave us the sound that everything else grew from,” Tonnon says. “As an experiment, I started cutting up recordings we’d made with the band and putting them back together in new ways. The result reminded me of the sample-heavy dance-pop I loved in the 2000s. Jon suggested a squelchy acid bassline, and from there a whole new journey began.”

The long-time collaborative duo won the Taite Music Prize for *Leave Love Out of This* in 2022, the same year Tonnon was named New Zealand’s Honorary Geographer in 2022. The award recognised the geographical inquiry in both his songwriting and *Rail Land* – a touring show that took audiences by rail to historic halls.

Tonnon has always been an obsessive world-builder. Three years in the making, *Cinematographer* takes this mission and widens the aperture, rolling live electronic music, filmic storytelling, and visual design into one immersive pièce de resistance.

[Back to contents](#)



# General

## New Wellington school rapidly gathering steam



A new Wellington school is already making its mark, with strong enrolment demand, impressive competition results, and a distinctive educational approach attracting growing interest from families across the region.

Altum Classical Academy, which opened this year as a state-funded charter school, has announced that its Year 7 and Year 9 cohorts for 2027 are nearing capacity, with student numbers expected to more than triple next year. The academy will also expand its offering to include Year 10 students.

Principal Christian Pera says the school's rapid growth reflects strong community support and a desire among families for greater educational choice. "We are incredibly grateful for the support we have received from the wider community," he says. "Most families who visit us have heard about Altum through word of mouth, which speaks volumes about the positive experiences our students and families are having."

Founded on the principles of classical education, Altum places an emphasis on academic rigour, character development, critical thinking, and active community contribution. The school combines a knowledge-rich curriculum with opportunities designed to support students' intellectual, physical, and personal growth.

Despite being in its first year of operation and serving a relatively small number of students, the academy has already achieved notable success in regional competitions.

In mathematics, Altum's Year 7 and 8 team recently competed against 45 schools in the Wellington Mathswell competition, placing first in two of the four rounds and finishing seventh overall. The school's chess programme has also enjoyed remarkable success. Both the intermediate and senior teams qualified for the national Chess Power Championships after strong performances in the Wellington regional competition. The teams will travel to Hamilton later this year to compete against some of New Zealand's top young players.

Sport has become a growing feature of school life. Altum recently hosted Wellington's Chess Power tournament and an inter-school Kiwi Handball competition on its campus. Students also participated in their first off-site handball tournament, where one player earned the Top Goalkeeper award.

Beyond traditional academic and sporting pursuits, students take part in a diverse electives programme that includes calligraphy, football, Latin, music, chess, cooking, gardening, outdoor skills, and Dungeons & Dragons. There is also a Games and Conditioning programme focused on fitness, resilience, and personal goal-setting.

Parents have responded positively to the school's approach. Many have noted that their children are learning more, enjoying school more, and developing confidence. With future expansion planned, Altum Classical Academy is already demonstrating how a small, focused community can achieve significant results and strong educational outcomes.

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**Altum**  
CLASSICAL ACADEMY



[Back to contents](#)



# Fresh flock of horrors

by **Isabella Smith**



**Photos by Rebecca McMillan.**

It's been 20 years since *Black Sheep*. Now it's baaack with a fresh flock of horrors, in cinemas on the 12<sup>th</sup> of November.

Shot at Avalon Studios, in Ohariu Valley, and around Pōneke and Wairarapa, *Black Sheeps* is a celebration of Kiwi culture, while also poking fun at it too. I caught up with director Jonathan King to discuss the horror-comedy's bloody return.

## ***The countdown is on for the release. How does it feel?***

It's incredibly exciting. It's been 20 years since the last one. Then it all started and finished so quickly. Shooting began about 11 months ago, and we've been working on it nonstop since. It only finished 10 or 12 weeks ago. All through that I was pinching myself. We wrote it very quickly too. Everything happened within two years. And because it happened so fast, there wasn't any second guessing, which made it quite thrilling.

We've screened it a couple of times for the cast and crew. For strangers to see it, I'm both nervous and excited.

## ***At the time of making the first Black Sheep, did you anticipate how big it was going to get?***

No, I didn't. And you know what? That wasn't the case when it first came out either. It did well, but it wasn't a smash hit. It travelled around the world and people found it, which was super exciting. But since then, it's lasted, which is what's different. People continue to find it and say, 'Have you seen this mental film from New Zealand?'

I couldn't have imagined that. Two years ago, we had screenings of the 4K restoration, and they were the best screenings it ever had. People came. We had a good time. It'll be great if people bring that attitude to the new one too.

## ***20 years on, is the sequel dealing with a different New Zealand?***

Funnily enough, the first film exists in a slightly timeless vacuum, which possibly explains why it's lasted. There's maybe one cell phone in the original film, but it's not trying to talk about 2006 New Zealand. Whereas this one talks more about 2026 New Zealand. Time has passed, and it's also passed in the *Black Sheep* world. Sometimes you go back to a sequel and nothing's changed, it's just a reboot of the first. But we've all been so changed by COVID. Even the way climate change now exists in our minds and how we think about what scientists tell us, how we share information, and misinformation, it's all changed.

I've got this franchise that has specific scientific rules of its own: if you get bitten by a sheep, you turn into a weresheep. I got to stomp around in that imaginary world but also have fun with things from the real world. It gave licence for the silliness to be a bit sillier, because we live in a pretty silly world.

Wellington Theatre  
Directed by Neil Brewer

Written by Rupert Holmes  
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National Party Candidate  
for Wellington North

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Stage one villas are expected to open August 2027.

**Disclaimer:** All images and artist's impressions are indicative only.



## Pushing the boundaries



Claire Cowan is an award-winning contemporary composer whose work traverses film, television, theatre, and dance. In 2019, she became the first woman in Aotearoa and one of only a handful worldwide to score a full-length ballet: Royal New Zealand Ballet's (RNZB) *Hansel and Gretel*. She also scored their 2022 production of *Cinderella*, working alongside her long-time collaborator and RNZB choreographer in residence Loughlan Prior on both new adaptations.

2026 has been a big year for the multi-instrumentalist and Nightflock ensemble leader. Not only did she win the APRA Best Original Music in a Series Award | Tohu Paerangi at the APRA Silver Scroll Awards for her work on the queer crime TV series *Bust Up*, but she also became the first New Zealander to be invited to take part in the Vancouver International Film Festival's Composer Filmmaker Accelerator programme (VIFF CFA) in early October. The programme brought together 12 composers from around the world for an intensive week focused on the craft and application of film scoring.

I spoke to Cowan in September ahead of VIFF CFA but while she was still in recovery mode. The week before, she marked yet another first as the artist to record at New Zealand Symphony Orchestra's (NZSO) Te Ngākau Recording Studios, located in the newly developed Te Whare Whakarauika Wellington Town Hall. Together with the NZSO and a 130-person choir, Cowan recorded her *Cinderella* score. The soundtrack album will be released in the coming months.

**What were the new studios like?**

The new studios are absolutely beautiful; world-class technology. The fact that you can record an orchestra upstairs and people in the isolation rooms downstairs at the same time with no lag or issue – that was something that hadn't been tested at all, and it all worked perfectly.

**Can't wait for the official opening in February! Let's jump into the VIFF CFA. What was the process of getting accepted?**

It's been quite a quick process. We had to submit a bunch of things: a playlist of our work, tracks that we thought represented our best work, IMDb listings. It was an all-round picture of the composer so they could make a good selection of the best and the ones who would get the most out of the programme. It jointly benefits the filmmakers involved as well as the composers because it's all about the process of how we work together, so we had to submit examples of that and how we communicate. It was not a usual kind of process: the music's one thing, but it was also about what we're interested in doing this job for. What are our reasons for being composers in the film world?

**Great question! Hit me.**

It's interesting to ask myself that. Sometimes in the busyness of life, you get caught up in the process and it gets difficult. You get stressed and don't get much sleep and it's like, 'Why am I doing this to myself?' Ultimately, it's all about the audience for me, and the connection, and the story. That's why I do everything: ballets, or playing music, or even creating concert experiences. Being able to elicit emotions, down to the very complicated ones, and putting those at very specific moments in relation to the characters or the storylines. So, connecting!

**What's the difference in the process of composing for film versus ballet?**

With a film, usually there's a picture in front of me and I'll be writing and responding to what's on the screen. I may have read a script in advance to get some ideas going or a concept for the sound world. For a film, the music comes in and out and we use it to spice up certain moments or enhance the feelings. The picture does a lot of the job for me.

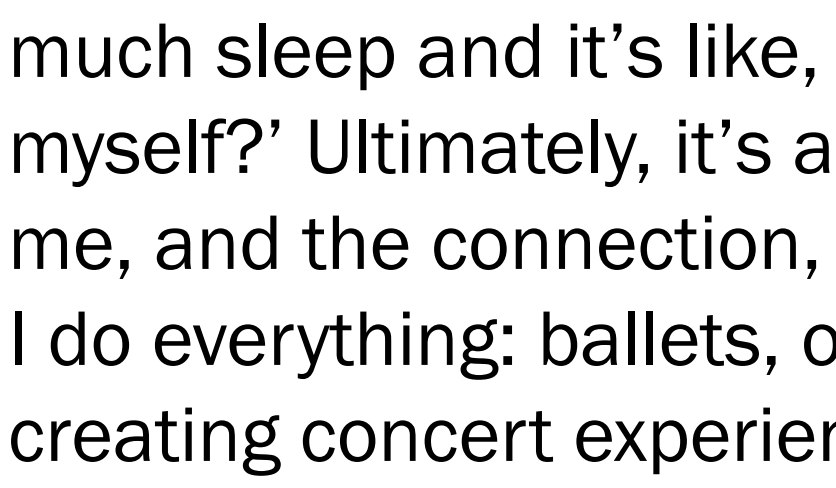
For a ballet, the process is almost back to front. There's nothing there to begin with. It's just a storyline and a spreadsheet of scenes, breakdowns, and approximate timings. The work is kind of harder because I have to imagine what's happening at the same time as writing. The music does absolutely everything for the emotional and storytelling role in a ballet; there are scenes and characters and acting as well as dancing, but the music really carries it all along. The review process is a little easier for me in the ballet because I present something and then the choreographer works to that, rather than the filmmaker presenting me with something to work to. I feel a bit more in the control seat when I'm writing a ballet, and that's quite nice.

**In terms of imagining what's happening while writing – when did you discover your gift for realising what's in your head? Do you hear potential work in your mind's ear?**

Interesting! I don't think I ever have a fully formed piece in my head and then try and realise it. Things come to me in little clumps of ideas and little bursts of inspiration from different things that I see. I try and expose myself to lots of different artforms for inspiration, like films, or I'll go to the art gallery to get out of my normal zones. One by one a concept will come together, and I'll plan it from there. Often I'll write down with words the kind of piece I'm trying to create, or if it's a ballet, the musical language. Like with *Cinderella*, I had a big note in my Apple notes that said, 'I want the music to be this, this, this; have influence from this, this, this; and emotionally, it's going to be this, this, this'. I think it's important to plan those things, but also be open to how things unfold, other people's influence, collaborations, and happy accidents.

**Looking back over your work, what are you the proudest of?**

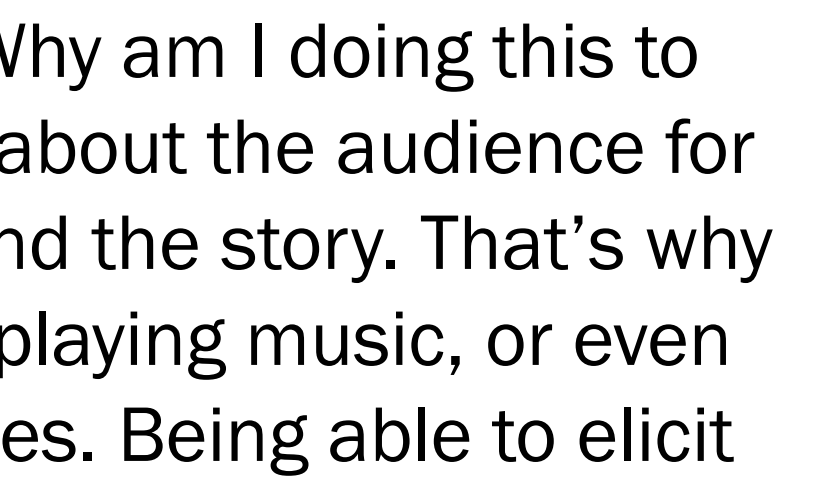
I think *Cinderella* is one of the works I'm most proud of. It was something we didn't really want to do, because it's a dumb story [laughs]. *Cinderella* doesn't have a very positive message for the people of today, women or young people! Having been asked to write a *Cinderella*, we took it upon ourselves to change the story. To make it relevant and positive and inspiring and push the boundaries of what's been done with ballet before. The impact – what I've heard from audience members, and from people in the process of recording the music – is that it's an important show. Even though it's fun and upbeat and not altogether serious, it does touch on some things that have very real connections to the lived experiences of people in the audience, and things that they don't see on stage represented in a national ballet company very often, or just on stage in the dance world. I'm proud of that and hopeful that it can travel to places now that this recording has been done.



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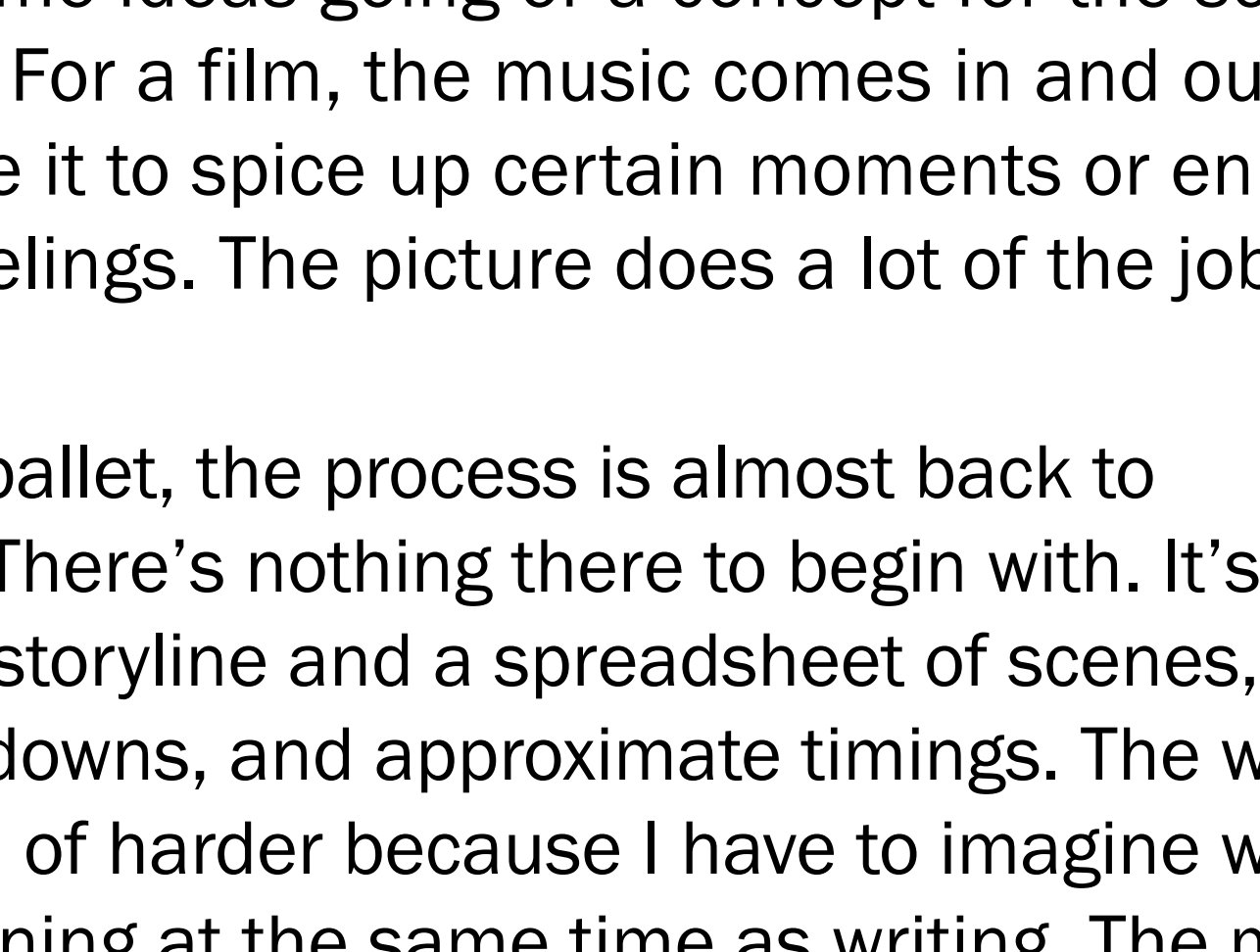


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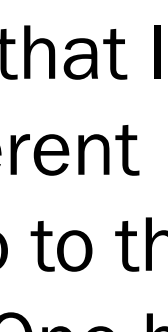
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Back to contents



# Money matters

## Secure your future



Independent financial advisor Robbie Schneider has financial services in his blood. In 2003, building on his mother's legacy in financial counselling, Robbie took the reins of Succession First, a financial advisory firm which empowers individuals, families, and small businesses to make confident decisions that protect and build wealth to secure their financial future.

With over 35 years of experience, he remains dedicated to offering a five-star service, helping clients to create robust financial plans and achieve long-term goals. This includes advice around KiwiSaver investments, managed funds, retirement income, and individual investment plans.

Robbie and his team of experts align your investments with your goals and risk profile and devise strategies to improve financial security.

Whether you're preparing to purchase a first home or are gearing up for retirement, Succession First's goal is to help you stay on track and make informed financial decisions every step of the way.

## A confident hand



What each of the six members at Village Real Estate have in common is a deep-rooted connection to Kāpiti. Small, dedicated, and highly experienced, the team live and breathe the area and understand the unique character and charm of every town.

In accordance with the laid-back lifestyle of living on the coast, the ethos at Village Real Estate is to provide personalised and tailored services, using unparalleled insights, through a relaxed approach that makes buying and selling a stress-free experience.

Village Real Estate prides itself on communication skills. The team understand the gravity of making a decision to buy and sell a house, and do their utmost to ensure their clients achieve their goals – whether it's showing off the best attributes of a house on the market or finding a forever home that suits every lifestyle.

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For 25 years, Taylor Property Plus has delivered property management services across Wellington, Hutt Valley, Kāpiti, Horowhenua, and Manawātū.

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Karen made the whole process very easy. She was clear with what she needed from us and what she needed us to look into. She was always on time with a smile and loads of enthusiasm.

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[Back to contents](#)



# Discover NZ by bike



**Lake Dunstan Trail, Central Otago.**

**Photo by Geoff Marks.**



**Timber Trail.**



**West Coast Wilderness Trail. Photo by Jase Blair.**



**Mountains to Sea – Ngā Ara Tūhono.**

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# Discover NZ by bike

## Ride with giants



*Photo by Graeme Murray.*

Passing through enchanted forests beneath redwood giants, across lands shaped by volcanic activity with sweeping vistas of Lakes Rotorua and Tikitapu, the Whakarewarewa Forest Loop is a journey into the rich and fascinating history of the inland Bay of Plenty area.

The newest Ngā Haerenga Great Ride is a 36-kilometre trail through a variety of forest types in Whakarewarewa Forest. A cruisy Grade 2 ride, with a few short Grade 3 moments, the trail takes three to five hours. Purpose built as a sightseeing tour, it features storyboards along the way that recount tales of the past, from the tectonic shifts and volcanic eruptions that shaped the land over hundreds of thousands of years and the area's rich Māori culture through to the planting of Californian Coastal Redwoods and its flourishing as a hub for recreational activities.

With 5,600 hectares of forest and 200 kilometres' worth of trails that wind through Whakarewarewa Forest, cyclists can spend the whole day exploring other trails along the way. Trails ascend to heights offering stunning views of the surrounds, or swoop past geothermal wonders where steam drifts and mud bubbles.

There are multiple access points, but it is recommended to start at Te Pūtake o Tawa Carpark or at the Waipa State Mill Road: a mountain biking hub with bike rental, cafés, and washdown stations. Bring your togs for a dip in Lake Tikitapu and a packed lunch to enjoy at the water's edge.



[Back to contents](#)



## Land before time



*Ngā Ara Tūhono – Mountains to Sea bike trail.*

For intrepid nature-lovers, the diverse landscapes of the Central Plateau offer some of the most exciting biking experiences in the country.

The classic Ngā Ara Tūhono – Mountains to Sea bike trail is a 231-kilometre adventure crossing two national parks. The three to six-day ride is steeped in history. It begins on the slopes of Mount Ruapehu, crosses the volcanic Central Plateau, goes through rolling hills, valleys, forests, and river gorges, and arrives at the Tasman Sea.

Between the western shores of Lake Taupō, Taumarunui, and Te Kūiti, deep inside the heart of the ancient Pureora Forest Park, spans the unforgettable 85-kilometre Timber Trail. Home to some of the rarest and most precious stands of native forest giants in Aotearoa that are teeming with birdlife, the two-day Timber Trail is a journey back through time.

These trails offer the perfect adventure to connect with nature and the stories of the land.

## 100% gluten free



Heading north from Wellington? Make Munch in Palmerston North your ultimate road trip pitstop. Owned by a coeliac, this Broadway Avenue gem offers the gold standard in dietary safety with a kitchen that is strictly 100 percent gluten free and nut free. Every dish is prepared with absolute certainty, providing true peace of mind.

Forget the standard, dry cabinet items. Munch boasts an abundant, vibrant cabinet alongside a full breakfast and lunch menu. Everything is entirely coeliac safe, effortlessly catering to vegan, soy free, dairy free, and low FODMAP requirements without compromising on flavour.

Step inside to enjoy their stylish retro fitout. The welcoming, two-storey café seats around 140 people, making it perfect for travellers to relax, groups to gather together, or to book your next outing. Munch gives Wellingtonians the perfect reason to stop in the Manawatū.

Visit [www.munchpalmy.net](http://www.munchpalmy.net) to plan your next visit.

## Town meets country



The Manawatū A&P Show has been around for a whopping 140 years. A highlight of the Manawatū events calendar, it attracts thousands of visitors from across the region and beyond.

Located at the Manfeild Park Stadium in Feilding, there's something for every punter in a show where 'the country comes to town!'

Check out the dog agility demonstrations where dogs of every size, stripe, and spot will showcase their agility, obedience, and powerful sense of smell.

Families get a chance to experience real rural life up close. There'll be equestrian events, sheep shearing, livestock, eggs and poultry, the famous Farmworld where kids can hang with calves, lambs, goats, chickens, and ostriches, and plenty of food vendors, trade and exhibit sites, rides, games, and live entertainment.

On from 9am to 4pm on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November, head along and celebrate the Manawatū's rich agricultural heritage.

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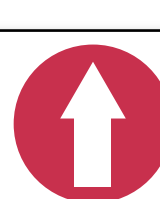
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[Back to contents](#)



# Discover NZ by bike

## Beauty and solitude



Crystalline waters, hidden coves, vast outlooks, and enchanting native bush are what await on the Queen Charlotte Track in the Marlborough Sounds.

Listed as a Great Ride on the Ngā Haerenga New Zealand Cycle Trail, the Queen Charlotte Track is the longest piece of continuous track in the country. It can be ridden over three days, with options to camp or stay in lodges along the way.

The Marlborough Sounds in its remoteness and solitude is home to swathes of untouched native forests and incredible birdlife. The trail undulates up and down as it dips into bays and climbs up and along ridges to offer breathtaking views of this unique corner of Aotearoa.

With water taxis to and from both ends and the potential to organise bike and luggage transfers, the Queen Charlotte Track is also one of the most well-organised biking tracks in the country.

## Take the long way



The longest of the Ngā Haerenga Great Rides is the Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail. With trailheads at the foot of Aoraki/Mount Cook or at beautiful Lake Tekapo, it traverses mountains that scrape the heavens and valleys that plunge deep into the Earth.

Wrapping around Lake Pūkaki, cyclists thread their way towards Twizel and Lake Ōhau, climb to the highest point to take in the magnificent Mackenzie Basin, then drop down to Ōmarama. Next, they'll fly past the Waitaki Valley before heading through to Ōamaru.

Alps 2 Ocean is broken up into nine sections, making for an easy and intermediate multi-day experience. Cyclists can pop on and off the trail at various points or complete the entire 306-kilometre route in five to seven days.

With some of the most stunning landscapes in the South Island, the Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail is a treat the whole way through.

## The wild places



### **Kawatiri Coastal Trail.**

The West Coast is a wild and wondrous region, and there's no better way to explore it than by bike. Start by choosing a base for your adventure. Set at the mouth of the Buller River, Westport is known for its rich heritage and rugged surrounds. Greymouth is the largest town with a history of jade hunting and gold mining, while Hokitika offers a dramatic beach, two serene lakes, roaring rivers, mountain views, and great cafés.

The region is home to some amazing trails. The 40-kilometre Kawatiri Coastal Trail is often called 'New Zealand's longest short ride' thanks to its stunning mix of coastal views, native bush, and ever-changing scenery. The 85km Old Ghost Road traverses majestic native forest, open tussock tops, river flats, and forgotten valleys. Winding through wetlands and ancient rainforests, along glacial rivers and around moody lakes, the 133km West Coast Wilderness Trail gives you the chance to discover the last of the wild places.

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# Discover NZ by bike



## Historical luxury



At the heart of the wondrous West Coast, by the mouth of the Hokitika River, looking out over the tumultuous Pacific Ocean, with a shawl of emerald and ivory mountains at her shoulders, lies Hokitika.

When passing through town on your bike, you can't go past Hokitika Fire Station Boutique Accommodation, where heritage meets modern comforts and there's everything you need as a base for exploring the West Coast Wilderness Trail.

Hokitika Fire Station Boutique Accommodation calls the town's old 1866 fire station building home. Beautifully restored, each self-contained apartment is named after a fire chief who led the brigade and has its own flair and feel, accented by original brickwork, historic photographs, and firefighting memorabilia. As the only Qualmark Gold five-star accommodation in central Hokitika, it goes without saying that all five apartments offer character, class, and charm by the fire-truckload.

With complimentary parking, EV charging, laundry, and secure bike and gear storage available to all guests, there's no better place to swap your trail clothes for something comfier. Just outside your door, you'll find Hokitika's bustling hub chocka with boutiques, museums, galleries, eateries, and cafés, not to mention the iconic beach and driftwood sign down the road where magnificent sunsets set fire to the sky each night.

Whether you're flying solo, riding in a pair, with your pals, or have the whole whānau in gear, book your West Coast biking stay at

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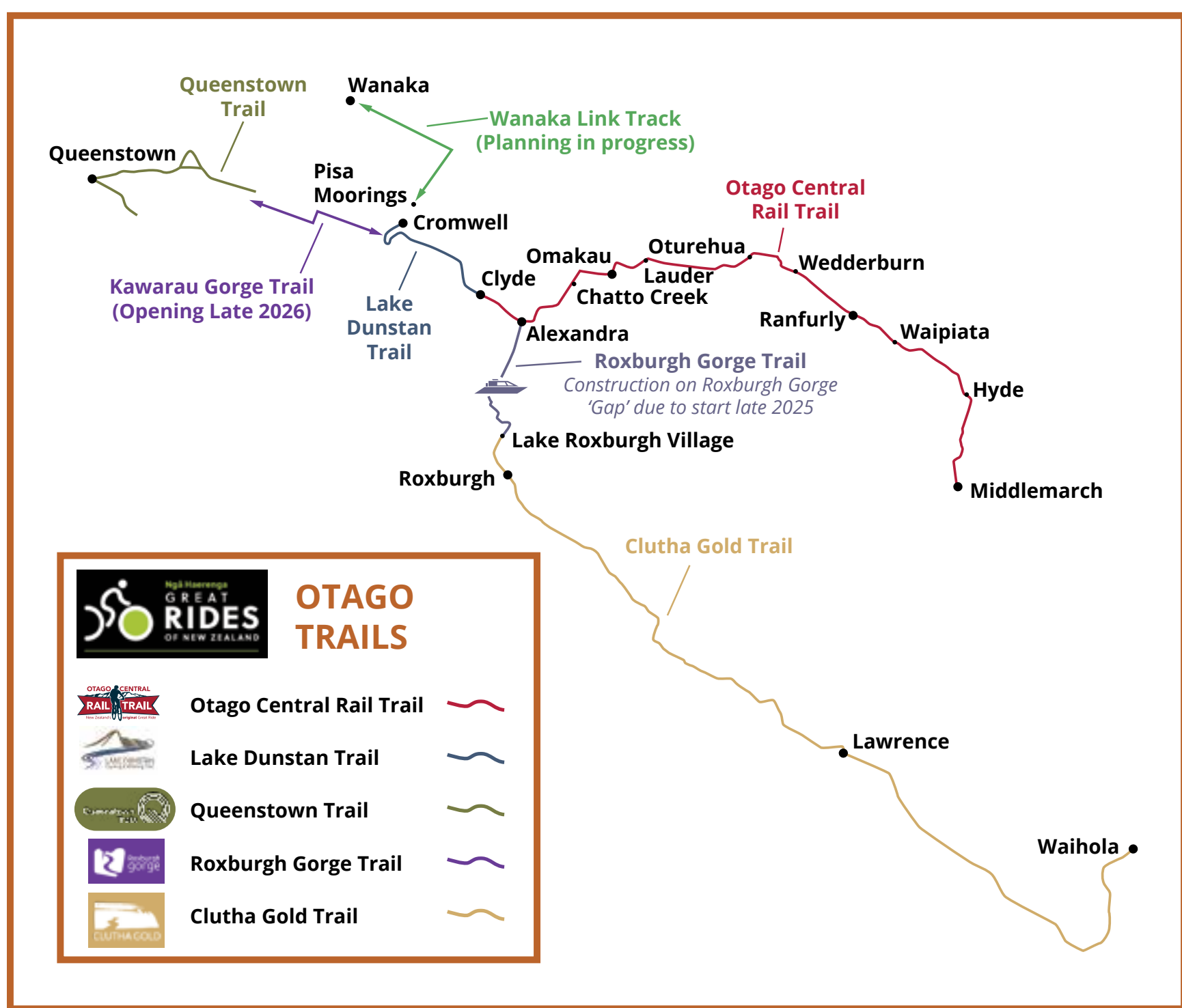
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# Discover NZ by bike



## Pedal paradise



Photo by Will Nelson.

The beautiful trails, sweeping landscapes, and picturesque vistas of Central Otago are best explored by bicycle. Bike It Now! provides bike and e-bike retail, hire, workshop services, and self-guided tours in the region, so you can get pedaling on the adventure of a lifetime.

With locations in Clyde, Cromwell, and Wānaka, Bike It Now! offers door-to-door pick-ups from Queenstown and drop-offs leaving Clyde each day, which gives the passionate crew the opportunity to share the area's history.

Whether you're keen to jump into some of New Zealand's Great Rides, or you'd rather coast down the less-beaten tracks, Bike It Now! has a range of options to suit all levels, interests, and timeframes. Choose from any length (half-day to 10 days) or experience from Grade 1 up to Grade 3. Mix, match, and combine popular tracks like the Otago Central Rail Trail, Roxburgh Gorge Trail, Clutha Gold Trail, and the Lake Dunstan Trail with local routes crafted into a tailored adventure.

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# Buy – build – renovate

## From start to finish

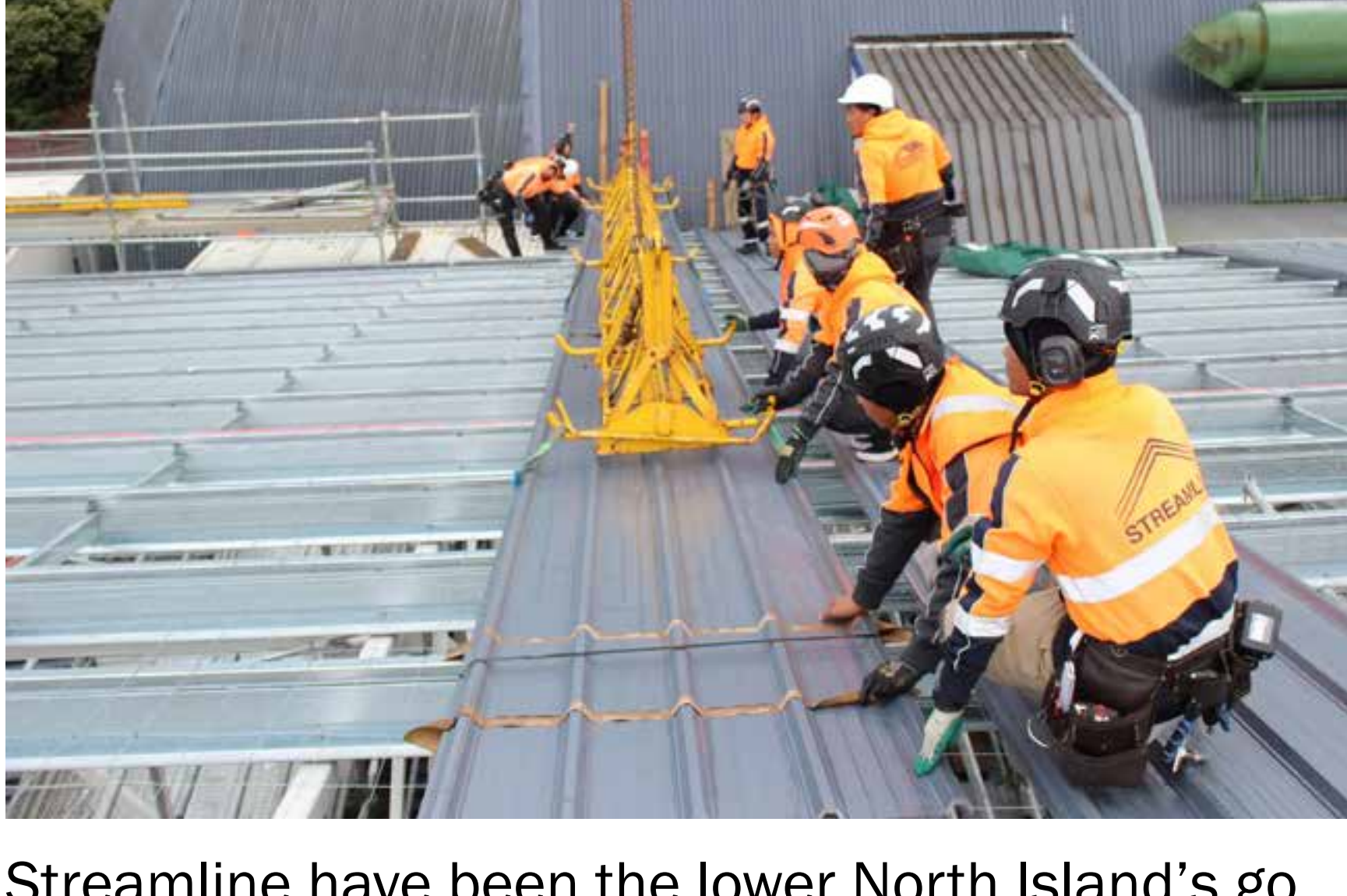


When turning a renovation or build into a reality, it's difficult to envision all the work that is required. My QS Consultants Ltd's quantity surveyors map out all the nitty-gritty details, accounting for any unpredictable events to give you an estimate of how much a construction project will cost. They take responsibility for making sure a project stays within your budget and schedule, while checking in to ensure things are running smoothly.

Ciaran Clinton has over 30 years of experience. He and his dedicated team offer everything from a rough order of cost estimate to a detailed estimate, and part to full tenders.

Together, they have broad experience with different types of contracts, from residential, seismic upgrades, and earthquake repairs to leaky buildings and insurance rebuild costings. My QS Consultants Ltd thinks outside the box and finds creative solutions to ensure a project runs smoothly, efficiently, and at the projected cost.

## Under one roof



Streamline have been the lower North Island's go to roof specialists for over 30 years. Family owned and operated, they provide a comprehensive range of rainwater solutions for residential and commercial properties from Palmerston North through to Wellington.

Streamline's services include replacing or fixing fascia, spouting, downpipes, roofing, cladding, and membrane. They offer end-to-end services, from scaffolding and the removal of old products to organising painters and builders. That way the job can get done under one roof, saving you time, stress, and unexpected costs.

Known for their first-class services, professionalism, and friendly staff, Streamline only work with premium materials that are suitable for New Zealand conditions. Offering 15-year materials and five-year workmanship warranties on their rainwater solutions, they guarantee peace of mind. Don't wait for leaks or damage to cost you more; head to Streamline's website at [streamline.kiwi](http://streamline.kiwi) or give them a ring for a free quote.

## Advice you can build on



Every successful build starts with understanding the ground. Geotechnical engineers investigate soil, rock, and groundwater to identify potential risks and provide practical advice tailored to the specific conditions of a site.

Cohesive Geotechnical provides practical site investigations and reporting for residential builds, subdivisions, and land development projects across the North Island.

Our team of experienced geotechnical professionals combine local geological knowledge with efficient field testing to deliver clear recommendations for foundations, earthworks, and site development.

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Find out more at [www.cohesivegeo.co.nz](http://www.cohesivegeo.co.nz)



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MANAWATŪ PALMERSTON NORTH KĀPITI WAIRARAPA

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## Smart homes



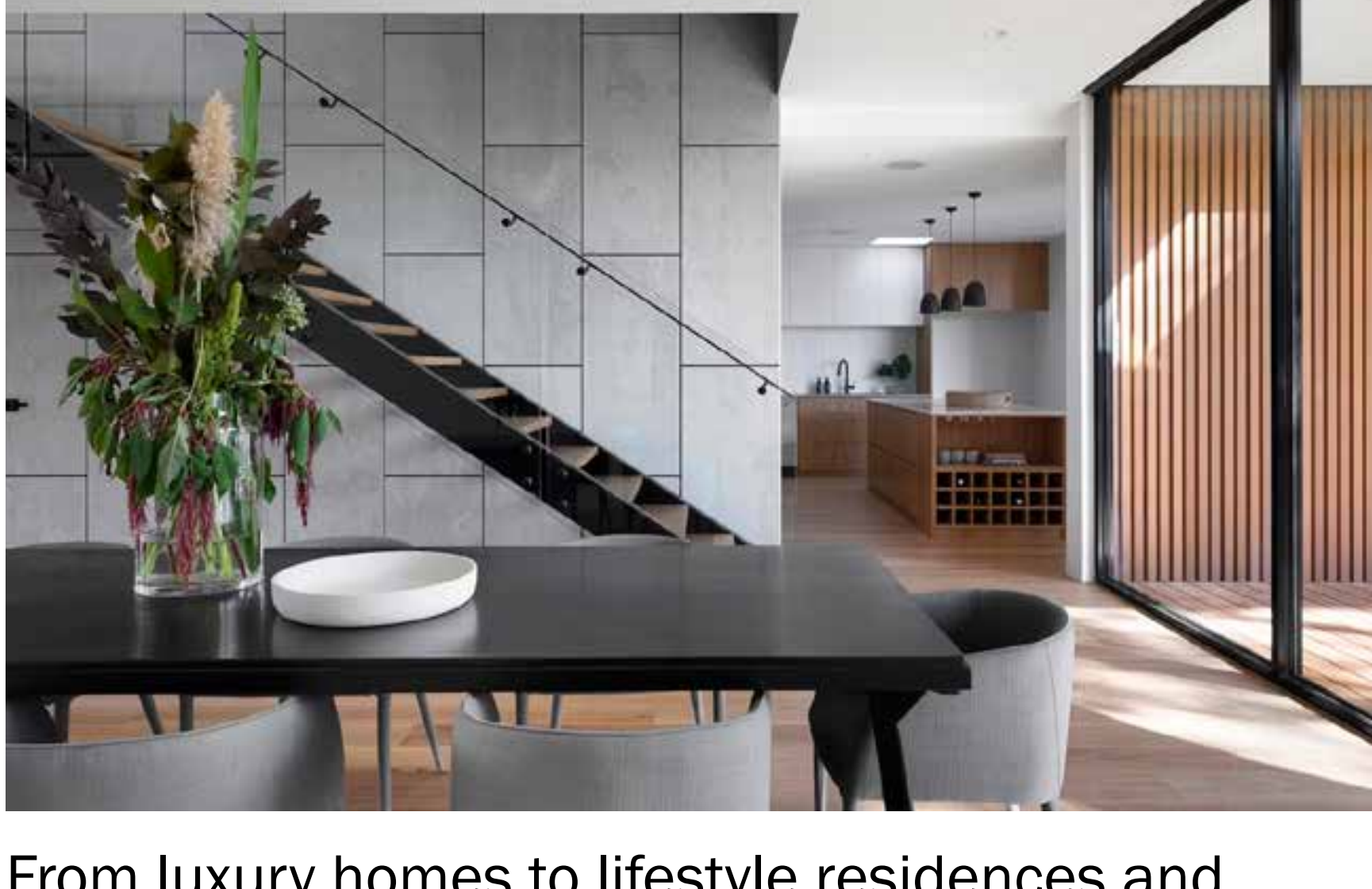
From architectural feature lighting to smart home technology and energy-efficient heating, Eclipse Electrical Services helps Wellington homes and businesses look better, work smarter, and feel more comfortable.

What started as a one-man operation has grown into a trusted team of licensed electricians that work throughout Wellington, Hutt Valley, Kāpiti, and surrounding areas, providing lighting design and installation, heat pumps, switchboard upgrades, EV charging, smart home systems, security, and general electrical services.

Led by local owner Barry Carr, the team combines reliable workmanship with practical advice and a sharp eye for detail. Whether it is a striking new-build installation, a heat pump upgrade, or essential electrical maintenance, every project receives the same care and attention.

The five-star rated business prides itself on being on time and reliable, with clear communication skills and a guarantee for high-quality workmanship. Visit [eclipseelectricalservices.co.nz](http://eclipseelectricalservices.co.nz) to organise a free quote.

## Herculean reputation



From luxury homes to lifestyle residences and more modest homes, Luxe Realty is a Wellington real estate agency that has been offering premium services to home buyers and sellers since founder and sales director Mike Lovell established the company last year. With over 245 five-star reviews, Lovell has quickly built an outstanding reputation among clients and competitors alike for his work ethic, dedication, and diplomacy.

Only in its youth, Luxe Realty is already making a splash on the market, with countless satisfied clients. Luxe Realty offer free appraisals to people considering putting their home on the market in order to help clients understand what's involved in getting the best price possible for a property.

With a strong team of experts with exceptional local knowledge, Luxe Realty is continuing to grow its reputation as a service provider that exceeds its clients' expectations every time.

Visit [www.luxerealty.co.nz](http://www.luxerealty.co.nz)

## For today and tomorrow



Mac Architecture designs highlight the beauty of New Zealand's natural environment while nurturing the wellbeing of those who call it home.

Certified Passivhaus designer and Homestar designer and assessor Jason Macquet has a profound connection to the land and the Kiwi way of life. His priority as the director of Mac Architecture is to craft healthy and comfortable homes through thermal modelling. His expertly trained team can consult and review any architectural plans to offer recommendations on how to improve the energy efficiency of the design, assist homeowners from concept to completion, or join the project at any point in the process.

No matter where you find yourself on your building timeline, the team can identify areas for improvement and provide advice on adjustments needed to bring your vision to life. Mac Architecture operates with the understanding that our choices today shape the world of tomorrow, keeping both the present and the future front of mind.

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# Buy – build – renovate Metalcraft Roofing



With 12 branches nationwide, Metalcraft Roofing is New Zealand's largest and most established privately owned building product manufacturer. Operating since the 1950s, their dependable products offer unique solutions for any roof or wall cladding project.

They offer a range of roofing and rainwater systems, from metal roofing and cladding to tiles, guttering, spouting, purlins, girts, tophats, fencing, and insulated panels. They are proud to use NZ steel from COLORSTEEL®, which can handle our ever-changing conditions. Metalcraft also specialises in manufacturing and supplying insulated panels and offers a nationwide PV solar supply and installation service. This service means they can provide a competitive solution for any domestic, commercial or off-grid property.

Metalcraft Roofing is known for providing unparalleled coverage. All their products are backed by solid warranties, offering you a simply unbeatable level of satisfaction and peace of mind.

## Local legends



Instantly recognisable, David & Maria's Carpet & Vinyl Warehouse has become part of the furniture in Strathmore Park, where the family-owned business has looked after customers and their flooring requirements for over 40 years.

Their local and imported wool and nylon carpets have been laid across the Wellington Region, including in Upper Hutt and Kāpiti Coast. If you're after a sophisticated look that feels soft underfoot, they offer a wide range of hard-wearing vinyl planks and laminates that are sustainable, long-lasting, and a fraction of the price of stone, ceramic, and wood.

The showroom's relaxed atmosphere attracts people from across the region, where the staff are renowned for being friendly, knowledgeable, and committed to finding you the right flooring. Speak to the experts and discuss their recommended options, take home some samples, and let the team take care of the rest – stress free.

## Bespoke solutions

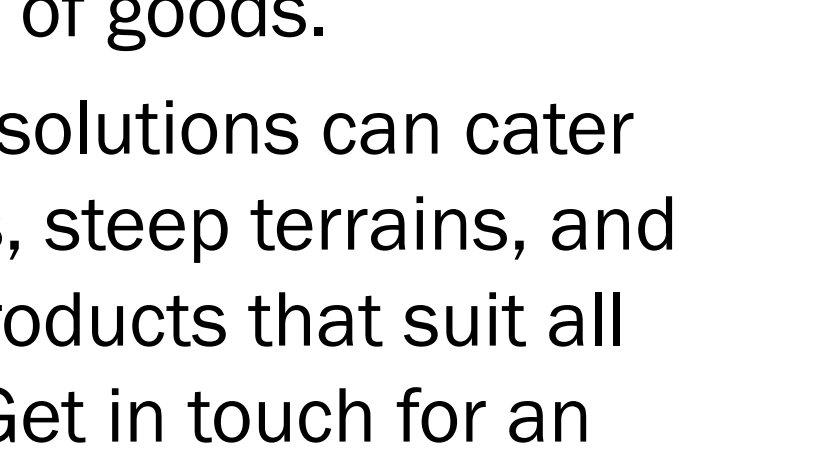
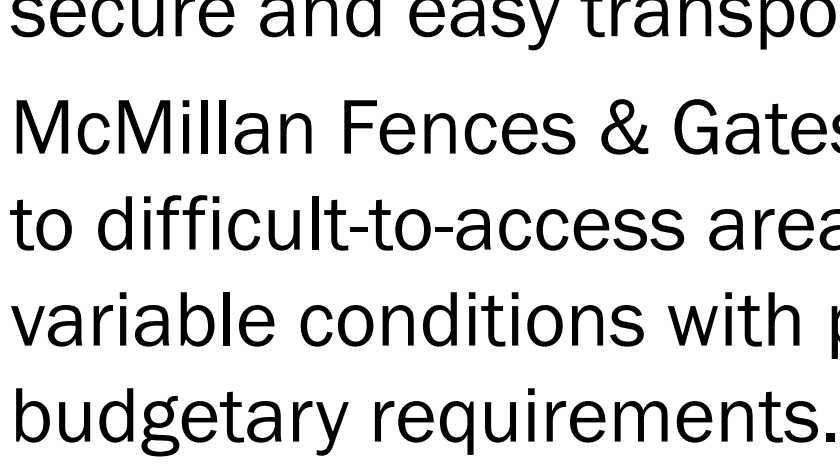


For over 20 years, family-owned and operated business McMillan Fences & Gates have been providing Wellington with bespoke fences and gates that meet the security and engineering needs of rural, residential, and commercial buildings using a range of materials.

Based in Petone, McMillan Fences & Gates manufacture a wide range of custom gates and fences, from pool fences, swing gates, and balustrades to high-security automated gates, commercial fencing, and wrought iron feature gates.

With attention to detail and an eye for decoration, McMillan Fences & Gates also offer lace panels, corners, and friezes that come in a variety of styles. As experts in welding services in aluminium and stainless steel, they create van storage systems for secure and easy transport of goods.

McMillan Fences & Gates solutions can cater to difficult-to-access areas, steep terrains, and variable conditions with products that suit all budgetary requirements. Get in touch for an obligation-free measure and quote.



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# Buy – build – renovate

## Hassle-free services



On Time Aircon is a family-owned and operated business bringing a personal touch to heating, cooling, and ventilation across Kāpiti and the wider Wellington region.

With over 20 years of experience in the HVAC and refrigeration industries, the team take pride in making the process easy and stress-free for their customers. Whether it's installing a heat pump, designing a ducted system, or tackling larger commercial projects, they believe in doing the job right and treating every property as if it were their own.

As authorised suppliers and installers of trusted brands like Daikin and Mitsubishi Electric, they offer quality solutions tailored to each customer's needs. Known for their friendly service, honest advice, and transparent pricing, On Time Aircon has a strong reputation, with much of their work coming through word-of-mouth recommendations. For them, it's about more than just heating and cooling; it's about building lasting relationships and ensuring customers feel looked after from start to finish.

## Tailored to you



Self-made and hardworking, the Hawken Concrete Services team have an outstanding reputation for quality workmanship and tailored solutions.

Established in 2021 by Jeremy Hawken, the business continues to grow from strength to strength as it enters its fifth year. Starting off on his own with nearly two decades of experience under his belt, Jeremy now helms a highly skilled full-time team who craft long-lasting, aesthetically pleasing structures that are the perfect balance of form and function.

Hawken Concrete Services provide a range of customised solutions across residential, commercial, and public sector projects, tailoring their services to meet the vision you have in mind. From driveways to patios, paths to exposed areas, and everything in between, the precise and practised team apply their expert knowledge and skills to bring your ideas to life. For premium concrete services from Wellington to Palmerston North, get in touch with Jeremy today.

## Sharing the load



When Bernie Hiestand's wheelbarrow wasn't cutting it, he went on the hunt for a bigger one that wouldn't tip over sideways. When he couldn't find one, he embarked on a project to make his own. The Ōtaki-based engineer would go on to build a product totally unique, efficient, reliable, and brilliant.

Bernie's Barrow weighs just 28 kilograms and features a ribbed aluminium floor, moulded recycled plastic ends, and two wide rubber tyres. With a capacity four times that of a standard wheelbarrow, it can effortlessly haul a much larger load without compromising on handling, manoeuvrability, or convenience. Add-on options include a drawbar so it can be hitched to a ride-on mower and used as a trailer, caddies to hold tools or smaller items, a flat-deck tray to turn it into a mobile workbench, and attachable side panels to double the capacity.

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# Buy – build – renovate

## Effortless relaxation



A warm soak at the end of the day is one of life's simple pleasures. For New Zealand owned and operated manufacturer ECO Spas NZ, making that experience affordable and easy is at the heart of what they do.

Each ECO Spa is made to order, and the result is a spa that combines practical and stylish design with energy efficiency. The secret is a closed-cell marine foam, which encases the entire underside of the spa to reduce the power needed for heating, retain heat, and reduce costs to \$30 to \$50 per month.

Its cedar surround complements a range of outdoor settings, while five interior colour options allow customers to choose a look that suits their home.

Weighing 140kg when empty, the spa can be rolled into position and plugged into a standard household socket. With its emphasis on simplicity, local craftsmanship, and affordable enjoyment, the ECO Spa is the perfect place to unwind.

## A boat to water



In 2019, after more than 30 years in the industry, Mark Waters closed his shop The Upholstery Craftsman to pursue his passion in boating. When COVID lockdowns thwarted plans for a yachting trip around the Pacific Islands, he instead spent eight months sailing the northern parts of Aotearoa, before returning to dry land to assess how he could marry his talent for upholstery with his love of boats.

Mark's answer was The Mariner's Workshop. Now based in Grenada North, with a mobile service throughout the region, he specialises in marine upholstery and canvas work, helping customers find practical, comfortable, and durable solutions to suit their boat, their needs, and their budget.

Whether it's refreshing tired boat cushions, replacing foam, canvas work, or exterior upholstery, Mark Waters is your guy. That also goes for upholstery solutions for RVs, challenging household furniture, and disassembling hard-to-fit furniture when you're moving homes.

## Conscious living



If you're looking for ideas on how to add more sustainable and healthy practices and products into your life, look no further than the Go Green Expo, a two-day showcase for conscious living.

Happening on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of November at the TSB Arena on Queen's Wharf, the Go Green Expo will be stacked with food and beverages; health, beauty, and wellness products; household and lifestyle products and ideas; eco-building and healthy homes inspiration; EVs and sustainable transport options; and other products and services that are both good for you and good for the planet.

Across both days there is an epic lineup of seminars by health, wellbeing, and sustainability experts covering a range of topics, from solar energy, veganism, and architecture to resetting your gut and healthy ecosystems. Tickets are free, and if you purchase anything at the expo, 90 minutes of parking is free too.

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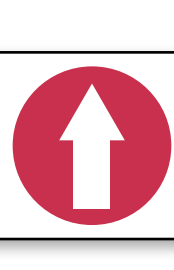
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[Back to contents](#)



# CUSTOMER TESTIMONIAL

## — PETER & SALLY, KARORI —



### Why Did You Want Double Glazing?

One of the areas in our home was already double glazed so we could feel the difference, and on some days we would get heavy condensation in the rest of the house. We realised that double glazing is just what you have to do if you want to keep a warmer home and save on heating bills. There was really no point in putting it off, and it will always add value if we ever sell our house.

### Why Did You Choose Wellington Double Glazing?

It was critical that we stayed true to the style of our home, particularly the wooden frames and leadlight windows. So when choosing which company to go with, we had quite a robust process. We contacted a number of companies, asked them to come around to provide quotes, and then made notes on all of the options. We were looking at four different proposals, and most of them were really good, but no one gave us the feeling of full confidence that we were making the right decision with our money. There were still aspects we felt unsure about, particularly around the process, as it's all actually quite complicated for someone who hasn't done it before.

Our friend then recommended Wellington Double Glazing, as they had worked on her house. We called them up as a last-minute addition, and as soon as they visited we finally felt like all of our uncertainties were answered. Even before they'd measured anything, we knew that these were the guys we wanted to work on our home. The way they do most of the work on-site was a big selling point too, because you can always see exactly what's happening, and having the windows come back into the house each day lets you feel like you're still living in your own home!

### What Was the Process?

We decided to do a two-step process, so we could see what it was like. We started with a couple of windows in our study, and it went so smoothly that we soon said, "Please carry on!"

You can imagine how having your windows taken out could have been really stressful, but it was just so easy. The process was utterly straightforward, and went exactly as the guys described. At every stage we got good explanations of what was happening, and it all happened quickly. Importantly, the guys were really pleasant to have around. They were efficient, cleaned up every day, and we were never made to feel like we



were in their way. Then when they finished, they followed up to check that we were all happy too.

### What's the Outcome Been for You?

Now we have no condensation at all, and you can feel that it's drier and retains more heat overnight so you don't get that really cold chill in the mornings. We've also had compliments from visitors, especially about how well it fits into the style of our home. It's all the original wood, and the leadlights look fantastic – you have to look very closely to tell that they are double-glazed. Everything is as it should be, and it's retained the qualities that we love about our house.

“  
*Everything is as it should be,  
and it's retained the qualities  
that we love about our house.*  
”

### What Would You Say to Others?

Our impression is that they really listen to what their customer wants, and speak in a way that makes total sense. We felt comfortable about the process, and we got exactly what was promised. For anyone who's looking at getting double glazing, there are a number of factors that go into it, but in terms of value for your money we can't imagine anyone else doing better. The whole team was outstanding, and they deserve our thanks!



## A warmer home



Wellington's older homes are full of character, but cold rooms, draughts, and condensation can make them uncomfortable – even with the heating on.

Upgrading single-glazed windows and doors can help reduce heat loss and improve comfort throughout your home. For the past 15 years, Wellington Double Glazing Ltd owners Simon and Kevan have been helping local homeowners enjoy the benefits of double glazing while retaining the features that make their homes unique.

Specialising in retrofitting double glazing into existing timber windows and doors, the team combines local knowledge with careful craftsmanship to preserve the original joinery and appearance of your home. Full replacement options are also available for aluminium windows, and the result is a warmer, quieter, and safer living environment.

Discover the transformation that double glazing can make. Contact Wellington Double Glazing Ltd for a free, no-obligation measure and quote.

## The finer details



Duane Cameron took over the family business in 2008. Based in Waikanae, he and his team have continued to blow expectations out of the water ever since.

Duane has 32 years of experience in the building industry. Having learnt the trade from his father, he combines old-school attention to detail with up-to-date industry trends to provide a building and renovating service of the highest quality.

The added difference is that Duane and his team of skilled, certified builders absolutely love what they do and pride themselves on being able to realise their clients' wishes, using top-quality materials and the smartest solutions available to them.

Whether it's a light commercial build, a new architectural dream home, much-needed renovations, or laying a timber floor, get in touch with the team at Cameron Builders. They consistently deliver on promises, always with an eye for the details and a guarantee that your building and renovation job will be a smooth one.

## The future is here



Frank House has a vision for the future of building, where homes are guaranteed to be warm and dry, are quick to build, and leave a small carbon footprint. Along the way, new homeowners have fun, builders enjoy their job, and the process from plans to key in hand is headache free.

Frank House manufactures precision-built prefabricated wall, floor, and roof panels in their Waikanae workshop. By manufacturing offsite in a controlled environment, they're not held up by unpredictable weather conditions, allowing for greater accuracy, consistent quality, and a more efficient building process.

Their prefabricated panels are delivered to the site, ready for a fast and smooth installation that significantly reduces onsite construction time and helps projects progress more efficiently.

"We're Frank by name, and frank by nature," founder Duane Cameron says. "It's who we are, how we work, and what we believe in. And that's a straight-up better way to build houses."



## Fresh summer coat

With 45 years in the industry, Graham Stewart is a veteran when it comes to providing Wellington and Hutt Valley with unmatched painting and decorating expertise.

The highly qualified team at Graham's Painters offer interior and exterior painting

and decorating services and are passionate about what they do. They have a strong work ethic, ensuring no corners are cut, top-quality materials are used, paint preparation is thorough, and clients receive clear communication about timelines and costs.

With summer months incoming, the heat ramping up, and festival season bringing whānau and friends to the door, now is the perfect time to freshen up your home on the outside. A new lick of paint not only improves visual appeal and gives your home a new lease on life, it also protects it from harsh weather and UV damage. Graham's Painters can give the house, roof, deck, and fencing a fresh coat to give your home the lift it deserves. Contact Graham's Painters for a free painting quote today.

## Graham's Painters

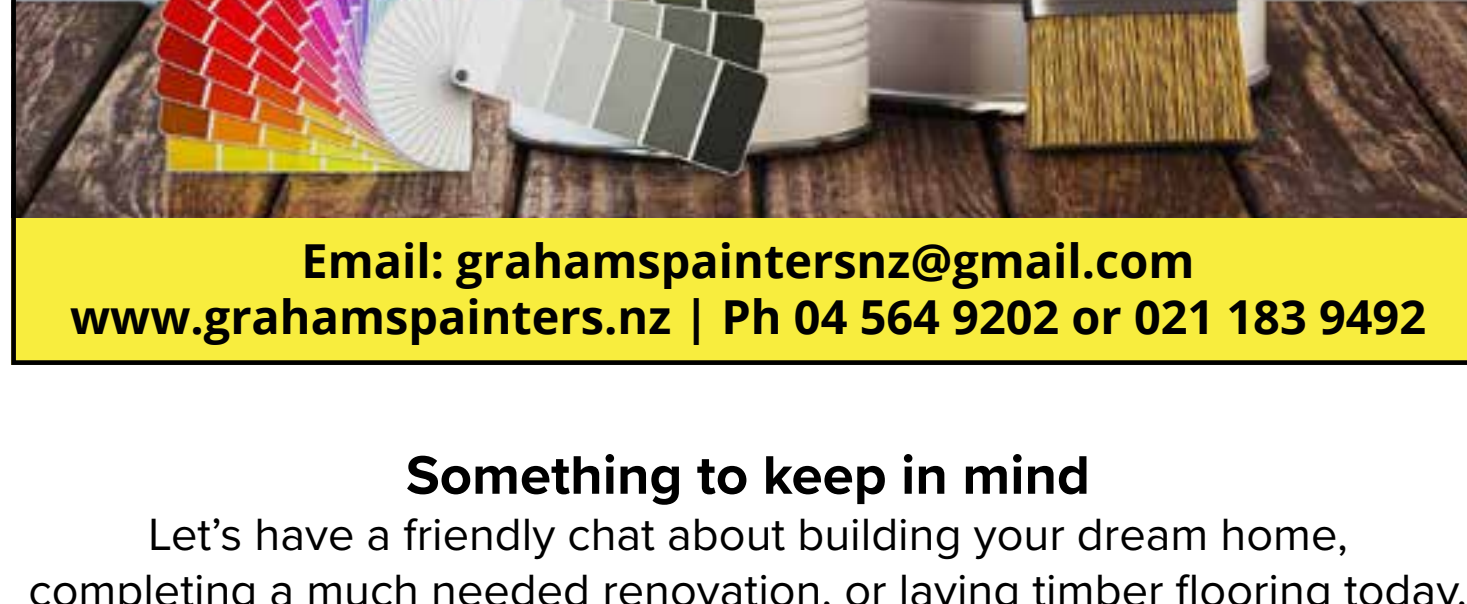
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### Something to keep in mind

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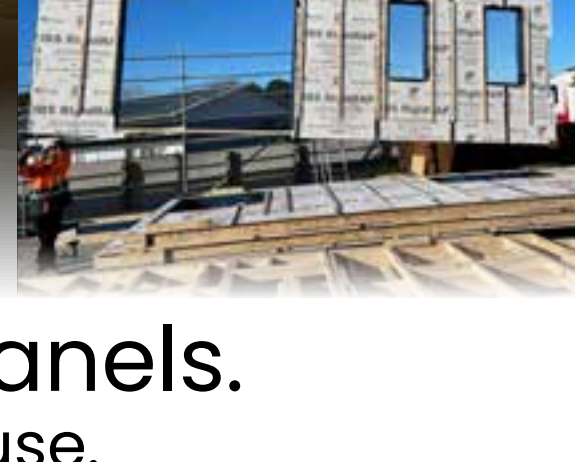


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[Back to contents](#)





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## A good time for Goodtime



Live music and an incredible fundraiser auction await at the Goodtime Foundation Gala, happening on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October at Abandoned Brewery in Lower Hutt.

With a stripped-back live performance from The Black Seeds and Fly My Pretties frontman Barnaby Weir, the evening is set to be a fabulous celebration.

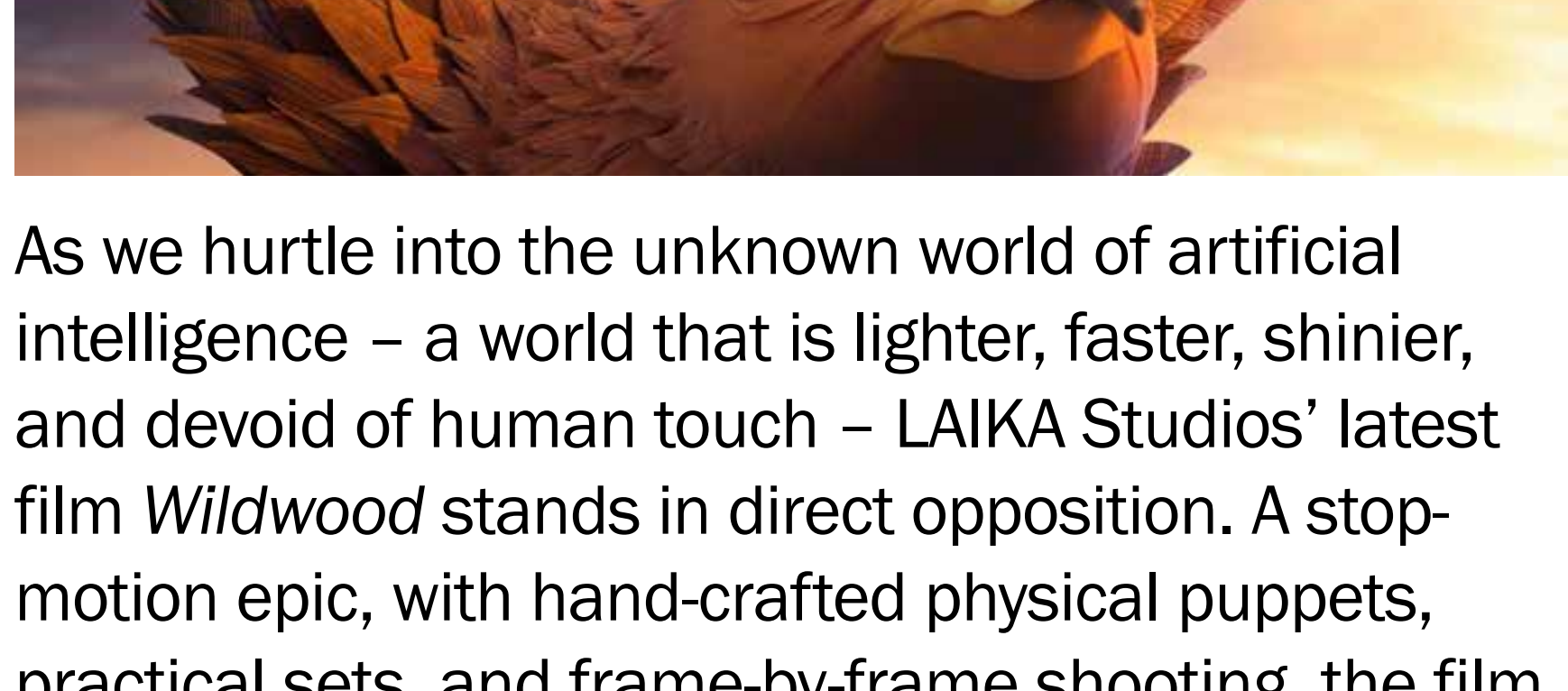
For 10 years, Goodtime Foundation has provided free music lessons and mentoring for young people who might otherwise never have the opportunity to learn an instrument. What started locally has since grown to reach young people across Greater Wellington, with Goodtime working alongside schools to identify who would benefit most from the programme.

“Music can be an incredible vehicle for confidence, discipline, creativity, and connection. We’ve seen first-hand over the past decade what can happen when a young person is given an instrument, a mentor, and someone who believes in them,” director of Goodtime Foundation Hanna Christiansen says.

In support of the Goodtime mahi, local businesses have donated dining experiences, luxury getaways, hampers, wellness packages, and art, among other exciting things.

Attend the gala dressed in something relaxed and stylish to listen to an intimate set from one of Aotearoa’s brightest stars, partake in the auction, and hear more about the Goodtime Foundation and the ways it helps foster a love for playing music among young people from Wellington and Hutt Valley to Kāpiti and Wairarapa.

## Enchanting secrets



As we hurtle into the unknown world of artificial intelligence – a world that is lighter, faster, shinier, and devoid of human touch – LAIKA Studios’ latest film *Wildwood* stands in direct opposition. A stop-motion epic, with hand-crafted physical puppets, practical sets, and frame-by-frame shooting, the film is a dark, magical odyssey. Set in Portland, Oregon, *Wildwood* follows Prue, a young girl who ventures into the forbidden forest to rescue her baby brother who was stolen by a murder of crows.

From the makers of *Coraline*, *Wildwood* is a journey shaped by love, power, and the courage to confront the unknown. Before its release, the film has already been making waves for its emotional depth and apparent scale, which is why Wellington Community Ballet Theatre has organised a fundraiser screening of the movie at Lighthouse Cuba on Sunday the 25<sup>th</sup> of October. All proceeds go toward realising the ballet company’s next production, *Don’t Ask*, which deals with similar themes. Happening in February next year as part of New Zealand Fringe Festival, it will take audiences on a dark journey full of secrets, exploring the cost of keeping them and what happens when they finally come to light.

Wellington Community Ballet Theatre offers adult dancers a chance to work towards large-scale, collaborative dance theatre productions and supports emerging choreographers and freelance artists. Arrive early for pre-movie drinks and a catch up before stepping into a fantastical realm full of enchanted creatures and high-stakes adventure.

## Colourful new beginnings



**Photo courtesy of Wellington City Council.**

TSB Arena and Shed 6 will host a colourful celebration of culture and community on Sunday the 25<sup>th</sup> of October. Light and colour collide with sound and sizzling scents for the spectacular Diwali, also known as the Hindu Festival of Lights, rooted in the traditions of the Indian subcontinent and observed around the world.

In Wellington, the entertainment kicks off at 2pm and runs nonstop till 8:30pm, with cultural performances on throughout the day and vibrant stalls offering fashion, jewellery, henna tattoos, and more. Come hungry to make the most of a mouth-watering variety of vegetarian cuisine from across North and South India.

After the main event, fireworks will explode over the harbour at around 8:50pm, to be viewed from Queens Wharf or along Wellington Waterfront.

Wellington City Council city events manager Stephen Blackburn always looks forward to the community group performances at Diwali, which he describes as one of the city’s major multicultural festivals.

“Wellington marks it with a large public celebration featuring cultural performances, food stalls, markets, family activities, and fireworks”, Blackburn says, adding that it brings together “all Wellingtonians in a wonderful celebration of Indian culture”.

Event organiser Murali Kumar is the founding trustee of Communities Action Trust NZ, an organisation that aims to empower communities from the ground up and promote New Zealand’s diversity through programmes and events such as Diwali. Kumar calls the festival “an annual Wellington event not to be missed”.

## Out with a bang



There’s no better place for political ribbing than at The Backbencher Gastropub, beneath the watchful eyes of the Kiwi politician puppet caricatures hanging on the walls.

On Thursday the 5<sup>th</sup> of November, just two days before election night, there’ll be some much-needed comedic catharsis brought to you by the people behind the popular monthly Drone Strike comedy shows.

The *Powder Keg Comedy Election Special* promises political satire, sharp observations, and jokes that leave no politician, party, or campaign promise out of the firing line. By then the campaign trail will be in full swing, the ballot boxes will be open, there’ll be no shortage of political material, and folks will need a chance to step back from the political spin and laugh at the whole spectacle.

The lineup features Jerome Chandrahasen, a veteran of the Aotearoa comedy scene, regular at the NZ International Comedy Festival, and co-founder of Humorous Arts Trust; Lesa Macleod-Whiting, one of Pōneke’s increasingly recognisable comedy voices, combining political satire, absurd characters, and fast-paced audience interaction; and Neil Thornton, a US transplant who built a career performing in New York and has since become a regular on the local comedy circuit. The big three will be joined by Mike Fowler and more.

Head down to The Backbencher for a night of elections absurdity, where there are no sacred cows and no safe seats – just sharp jokes, big laughs, and plenty of ammunition.

# Wellington sculpture series

## Quasi by Isabella Smith

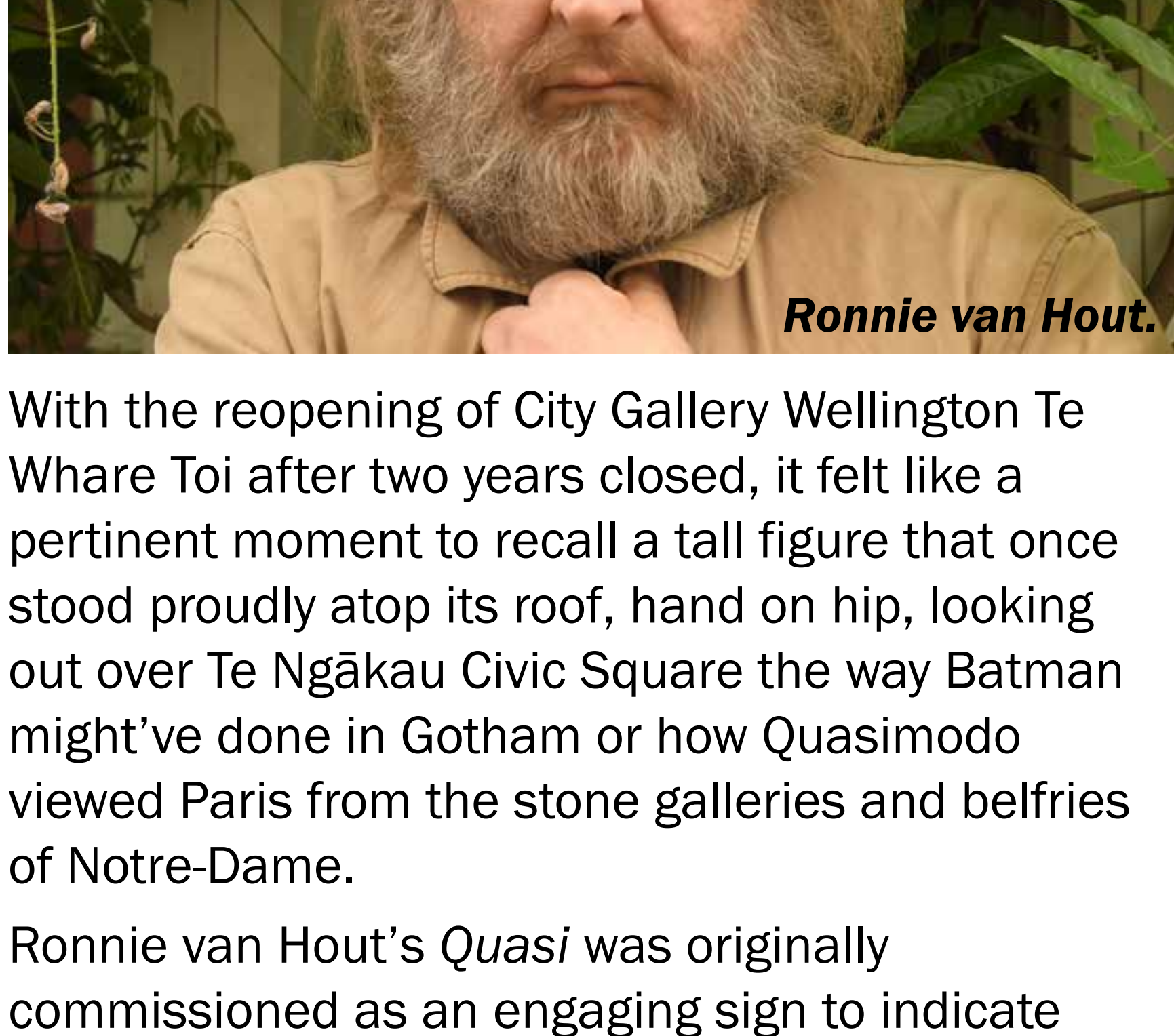
**In this new series, Isabella talks to the artists behind the sculptures dotted around our city.**



*Photo courtesy of Wellington Sculpture Trust.*



*Photo courtesy of City Gallery Wellington Te Whare Toi.*



*Ronnie van Hout.*

With the reopening of City Gallery Wellington Te Whare Toi after two years closed, it felt like a pertinent moment to recall a tall figure that once stood proudly atop its roof, hand on hip, looking out over Te Ngākau Civic Square the way Batman might've done in Gotham or how Quasimodo viewed Paris from the stone galleries and belfries of Notre-Dame.

Ronnie van Hout's *Quasi* was originally commissioned as an engaging sign to indicate the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū was back open after five years closed following earthquake damage. It was then moved to Wellington in 2019 to bring life back to Civic Square, which had suffered as a public space due to closures of the library and town hall.

Standing at five metres tall weighing 400 kilograms, *Quasi* is a giant, lifelike hybrid face-hand modelled on those of the artist, with blue eyes, a fair complexion, and rather serious expression.

All public art takes on a life of its own once it is gifted to a city, but stick a human face on it and set it at a distance, and it becomes a participating character.

Ronnie digitally combined 3D models of his hand and face to create the design. The imagery was then used to drive a CNC machine that cut the form out of CNC-routed polystyrene, which was coated in urethane and painted with resin by Ronnie and his brother Francis.

The concept “came out of a video I made using my hands as characters walking on their fingers,” Ronnie says. “The video was made to test out a new video camera, but I ended up liking the reading of the fingers as legs, and hands as bodies.”

“This ability to transfer and transform is a part of art, and I do like illusions where it is difficult to see the two states of an image at once. It's called the Duck-Rabbit problem, and in this case, it's the finger-leg problem.”

Born in Ōtautahi and based in Naarm, Melbourne, the multimedia artist's distinctive style has been described as an existential absurdism that engages with the uncanny. His works are simultaneously humorous and unsettling. The subject is often himself, making mannequins and doll lookalikes that behave as doppelgangers and alter egos.

While he doesn't inject meaning or assign a theme to his work, he says, “I am interested in the self and how it is created and where it manifests” and that his own hurt and rejection are powerful motivations.

Much can be and has been read into *Quasi*: an outsider, a superhero, a creep, a monster, a humorous example of boundary-pushing contemporary art. His name comes from the Italian meaning ‘almost’ or ‘not quite’ and perhaps explains the phenomena that he can be all those things, according to who is looking.

In the sculpture's relation to the fictional character in Victor Hugo's 1831 novel *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, it is important to note that the name Quasimodo was assigned to the character by the real monster of the story.

“The Hunchback has no name, and Quasimodo is more of a description or category. The point being that when we assign or label something weird, ugly, alien, we are really talking about ourselves. *Quasi* didn't put itself outside. Being an outsider or rejected requires someone, a society, a rule, some kind of pressure to reject.”

In 2019, *Quasi*'s extravagant entrance into Pōneke, drifting over the city one blue sky morning hanging from a helicopter lowline, was a spectacle in itself that immediately invited people to participate in the mythmaking of the new figure who'd come to town.

Like it had already in Christchurch, *Quasi*'s arrival set the media wheel spinning and saw international publications like *CNN*, *The Guardian*, *BBC*, *Time Magazine*, and *Sydney Morning Herald* feature write-ups as well as 35 international media requests for the footage and photos.

Articles spoke of a divided public and polarised opinions. Journalists interviewed passersby and catalogued their responses to the artwork as love or hate; for or against.

A few articles reported public outrage that *Quasi* had been paid for by ratepayers' money, despite the transport, Wellington-proofing, and instalment of the sculpture being a joint effort between Wellington Sculpture Trust, Wellington City Gallery, Wellington Community Trust, private backers, and Wellington City Council.

“The history of the media bagging out art is as long as the media itself” and now more than ever it is near impossible to separate myth from art, particularly with the rise of clickbait, which feeds on extreme emotions. Fans of *Quasi* developed memes, others organised gatherings to ‘bow down to their leader’, there were offerings to knit hand-warmers, and a steady stream of visitors took selfies from Te Ngākau Civic Square.

“The reaction to *Quasi* was something completely new to me and made me think about how the world and consumption of images had changed,” Ronnie says. “The reaction was mostly constructed by the media and took on its own life.”

You only need look up the sculpture and the artist and a dearth of articles crop up about the controversial character. But the initial intent was for *Quasi* to draw attention to space, and it “did its job as a sign, as a distraction, and as something to have an opinion on”, with media coverage of *Quasi* calculated by Wellington City Council to have brought in \$1.5 million in free advertising.

“Sometimes the criticisms hurt, especially from the journalists in Christchurch, and I also felt that overall, *Quasi* has been detrimental to my standing as an artist in the community. People may love it, but people are not the art world.”

In 2024, when *Quasi* departed Wellington, the sculpture appeared to have been accepted by the city as its own, with the farewells being mostly fond ones.

“I enjoy that *Quasi* is embraced by so many and feel like it has been taken from my hands,” Ronnie says.

A mirror to society's own hangups, *Quasi* has since taken on another epithet: that of the wanderer, like the new kid in school who has to start over again in a new town and establish their place in the pecking order. In 2025, it was installed on the roof of the Henry Jones Hotel in Hobart Tasmania as part of the Dark Mofo Festival and earlier this year, it was moved to stand on the Bendigo Art Gallery in Victoria, where it will hopefully remain until 2028 –

though flocks of corellas, a type of cockatoo, have taken a liking to the sculpture, picking at it and causing superficial damage.

When I ask about lessons from *Quasi*, Ronnie tells me, “I guess what I have learnt from *Quasi* is that people want to belong, be accepted by others, and be loved. As a consequence, the majority of people just try to fit in. The self is a reflection of how others see us, not some inherent quality of authenticity.”

“Public art has a range of roles to play. It is a genre of art, that many would argue is not art at all,” Ronnie says.

“There is an interest in making public art more interactive and meaningful, because we want things to be utilitarian. It is a thing in the world that is often in relation to architecture; that is not architecture, that is not furniture, or a playground, an advertisement, but could be these as well. Something to look at that makes you say, ‘What the f\*\*\* is that?’ or ‘How much did that cost?’ or ‘That's cool’ or ‘Whatever.’”

[Back to contents](#)



## Pobblebonk



**Detail of Consult the Sky, 2023-2026.**

Unstable landscapes fold in on themselves, creatures fall over one another in an urgent show of life, anthropomorphic rocks gather in clusters, clowns drift through nature’s carnival.

In her mind’s eye, Ōtepoti artist Kushana Bush has an encyclopedia of images and artistic styles to draw on when making a work, creating large-scale paintings that collapse centuries of art history.

“Often I’m very deliberately chasing an image that encompasses four or five periods and places”, Kushana says. “It’s in the pursuit of this perfect image that I stumble and trip and end up somewhere totally new. My failure is a kind of blessing. What Germans call Glück im Unglück.”

Reminiscent of Mughal paintings, Byzantine iconography, Japanese ukiyo-e prints, and Studio Ghibli, each of Kushana’s paintings is teeming with restless life.

“I think the natural world is extraordinary when you slow down and observe. The pobblebonk frog that sounds like a banjo strum, the petrol iridescence of a tūi feather, the rotund plumpness of a kererū moving vertically in the sky.”

This collapsing of images is a rejection of the idea that art is created to say something specific. “I’m really open to my images being used as a kind of divination. I love the way narrative paintings flex and warp in time. I like how the paintings change according to a viewer’s personal baggage and the cultural milieu around it.”

At once presenting a primeval world still in the throes of organising itself out of chaos, the paintings are highly organised scenes. Kushana is interested in the genre of painting called weltlandschaft or ‘world landscape’, which uses a tri-colour system: the earthen plane (ochres and earthy tones), the living plane (cobalt, teal, and greens), and the celestial plane (soft blues and greys). “The possibility is endless when it comes to colour, even 20 years in, I’m always learning.”

The exhibition *Pobblebonk* – on display at the Dowse Art Museum until the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2027 – comprises works made during two significant periods that closed and opened her imaginative world. The first half of the paintings was created in her bedroom during the pandemic lockdown, where she pictured “what it would be like to be an illuminated manuscript maker in a medieval monastery, nervously painting as the black plague sauntered past the open stone window”. The latter emerged when her daughter was born, and her “tightly controlled world was suddenly upended”.

With less time, she replaced structured planning with intuitive painting, and “the second half of the show organically bloomed like a mould across the paper”.

As her daughter learnt to walk and talk, Kushana’s works too ventured outdoors. “We were playing in sandpits, inspecting clover and holding worms. I was on my knees, down in the dirt, sniffing the clods.”

“I was interested to depict the natural world as grasped for the very first time. Seeing our world afresh, through a child’s eyes, broke the world open again for me.”

## The Poetics of Space



**Obelisk exhibition, Ben Pearce.**

**Photo by Ryan B McCauley.**

Caught somewhere between a prehistoric megalith and lean bird-like figures, Ben Pearce’s sculptures in the exhibition *Obelisk* – on at James Blackie Gallery until the 7<sup>th</sup> of November – are at once terrestrial yet light and dynamic.

“The forms for sculptures often come to me in dreams or as silhouettes. I scribble these down in my workbook and then go after them in 3D form in my workshop,” Ben says.

Made of bronze, brass, and corten steel, Ben brings these sculptures to life through a process of casting, fabrication, welding, and patination.

“The patination process is the most enjoyable as it closely resembles painting, it’s where the sculpture awakens.”

Walk around each one and its form shifts as multifaceted surfaces absorb and reflect light and the perception of the surrounding space changes, adding further movement to the static forms.

“According to *The Poetics of Space* by Gaston Bachelard, to understand sculptures we must rebuild them mentally in 3D. To do this we need to move around them and study their entire surface.”

The assemblage of geometric shapes stacked atop one another balances the organic with the industrial. Unmistakably fabricated from steel, they equally look as though they have emerged from the landscape in familiar anthropomorphic forms.

“As humans we are all acutely attuned to reading the languages in objects around us, be it the natural environment, in animals, or within body language. When we look at anything our minds are cross-referencing every experience, feeling, smell, memory, and location. That’s why art is so unique to our own lived experience.”

## Angle of an Entrance



**Lucia Sidonio in her studio. Photo by John Collie.**

*Angle of an Entrance* – Lucia Sidonio’s first exhibition in Pōneke, on at McLeavey Gallery from the 21<sup>st</sup> of October to the 14<sup>th</sup> of November – consists of quiet, intimate works that express a tension between ideas of shelter and comfort, freedom and escape.

Using oil on canvas, the Ōtautahi-based artist is drawn to close-ups and snapshots, “giving attention to the small details of the everyday that are easily overlooked”, she says. The works invite prolonged viewing, as the painting shifts with proximity and distance.

The series first emerged out of taking photos on a rainy day in Paris. “I was drawn to the array of differing umbrellas and the way that people formed groups and huddled together to take shelter under them.”

At the time, Lucia was engaging with the works of Milton Avery, noticing how “his figures are rendered as blocks of colour that interlock like a puzzle, much like the way a crowd shuffles and reconfigures itself”.

“I wanted the work to be anchored by the umbrella, stretching from one side of the canvas to the other, playing with the limitations of the picture plane so the figures are enclosed both in a narrative and a pictorial sense.”

The works have a warmer palette compared to earlier series, and shift away from previous explorations of memory toward something less personal and more symbolic.

“I usually start from an image or a specific motif, and as I go, I assess whether the composition is working. Sometimes I know instantly that something formally interesting is happening, but if a work is lacking, I don’t hesitate to paint over the entire composition.”

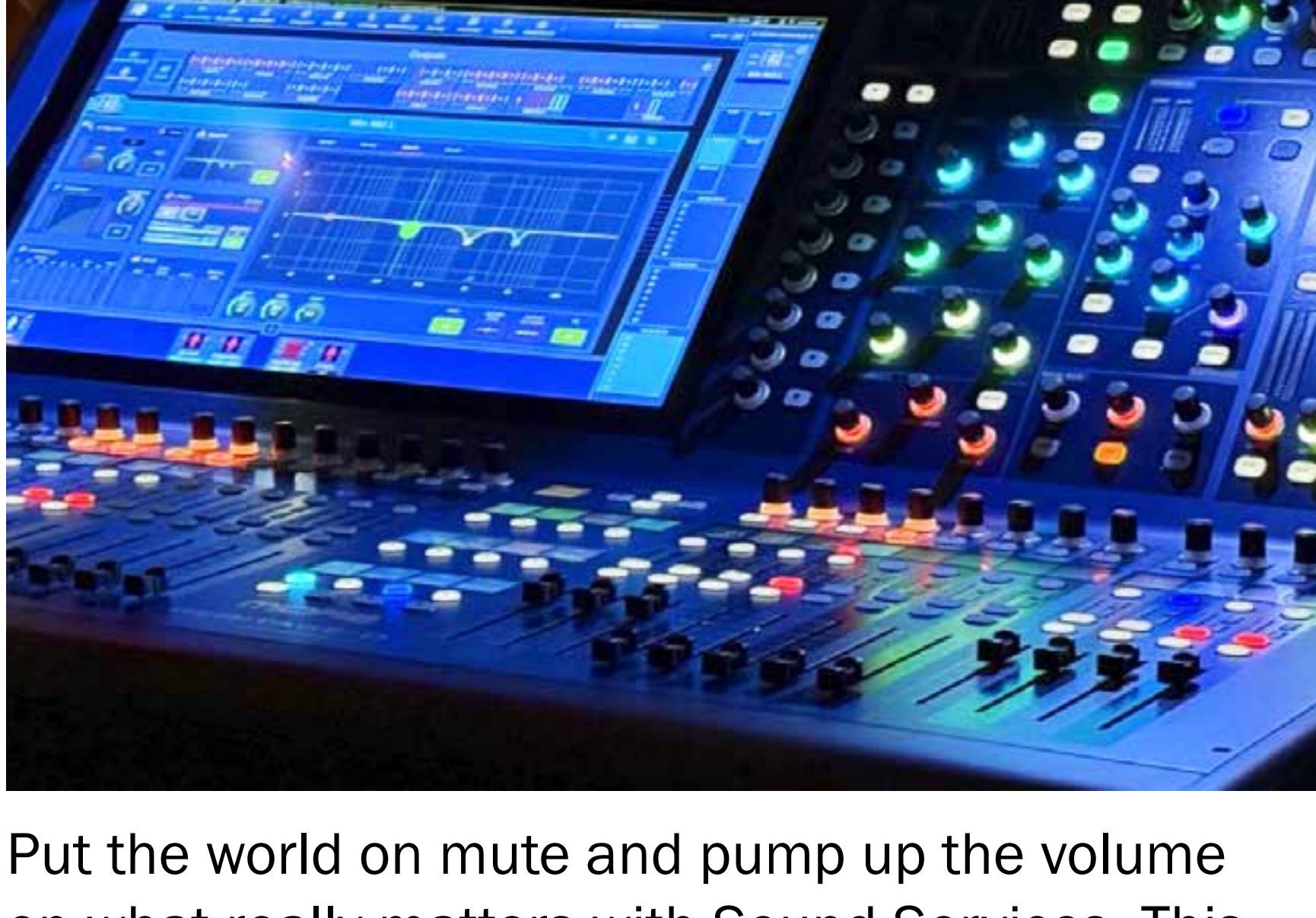
“If anything, I enjoy the process of pentimenti, which allows the history of the painting, its layers and physical buildup, to be present in the final work.”

[Back to contents](#)



# Exceptional services

## Feel the music



Put the world on mute and pump up the volume on what really matters with Sound Services. This Wellington-based, progressive, and innovative sound system integration company covers the entire Lower North Island, working within the live concert, corporate, festival, and house of worship markets. With a rich history in live sound, studio production, remote recording, system design, installation, and equipment sales, their proven track record with artists, clients, and audiences goes back more than 25 years.

Sound Services provides a professional and personalised service par excellence. There's no cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, it's about attention to detail and taking a flexible approach to meet your needs, budget, and timeframes. Whether you're running a live event or need a permanent venue installation, the Sound Services solution sounds like peace of mind.

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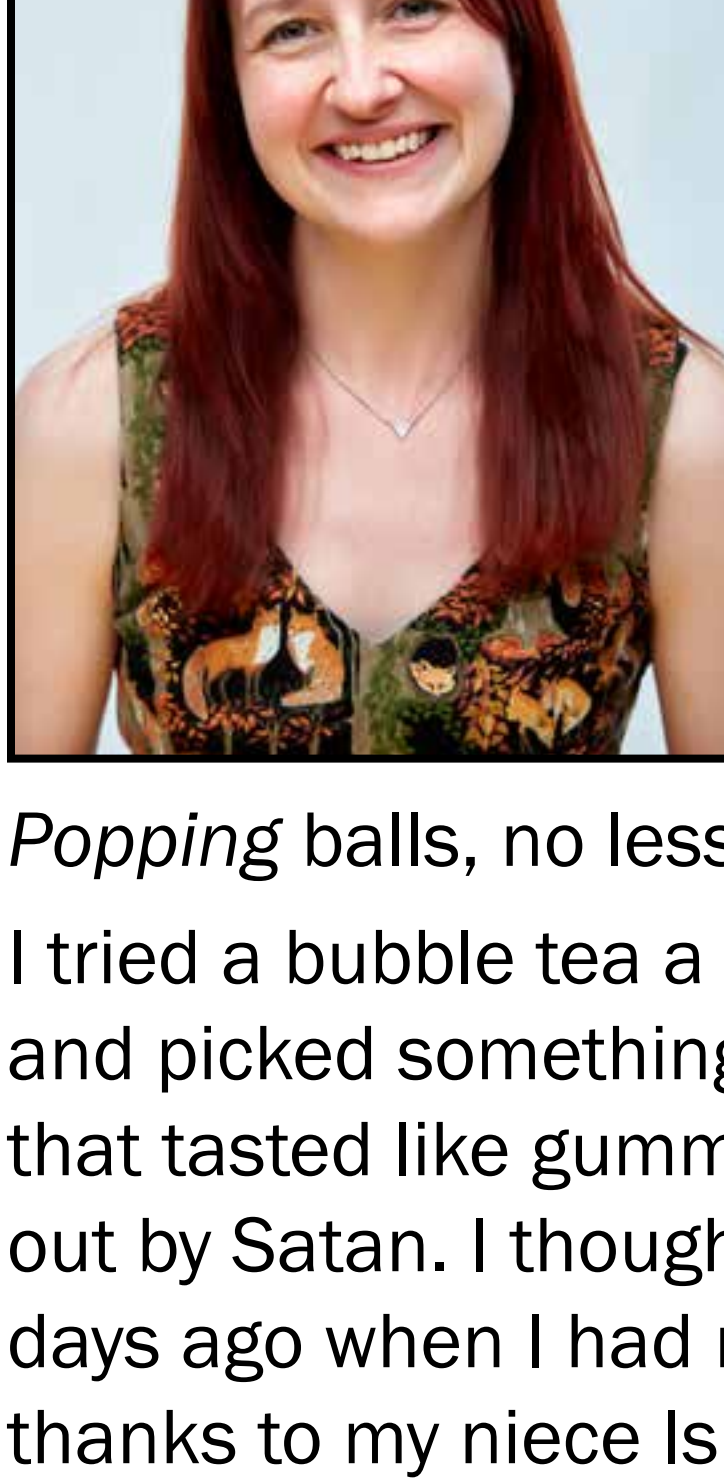
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# News A word from Maddi...

## Facing real-tea

by **Madelaine Empson**



I must admit I've been a lifelong hater of bubble tea. By lifelong, I mean since it became a thing during the baffling bubble boom of the 2020s. What do you mean peach milk? Who is putting red beans in their caffeinated watermelon juice? And what the hell is with those chewy balls?

*Popping* balls, no less? Get out of town.

I tried a bubble tea a few years back out of spite and picked something strawberry and coconutty that tasted like gummy bears chewed up and spat out by Satan. I thought that was that until three days ago when I had my first proper bubble tea thanks to my niece Isla and felt ashamed. The second the boba popped, it was like a tiny universe of joy exploded in my mouth. I stopped dead in my tracks on the street, where I stood chomping, grinning, and alarming all who passed by. Now, I am such a convert that I am writing this column while staring longingly at a picture of the bubble tea I'm about to order online.

Over the years, there have been many things I've taken an instant dislike to for no discernible reason. Puffer jackets were my arch nemeses until I put one on and developed an instant obsession. I now have four; my favourite one is so long that when I wear it, I look like a worm with shins.

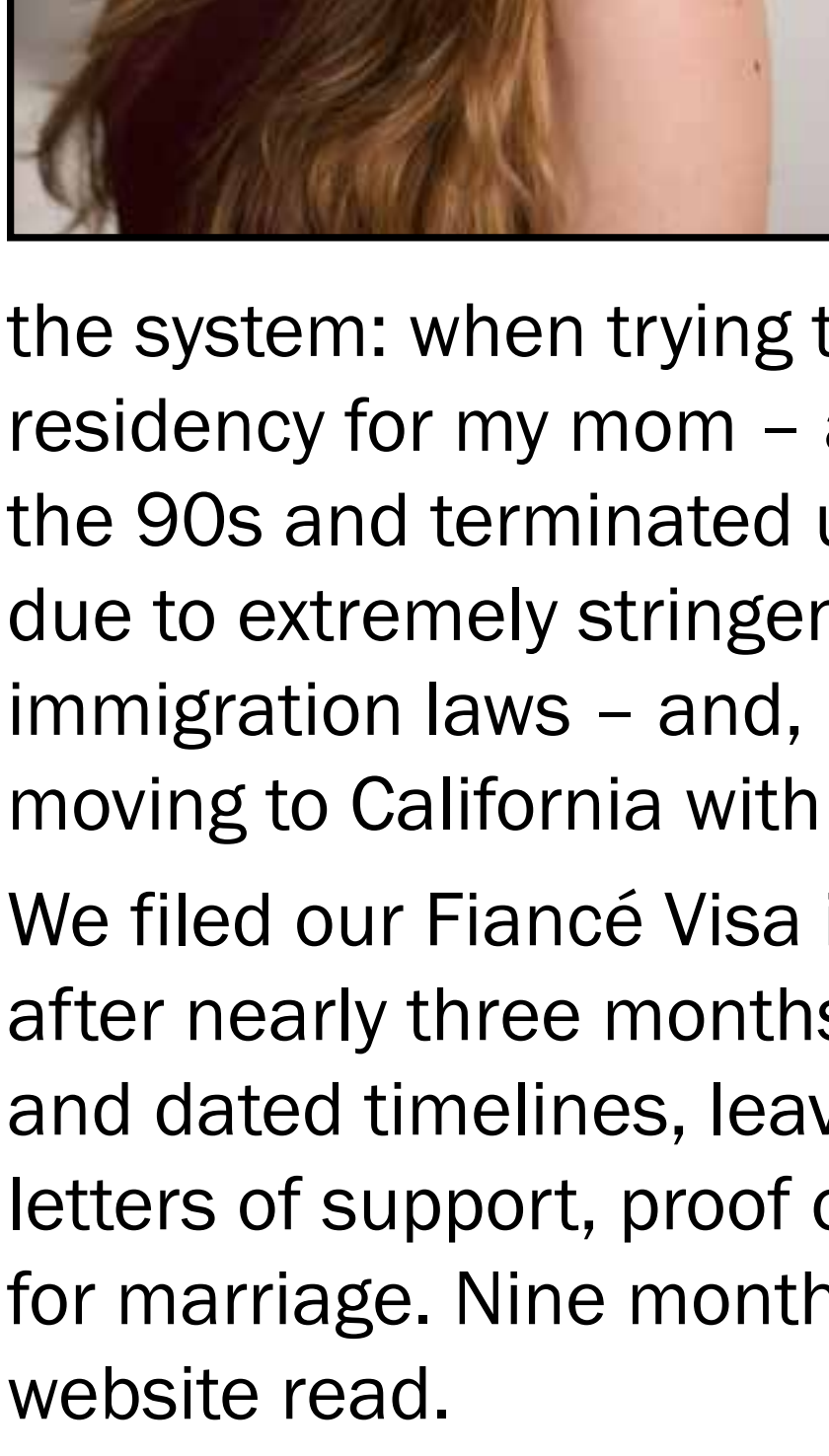
With no scientific backing, I had decided the TV show *Fargo* was about 'cowboys in the snow' and refused to watch it. After Dan politely but emphatically put it on the telly, I discovered it is not about cowboys in the snow (sorry for the spoiler) but is, in fact, excellent. Also, it turns out *Fleabag* is not actually about fleas.

I will hold on to some of my preconceived notions till death do us part. For instance, you will never convince me that comic sans is not a garbage font. But perhaps I might one day be persuaded to try on a pair of Crocs, despite the fact that they are the ugliest shoes on the planet. I'm also told they're amongst the most comfortable. You just never know what you might find once you get out of your bubble.

## A Kiwi abroad

## Love, marriage, and visas

by **Alessia Belsito-Riera**



As someone blessed with three citizenships, visas were never something I had to think much about.

I realise this is a privileged position, but it doesn't mean I have been spared from the bureaucracy of immigration. Twice have I muddled, tiptoed, and stomped my way through

the system: when trying to get New Zealand residency for my mom – a journey that began in the 90s and terminated unsuccessfully in 2025 due to extremely stringent and uncompromising immigration laws – and, more recently, upon moving to California with my Kiwi husband.

We filed our Fiancé Visa in December of 2024, after nearly three months of collecting documents and dated timelines, leaving/landing lists and letters of support, proof of relationship and plans for marriage. Nine months minimum wait, the website read.

So, we continued our lives in Aotearoa, checking the post daily, calling immigration occasionally, turning down plans too far in advance, until eight months later, a letter arrived... Who knew the joy a piece of A4 paper could bring!

What followed was collecting the documentation all over again, flying to Auckland for a medical exam, and flying back a second time for the US Consulate interview – defined by pre-appointment (stressed) jitters, a relaxed exchange with an officer, and post-appointment (happy) jitters.

One may think the hard work was done, but upon touching down at LAX in February we were whisked off to a courthouse to secure the marriage paperwork. We had 90 days to wed, but it takes eight weeks for the licence to process. Plus, did I mention we had to submit the documentation all over again?

We filed for Kiwi boy's residency in April, attended a biometrics exam in June, and were assigned an interview date in August. Our Auckland appointment seemed like a walk in the park compared to our nail-biting wait in Downtown LA, but our anxiety was for naught, because he exited as a new permanent resident of the USA. What a journey! (What a relief!)

What we learned during these two years? It's both fascinating and frightening to see your entire relationship laid out in neat little piles, the Statue of Liberty's proclamation still rings true, romance can exist amid bureaucracy, and love truly knows no borders.

## Metal devastation

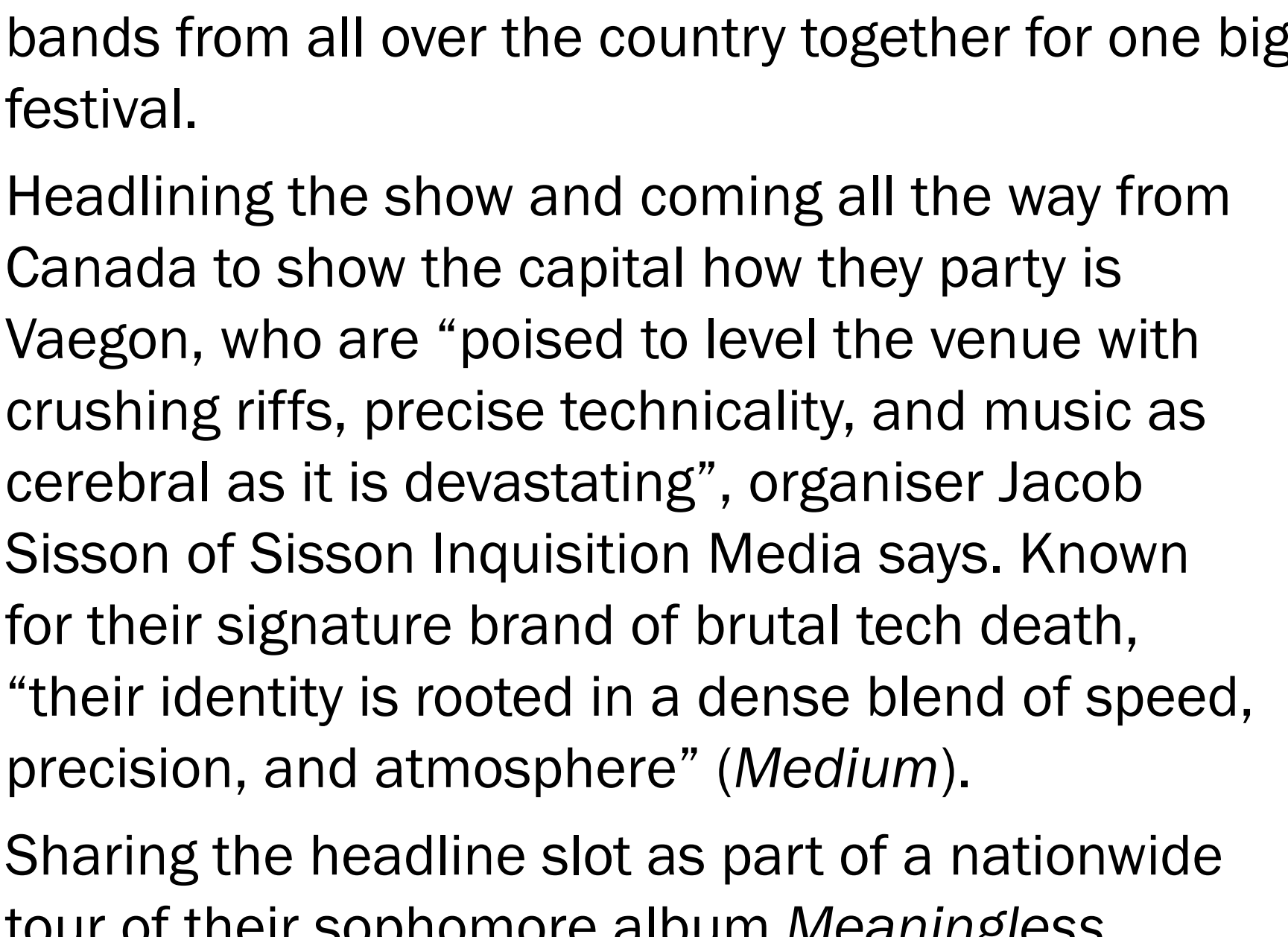


**Photo by Jechtography.**

Coming back for its 11<sup>th</sup> year, Symbiotic Metalfest is taking over Valhalla across two days on Friday the 23<sup>rd</sup> and Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup> of October. Combining all different types of extreme metal, Symbiotic has a longstanding tradition of bringing bands from all over the country together for one big festival.

Headlining the show and coming all the way from Canada to show the capital how they party is Vaegon, who are “poised to level the venue with crushing riffs, precise technicality, and music as cerebral as it is devastating”, organiser Jacob Sisson of Sisson Inquisition Media says. Known for their signature brand of brutal tech death, “their identity is rooted in a dense blend of speed, precision, and atmosphere” (*Medium*).

Sharing the headline slot as part of a nationwide tour of their sophomore album *Meaningless Existence* is Ōtepoti-based slamming death metal band Utilize The Remains: “The band on the tips of tongues around the country, they will be the next biggest thing.”

With sounds ranging from melodic metal and deathcore to goregrind, old-school, and metalcore, on the heavy lineup are 10 other savage bands: Dark Divinity, Desoration, Vortekke, The Rising Tide, Wince, Visceratory, Exanimus, Crisis, Utterance, and Unyielding Desolation.

“A yearly event like this provides something to look forward to: a weekend showcasing some of the best bands around the country, where no matter the style of metal you enjoy, there will be something for everyone!” Jacob says.

## Rich and resonant

by **Madelaine Empson**

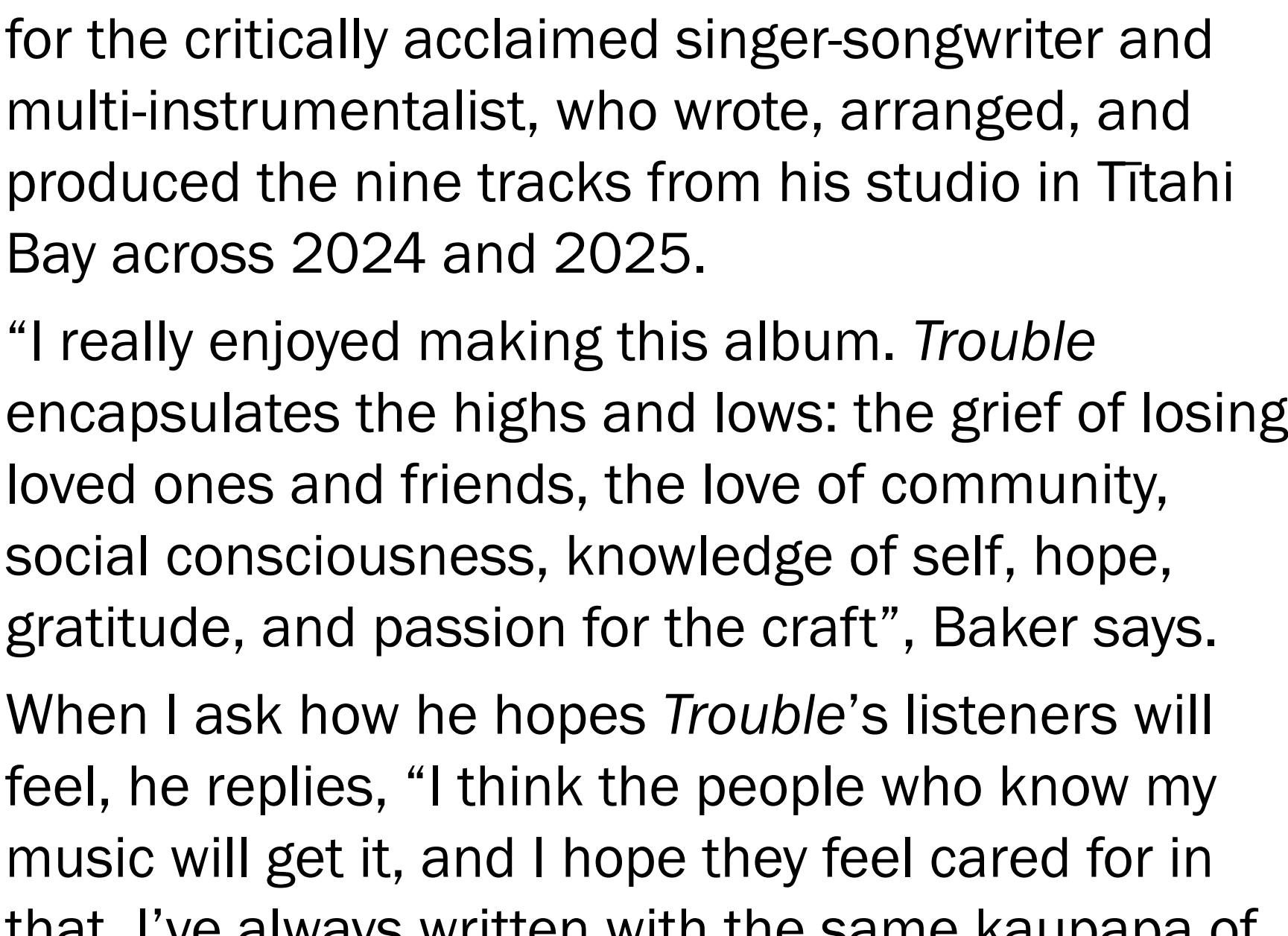


**Photo by Ashley Alexander.**

Aotearoa contemporary soul artist Louis Baker has just released his second studio album. *Trouble* took shape during a period of personal growth for the critically acclaimed singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist, who wrote, arranged, and produced the nine tracks from his studio in Titahi Bay across 2024 and 2025.

“I really enjoyed making this album. *Trouble* encapsulates the highs and lows: the grief of losing loved ones and friends, the love of community, social consciousness, knowledge of self, hope, gratitude, and passion for the craft”, Baker says.

When I ask how he hopes *Trouble*'s listeners will feel, he replies, “I think the people who know my music will get it, and I hope they feel cared for in that. I've always written with the same kaupapa of letting the art drive things, and being honest in my songs – and in that honesty I hope they find some connection.”

From *Late Night*, which reflects on the human cost of war, to the vulnerable *Flaws* and uplifting disco-soul groove *Night Dance*, the album balances social observation with self-reflection. Warm analogue textures and contemporary production meet expressive guitar work, lush strings, and Wurlitzer keys, all wrapped up in Baker's rich and resonant vocals.

In his first headline tour since 2021, Baker will perform songs from *Trouble* and more across Te Waipounamu and Te Ika-a-Māui, culminating in a lively band show at “the stunning” Meow Nui on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October.

“We're going to lay it all out on the stage,” Baker tells me. “Can't wait to play these new songs and songs from my catalogue for my hometown crowd. I want people to take the good energy from the show out into their lives; we all need some positive energy.”

# Halloween news

## Prepare to scream



It's been 30 years since the iconic horror film *Scream* landed in cinemas to reinvent the slasher genre and establish itself as a defining film of the 1990s. Starring Neve Campbell, Courteney Cox, David Arquette, and Drew Barrymore, it is set in Woodsboro, where a masked killer known as Ghostface is terrorising the small town. When high school student Sidney Prescott becomes the next target, she and her friends find themselves caught in a deadly game.

"*Scream* is a horror film, and it's a film about horror films. It knows the rules, plays with them, and is packed with references to the genre's history. 30 years on, it's still smart, funny, scary, and endlessly entertaining," The Story Studio director Jane Ross says.

The film will screen at Regent 3 Cinemas in Masterton on Friday the 30<sup>th</sup> of October in celebration of spooky season. Come along in your Halloween costume and witness director Wes Craven's clever and genuinely frightening classic in the way it was meant to be seen: on a big screen, with an audience, with the phone ringing in the darkness.

The anniversary screening also features a world premiere of *The Boxer*, a brand-new horror short from local filmmaker Mark Pacey, which was shot in Wairarapa and features a local cast and crew.

"Come for the iconic cast and the scares, stay for the layers... It's 30 years of *Scream* and the next generation of local horror, all in one night."

## Misunderstood genius



Airhorn began as a rallying cry for alternative comedy in Pōneke; a chance for performers to make something daring and new, full of flashing lights, loud noises, wild comedy, and avant-garde theatre.

Since then it has transformed into a showcase of strange experiments where the country's best comic performers offer up live entertainment that is ambitious, generous, and "makes a lot of sense in the moment but seems increasingly like a fever dream in the days that follow", organiser and comedian Zach Mandeville says.

This spooky season, Airhorn presents *Scarehorn! Airhorn's Spooky Comedy Carnival*, an evening with a lineup chocka with award winners, fan favourites, critic darlings, crowd pleasers, and divisive, misunderstood geniuses: Lesa MacLeod Whiting, Alayne Dick, Lily Catastrophe, Ginge & Minge, Oliver Pol, Anna MacLean, Mandeville, Lydia Sainsbury, Phoebe Caldeiro, and Lia Kelly.

"There'll be thrills, chills, shocks, and scares!" Mandeville says. Expect scrappy energy and limitless heart as performers offer up stand-up, sketch comedy, clowning, and song in a variety show that swings through the emotions, from laugh-out-loud to what-the-heck to legitimate fright.

The show is on Halloween Eve, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October at Newtown Community Centre – "which is rumoured to be haunted".

"There'll be polished and raw bits intermixed willy nilly. It will feel like four stereos playing four albums at the same time, but weirdly they all sync up into beautiful, transcendent noise."

## Basic witches



Gather round goblins, ghouls, and basic witches, *Nightmare on Cuba Street* is taking over Ivy Bar!

In celebration of Halloween (the drag performer's Christmas), local dragsters will be carving the glazed ham and putting on their freakiest, spookiest, scariest performances on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October. You'll see horror classics, modern monsters, and conceptual creatures brought to life, ranging from a sultry Black Widow to a zombified Snookie, from Beetlejuice to Nightcrawler.

The lineup features the spooky, sexy, silly Faux Femm, the only ever double holder of Aotearoa Drag Monster and Mx; campy seamstress Silica Gel, bringing her twisted sense of humour, fashion, and a touch of consumption; queer witch, writer, and sex work activist Vixen Temple; one of Pōneke's biggest producers, Ness Quick, inspired by her heritage, hobbies, and private browser history; self-described hypermobile hottie Rainn Bowes, the most glamorous human pretzel you've ever seen; the girl with a heart in her name and none in her chest, newcomer Angelica Heart; and finally, the real scream queen and resident Māori princess King Chloe Tamekehu.

"Drag is expression, freedom, and art. It is also community, solidarity, and inherently political," organiser Faux Femm says. "When you have a sea of audience members dressed to the nines, we know you are right in it with us."

"Dress up! Yell and cheer for every freaky thing we do and record it all so the internet can never forget! We promise not to bite (unless you ask)."

## Take the last train to Spooksville



This Wellington Heritage Festival, Mainline Steam is running a special series of steam shuttles between Wellington and Plimmerton on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October, the scariest day of the year. Dress up the family and enjoy trick-or-treats, a best-dressed contest, and open-air viewing platforms aboard a genuine heritage steam train across three trips: 12:15pm for younger kids, the 2:15pm afternoon coastal loop, and the 5:45pm twilight sunset express.

Mainline Steam Heritage Trust general manager Grant Bradley says it's not often you get to see a steam locomotive departing directly from the capital's main station.

"We're really pleased to be able to bring steam back into the heart of Wellington and give families the chance to experience something a little different this Halloween. Being part of the Wellington Heritage Festival is also a great opportunity to celebrate our railway heritage and share it with a new generation, while showing that heritage can be fun, engaging, and enjoyed by everyone."

Running from the 24<sup>th</sup> of October till the 15<sup>th</sup> of November and always held at this time of year, Wellington Heritage Festival offers more Halloween-coded events than you can shake a (broom)stick at. CE and festival director Alex Hockley says the team loves to see the creative, fun, and engaging ways people mix the two.

"Heritage spaces are usually welcoming, but there's plenty of space for spookiness. Old buildings can feel calming in the day but eerie in the dark, and many have their own ghost stories! Cemeteries are also full of people's stories, offering insights into their lives and our region's past, but they are also perfect spots for a good, scary adventure."

"We're deeply excited to have Mainline Steam operate a train this year with the Halloween theme."

[Back to contents](#)



34  
Puzzles

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Across

- 1 - Not at home (4)
- 3 - Likely to occur (8)
- 9 - Paired (7)
- 10 - Mature person (5)
- 11 - Selected (5)
- 12 - Spanish beverage (7)
- 13 - Call into question (6)
- 15 - Plunderer (6)
- 17 - Deliver by parachute (3-4)
- 18 - Capital of Vietnam (5)
- 20 - At that place; not here (5)
- 21 - Variety of rummy (7)
- 22 - Good manners (8)
- 23 - Catch sight of (4)

Down

- 1 - Not living up to expectations (13)
- 2 - Friend (Spanish) (5)
- 4 - Least polite (6)
- 5 - Forcible indoctrination (12)
- 6 - Fuzzy (7)
- 7 - Noteworthy and rare (13)
- 8 - Clothing such as a vest (12)
- 14 - Upstart; one who has recently gained wealth (7)
- 16 - Unoccupied areas (6)
- 19 - Birds lay their eggs in these (5)

Hootin’ and hollerin’



Saddle up: it’s time to solve another murder!

Where a classic whodunnit meets western wiles, *The Great Western Murder Mystery* is a live, interactive theatre show in which every guest gets to be the sheriff. Dress brim and proper in your biggest hat and pointiest boots to see if you can solve the mystery of who killed the infamous cattle rustler Dooky Smudge.

While the show is interactive, no acting is required. The cast members play the sneaky suspects, and you’ll get multiple chances to talk to them throughout the evening to determine whose killer instincts are as sharp as a spur and whose are softer than cow pat. Everything – including dressing up – is optional, as it’s ultimately about making sure audiences feel comfy and have a blast during this riotous comedy that’s a hoot and a holler the whole way through.

As delighted patrons have said, the *Great Western Murder Mystery* “was a laugh from the start and the audience participation was next level – I got a great workout running up and down stairs with my trusty hobby horse. Definitely recommend!”

Another described the incredible cast as “quick-witted, entertaining, and so committed to their characters that I genuinely started distrusting everyone in the room!”

“If you’ve ever wanted to experience *Yellowstone* meets *Cluedo* after a few drinks, this is your sign” to ride on down to Lower Hutt Little Theatre on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October and Te Raukura ki Kāpiti on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Both shows start at 7pm sharp.

Caught in the Chrisfire



Pōneke comic icons Mamaeroa ‘Mo’ Munn and Austin Harrison are bringing the antidote to the election scares on Friday the 30<sup>th</sup> of October at The Hannah, before it all gets too real. With politicians heavy on the campaign trail, this cabaret night of political satire, songs, sketches, and downright silliness is set to bring some levity to the debate and help people to stay optimistic.

“Making people feel good about engaging in democracy is so important in these turbulent times, so that’s what we’re setting out to do with the show,” Austin says.

Audiences can expect a high-pace, rollicking show full of familiar political characters and a fair amount of good-natured jabs across the political spectrum. From a satire song titled *White Panic* to a series of sketches about what politicians get up to after dark, *The CHRStening: An Election Comedy Show* will be a rollercoaster-like comic variety show.

“We’re not coming at this with any agenda other than trying to make the election fun and get folks to enjoy engaging in the process.”

Mo is a multi-award-winning stand-up comedian, improviser, and writer based in Pōneke. Austin is a regular on the local scene, and this year was awarded Best Newcomer at the NZ International Comedy Festival. Step inside the CHRStine Chapel and join the comedy duo for a night that will be one part chaos, two parts surprising and unexpected, but most of all: full of joy.



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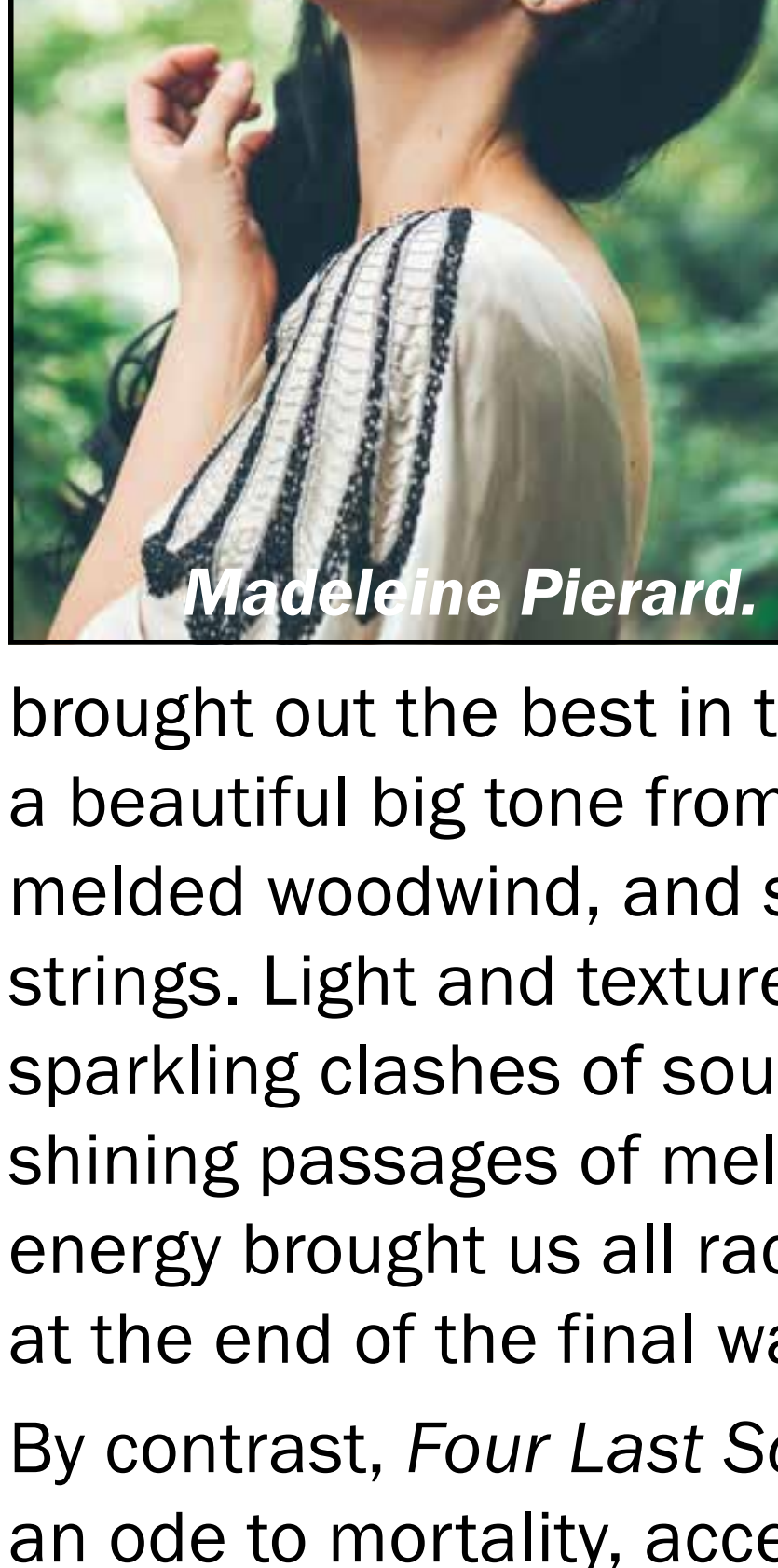
## Four Last Songs

**Presented by New Zealand Symphony Orchestra**

**Conducted by Sir Donald Runnicles**

**Michael Fowler Centre, 2nd Oct 2026**

**Reviewed by Tamsin Evans**



Madeleine Pierard.

Sir Donald Runnicles described the first piece in the programme, *Der Rosenkavalier Suite* by Richard Strauss, as “the *Reader’s Digest* version” of this four-hour opera. It certainly is a condensed narrative, capturing the core of the opera in five sections. Runnicles brought out the best in the orchestra, producing a beautiful big tone from the horns, wonderfully melded woodwind, and superbly expressive strings. Light and texture seemed to come through sparkling clashes of sound and delicately smooth, shining passages of melody, but then speed and energy brought us all racing downhill, breathless, at the end of the final waltz.

By contrast, *Four Last Songs*, also by Strauss, is an ode to mortality, acceptance of death after a long life well lived alongside one’s companion. Soprano Madeleine Pierard is so well suited to these songs. Her voice ebbed and flowed with power, intensity, sadness, and control. From poise and elegance in the first song *Frühling* (Spring), she perfectly conveyed the contemplation of death in *September*, and the slow sense of time and life passing in *Beim Schlafengehen* (When Going to Sleep) and *Im Abendrot* (At Dusk).

Runnicles mused on what would accompany *Four Last Songs* on the programme and told us Symphony No. 3 by Brahms was chosen because of their shared power and beauty; quiet and peaceful endings over a bittersweet shadow.

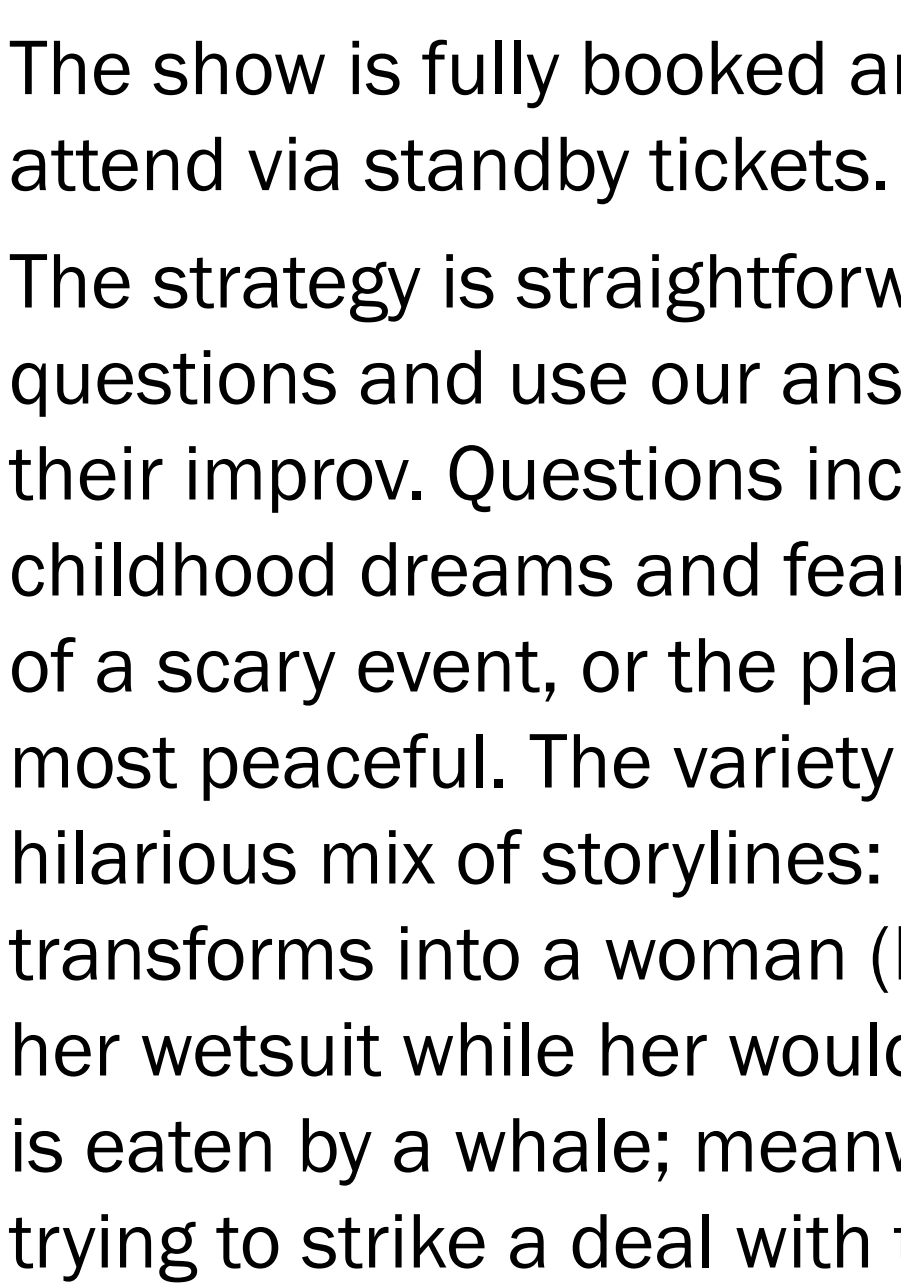
The second and third movements, *Andante* and *Poco allegretto*, captured this clearly. The relaxed and assured sound of woodwind in the *Andante* was a gentle folk dance hiding a sense of disquiet, carefully nurtured by Runnicles and excellently resolved by the musicians and the music at the end. The third movement, opened by a wonderful melody in the cellos, moved through tonal and major-minor shifts to lead into the fourth movement which delivered a sparkling peak, with suitably crisp sound from violins and cellos, before settling and reaching its tranquil end.

## Big Orb Improv

**Presented by Pig Alien Productions**

**BATS Theatre, 9th Oct 2026**

**Reviewed by Numi Stössner**



In *Big Orb Improv*, Caitlin Penhey, Criss Grueber, Ciarán Searle, Trubie-Dylan Smith, and Brendon Bennetts make up stories from audience suggestions, with just one hour to show the titular Big Orb the breadth of human experience.

The show is fully booked and a few guests can only attend via standby tickets. A promising start!

The strategy is straightforward: the actors ask questions and use our answers as inspiration for their improv. Questions include the viewers’ biggest childhood dreams and fears, the recollection of a scary event, or the place where one feels most peaceful. The variety of answers leads to a hilarious mix of storylines: a serene surfing trip transforms into a woman (Penhey) getting stuck in her wetsuit while her would-be saviour (Bennetts) is eaten by a whale; meanwhile, a boy (Bennetts) trying to strike a deal with the devil (Searle) to bring back his deceased cat Misty ends up calling Baby Spice of the Spice Girls for guidance.

The more absurd the story gets, the better. It is amazing to witness the group’s ability to transform audience responses into comedic scenes, their success driven by the way they mine us for additional details to draw on. Especially satisfying is the way they bring each plot together at the end, never missing the perfect moment to drop an almost-forgotten reference from earlier on.

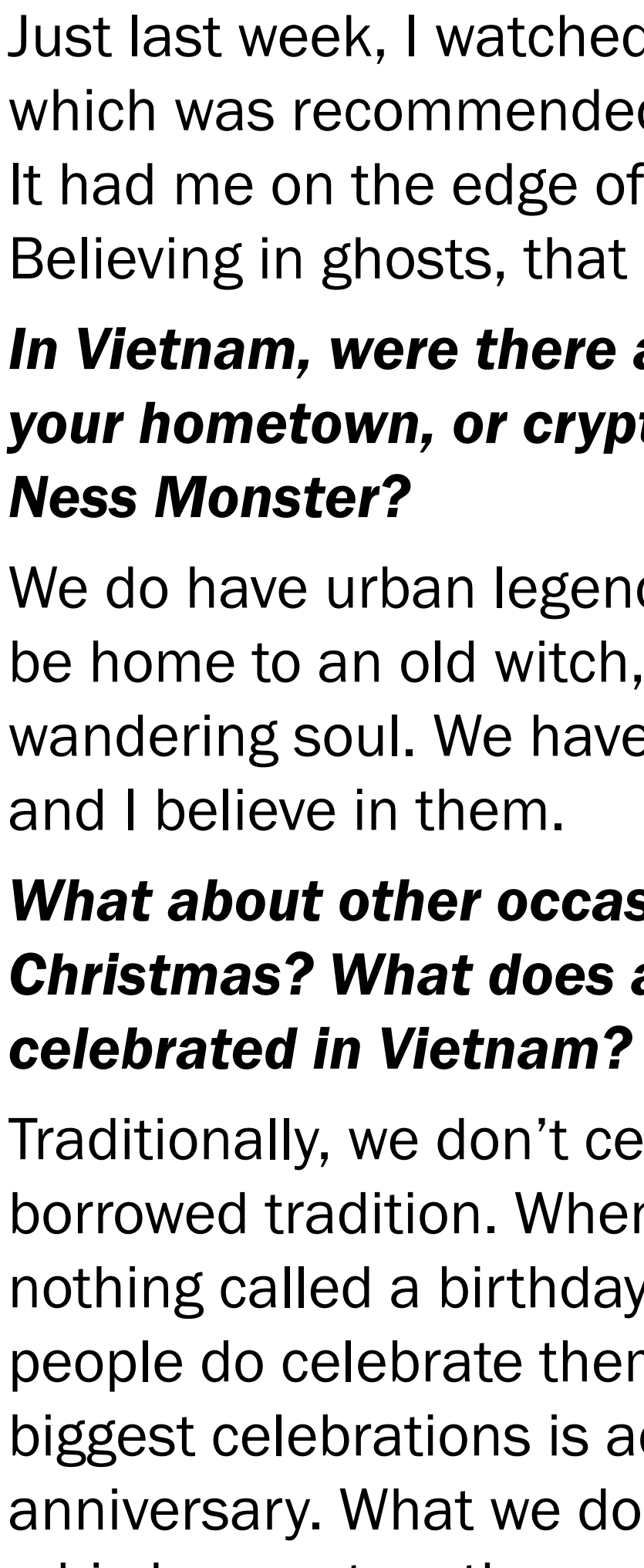
Throughout, the Big Orb signals its pleasure or displeasure by changing colour. For example and much to our amusement, it glows green when asked whether underage drinking is acceptable.

A highlight is the seamless integration of the pianist Finn McKinlay and the lighting and sound technician Campbell Wright, who shape the plot in many unexpected ways. For instance, McKinlay may randomly change the music, forcing the actors to adapt accordingly, while Wright’s voice resounds as that of an incorporeal entity.

I would be interested to see what would happen if audiences were called upon later in each scene, especially to have a hand in the storyline’s twists and turns. But ultimately, these players from Christchurch’s Court Jesters interpret and integrate our responses in a way I’ve never seen before, resulting in a hilarious show. Go to *Big Orb Improv* to have a good laugh with friends and see great improvisors doing what they do best.

## A chat with Tung...

## Kẹo hay ghẹo: Trick or treat



**by Madelaine Empson**  
***Halloween is coming up! Do you do anything for it here in New Zealand and did you do anything on the day in Vietnam?***

It is one of the occasions that doesn’t appeal to me at all, even though I am a big fan of spooky stuff. I even believe that ghosts are real! But these days in Vietnam, younger people – our generation – do celebrate it. They use it as an excuse to meet up and hang out together.

***Did you ever go trick or treating as a kid?***

No, but I met some kids once on the day who asked me, ‘Trick or treat?’ I remember my response to them was, ‘What do you mean?’ They said, ‘It’s what we ask on Halloween,’ and I said, ‘What do you want me to answer?’ The kids’ faces were like... ‘What’s going on with this man?’

***Would you go trick or treating now?***

Yes, but only if I had company.

***Being into spooky stuff, when is the last time you remember being really scared?***

Just last week, I watched a movie called *Heretic*, which was recommended to me by my colleagues. It had me on the edge of my seat the whole time! Believing in ghosts, that really got me.

***In Vietnam, were there any ghost stories circling your hometown, or cryptids like Bigfoot, the Loch Ness Monster?***

We do have urban legends: a big old tree could be home to an old witch, or a young ghost, or a wandering soul. We have a lot of tales like that – and I believe in them.

***What about other occasions like birthdays or Christmas? What does and what doesn’t get celebrated in Vietnam?***

Traditionally, we don’t celebrate birthdays. It is a borrowed tradition. When I was a kid, there was nothing called a birthday around me. Nowadays, people do celebrate them, but one of the biggest celebrations is actually someone’s death anniversary. What we do is gather around and have a big banquet on the anniversary of someone’s passing to remember that person and their life.

My grandfather passed away when I was five. During the banquet, I told my Mum, ‘I wish everyday could be like this, so I could eat chicken and sticky rice.’ The next day, I was like, ‘Where’s Grandad?’

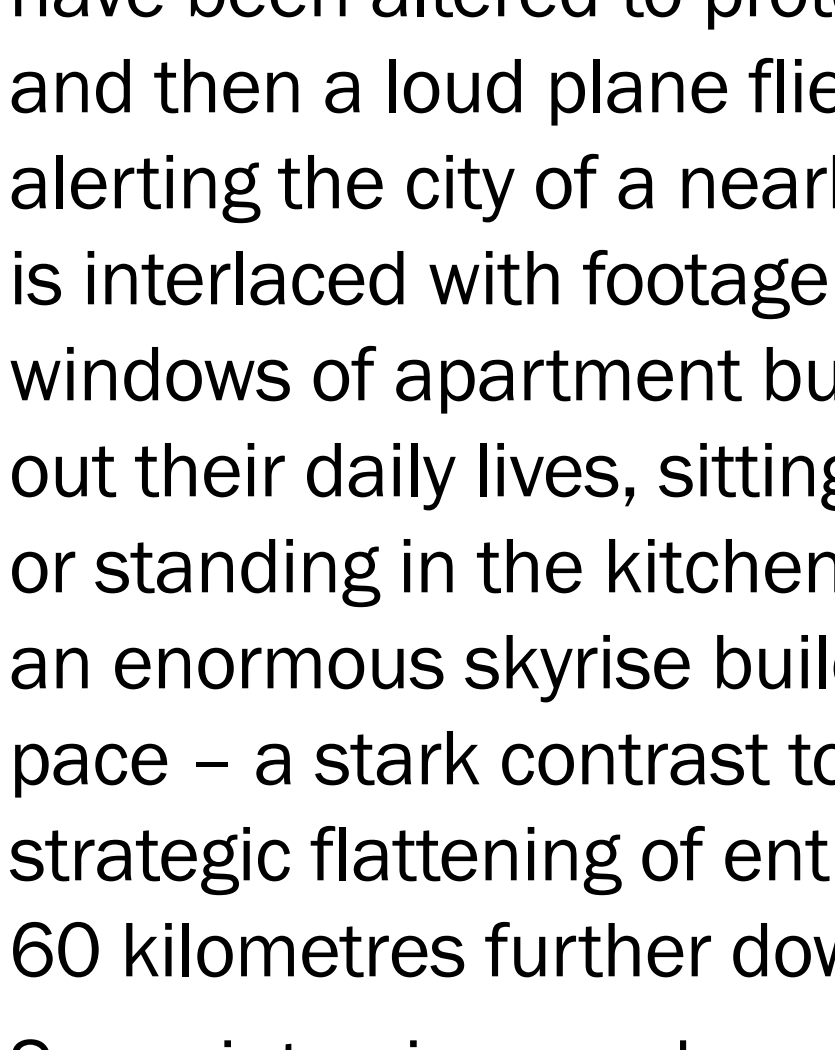
## NAZA

**77 minutes**

**M16**

★★★★★

**Reviewed by Isabella Smith**



NAZA is an Israeli military acronym for nezek agavi, a Hebrew term for ‘collateral damage’ that creates an unsettling moral detachment from the realities of mass civilian deaths in Gaza.

This chilling investigative documentary from Israeli filmmakers Yuval Abraham and Rachel Szor takes place under the cover of night on Tel Aviv rooftops where Abraham carries out clandestine conversations with 24 Israeli Defence Force soldiers and intelligence officers. Produced by *The Guardian*, the whistleblowers provide testimonies about the military operations in Gaza that have killed over 73,000 people, describing in detail the artificial intelligence tools and complex automated surveillance systems used by the IDF to target homes and buildings and knowingly calculate the number of NAZA that would die as a consequence.

The interviews plunge viewers into 77 minutes of darkness, with the silhouetted profiles of the interviewees set against the lit-up cityscape. This stripping of the senses centres the voices, which have been altered to protect identities. Every now and then a loud plane flies overhead or sirens go off alerting the city of a nearby strike. The documentary is interlaced with footage peering through the windows of apartment buildings where people live out their daily lives, sitting on the couch watching TV or standing in the kitchen cooking dinner. It shows an enormous skyscraper building being constructed at pace – a stark contrast to the descriptions of the strategic flattening of entire suburbs and towns just 60 kilometres further down the coast.

Some interviewees draw rudimentary pictures of weapons-screen interfaces and describe the inaccuracies of the AI tools used. Another describes the surveillance of a child’s phone to gather intel on when her suspected father will be home and therefore when to strike. The documentary is impactful in its specificity. It doesn’t attempt to draw a bigger picture, and it reflects the unsettling ways the IDF personnel viewed themselves within the much larger and highly granular war apparatus. One of them describes his role as merely “technical”, another says, “if I didn’t do it, someone else would’ve”.

Never have I experienced such a weighted silence as the credits rolled. The must-see film received the Special Jury Prize at this year’s Venice Film Festival. After its screen run, it will be available for free on *The Guardian* website in late November.

[Back to contents](#)



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Tīeke / saddleback. Photo by Janice McKenna

# What's on



## 1<sup>st</sup> Nov. Wairarapa Cinémathèque Presents:

**Psycho:** Regent 3 Cinema, Queen Street, Masterton – 7:30pm. Alfred Hitchcock's revolutionary thriller follows Marion Crane to the isolated Bates Motel, where nothing, and no one, is quite what it seems. With its shocking structure, iconic score, and enduring influence, *Psycho* forever changed the language of suspense cinema.



**7<sup>th</sup> Nov. A Glorious Storm:** St Andrew's on The Terrace, The Terrace, Te Aro – 3pm. Wellington's Gale Force Gospel Choir joins Auckland's Heaven Bent Gospel Choir for a concert marking two remarkable milestones: their 15<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> anniversaries, respectively. Expect spirited a cappella performances that will get your hands clapping and spirits soaring. **Photo from Pixabay.**



**31<sup>st</sup> Oct. BOWLOWEEN II:** Masterbowl, Queen Street, Masterton – 8pm. Bowling, pinball, and rock 'n' roll collide to bring the spookiest of scaries to Masterton this Halloween. Following a hugely popular event in 2025, *Bowloween II* will feature Rampage alongside The Coffin Fits [pictured]. Plus, there will be dancing, moshing, costume competitions, spot prizes, and more.



## 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct. Best in Class: NZ Comedy School

**Alumni Showcase:** The Fringe Bar, Allen Street, Te Aro – 8pm. Some of the NZ Comedy School's most celebrated graduates, delightful new faces, finalists from the NZ Raw Comedy Quest, and MC Brendon Green [pictured] come together to raise funds for the school's Diversity Scholarship, which helps grow new voices in the Kiwi comedy scene!



**Until 1<sup>st</sup> Nov. Skullduggery Art Show:** Thistle Hall, Cuba Street, Te Aro. Scarier and more spine-chilling than ever, *Skulduggery* showcases work themed around Halloween, horror, and the supernatural by 60 professional artists from across Aotearoa, many of whom work in the local film, game, and fine art communities. Celebrate the show's 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary this spooky season. **Artwork by Otis Chamberlain.**



**30<sup>th</sup> Oct. InDuna:** Moon, Riddiford Street, Newtown – 7pm. Aotearoa-based South African artist InDuna blends Afro-pop, R&B, and folk. His new single *Favourite Colours* is an atmospheric anthem about identity, healing, resilience, and journeying back to yourself. It uses colour as a metaphor for how anxiety, grief, and disconnection can drain the vibrancy from life. **Photo by Hannah Meier.**

# What's on

## Wairarapa

### 24<sup>th</sup> Oct. Fright Night at the Museum:

*Cobblestones Heritage Village, Main Street, Greytown* – 8pm, 8:30pm. The historic village will be transformed into a Victorian Gothic horror, where live scare actors bring the darkness to life.

### 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> Oct. Goldilocks and the Three Bears:

*Wairarapa Events Centre, Holloway Street, Carterton* – various times. Perfect for the whole family, this delightful production brings the much-loved classic story to life through a vibrant blend of dance and drama.

### 30<sup>th</sup> Oct. Scream 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Halloween Celebration:

*Regent 3 Cinemas, Queen Street, Masterton* – 7:30pm. Wes Craven's classic horror flick will be paired with the premiere of *The Boxer*, a brand-new horror short from local filmmaker Mark Pacey.

## Kāpiti

### 29<sup>th</sup> Oct. Beats By Bingo Halloween with Mistress Viv:

*The Bond Store, Birmingham Street, Paraparaumu* – 7:30pm. Enjoy a frightfully fun night of musical bingo, spooky mini games, awesome prizes, and Halloween dress up.

**1<sup>st</sup> Nov. Kapiti Women's Expo:** *Southward Car Museum, Otaihangā Road, Paraparaumu* – 10am. This annual event brings together a vibrant mix of local businesses showcasing products and services across art, beauty, fashion, food and drink, health and fitness, homewares, travel and tourism, and more.

## Events

### 24<sup>th</sup> Oct. Oh The Horror 2.0: Horror and Gothic Market:

*Whirinaki Whare Taonga, Fergusson Drive, Upper Hutt* – 11am. Be mesmerised by the macabre at this market celebrating everything spooky across music, cartoons, art, apparel, and more.

### 25<sup>th</sup> Oct. Welly Ballet Movie Fundraiser:

*Light House Cuba Cinema, Wigan Street, Te Aro* – 5:45pm. Help the Wellington Community Ballet Theatre raise funds while enjoying the darkly magical adventure *Wildwood*, a new movie from the creators of *Coraline* in which a young girl ventures into a dangerous hidden forest to rescue her brother.

### 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. Boo at the Zoo:

*Wellington Zoo, Daniell Street, Newtown* – 5pm. This spooky night at the zoo for the whole family features themed activities, special close encounters, pop-up talks, trick or treating, plenty of animal magic, and so much more.

### 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. The Goodtime Foundation Gala:

*Abandoned Taproom Petone, Fitzherbert Street, Petone* – 6:30pm. Dress smart for a live auction featuring an intimate acoustic performance by Barnaby Weir.

## Music

### 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct; 1<sup>st</sup> Nov. Beatlemania:

*Southward Theatre, Paraparaumu; Wairarapa Events Centre, Carterton* – 7:30pm; 6pm. Enjoy The Beatles' hits and deep cuts live in a tribute show performed in their original key and brought to life on stage with authentic costumes, replica instruments, and theatrical lighting.

### 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct. Midge Ure:

*Meow Nui, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. UK legend Midge Ure brings his extensive catalogue to New Zealand, performing hits from his superb solo career plus favourites from his time as part of the bands Ultravox, The Rich Kids, Thin Lizzy, and Visage.

### 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> Oct. Symbiotic Metalfest:

*Valhalla, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 7pm. Get amongst the chaos as 12 savage bands perform metal music over two epically smashing nights.

### 24<sup>th</sup> Oct. Amped Up 2026:

*Brewtown, Blenheim Street, Upper Hutt* – 2pm. New Zealand's loudest night of mean-as metal mayhem is locked and loaded with a lineup featuring Devilskin, Villainy, Tadpole, Head Like a Hole, Written by Wolves, and Boondocks.

### 24<sup>th</sup> Oct. Reb Fountain:

*Meow Nui, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. Fountain's new album *Water for Gasoline* confronts the challenges of our times while searching for light, beauty, and connection amongst the noise.

### 28<sup>th</sup> Oct. New Zealand String Quartet Presents:

**Legend:** *Prefab Hall, Jessie Street, Te Aro* – 6:30pm. Celebrate the art of storytelling through music in this programme featuring Beethoven, Benjamin Britten, Claire Cowan, and a new work by Sara Arain, an emerging composer from the New Zealand School of Music – Te Kōkī.

### 29<sup>th</sup> Oct. Mudhoney:

*Meow Nui, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 7pm. Renowned for their ferocious live performances, Mudhoney continue to deliver the same high-voltage mix of sludgy riffs, pounding rhythms, and Mark Arm's unmistakable snarl that made them one of the most influential 90s outfits.

### 30<sup>th</sup> Oct. Greg Johnson:

*Old St Paul's, Mulgrave Street, Pipitea* – 8pm. LA-based Kiwi singer-songwriter Greg Johnson tours Aotearoa on his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday while showcasing his career-spanning repertoire.

### 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. Antonie Tonnon:

*The Hannah, Cambridge Terrace, Te Aro* – 6:15pm, 9:15pm. Three years in the making, the Taite Music Prize-winning songwriter's *Cinematographer* combines live electronic music, cinematic storytelling, and visual design into an immersive album.

### 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. Butter Wouldn't Melt:

*The Undercurrent, Tory Street, Te Aro* – 6:30pm. Join Wellington-based bluegrass band Butter Wouldn't Melt for the release of their new single *Nettle Song*, murder ballads, a costume competition, and Halloween festivities.

### 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. NZTrio Presents: Reverie:

*Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui, Victoria Street, Te Aro* – 7pm. NZTrio He Taonga Wairere is renowned for its eclectic repertoire of classical music, outstanding talent, and warm Kiwi stage presence. *Reverie* promises to be mesmerising and atmospheric.

### 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. The Bon Temps Bros:

*Hilltop House, Upland Road, Kelburn* – 7:30pm. Pip Payne, Richard Klein, and Al Norman on slide guitar, fiddle, accordion, and snare drum join sonic forces as a brand-new group. Together they make a big sound all about the groove. Acoustically syncopated Cajun blues, hot Louisiana music, and tunes that will set your feet stomping.

### 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. Louis Baker:

*Meow Nui, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. Critically acclaimed multi-instrumentalist, songwriter, and producer Louis Baker presents *Trouble*, a collection of nine songs rooted in timeless songwriting and blending retro-soul influences with contemporary production.

### 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. RadioActive.FM Presents: RAVE 2 THE GRAVE Fundraiser:

*The Grand, Courtenay Place, Te Aro* – 8pm. With three unique dance spaces across different levels, ravers can choose their vibe, from the more chill selections to heavy bass and high-energy tracks at this RadioActive.FM fundraiser.

## Performance

### 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct. Rhys Mathewson:

*The Hannah, Cambridge Terrace, Te Aro* – 7pm. Along the *Up To Speed Tour*, Mathewson presents an hour of the best jokes he's got, then, after an interval, he'll perform his award-winning show *10<sup>th</sup> Rodeo* – winner of the New Zealand International Comedy Festival Director's Choice Award.

### 24<sup>th</sup> Oct. Get Rhythm:

*The Opera House, Manners Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. *Get Rhythm* is a live theatre tribute experience that brings to life the heart, humour, and deep connection of Johnny Cash and June Carter.

### 29<sup>th</sup>; 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. Murder Mystery Interactive Presents: Great Western Murder Mystery:

*Little Theatre, Lower Hutt; Te Raukura ki Kāpiti, Paraparaumu* – 7pm. New Zealand's longest running interactive comedy show presents a western-themed whodunnit where cowgirls and cowboys pony up to solve another murder.

### 30<sup>th</sup> Oct. The CHRISTening: An Election Comedy Show:

*The Hannah, Cambridge Terrace, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. Pōneke comedy icons Mo Munn and Austin Harrison unite for an evening of political satire, songs, sketches, and downright silliness.

### 30<sup>th</sup> Oct. Scarehorn! Airhorn's Spooky Comedy Carnival:

*Newtown Community Centre Theatre, Columbo Street, Newtown* – 8pm. Airhorn is a top comedy cavalcade of the brightest and best comedians in Aotearoa, but for one night, on Halloween eve, they get downright spooky!

### 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. Nightmare on Cuba Street: A Halloween Drag Show:

*Ivy Bar & Cabaret, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 10pm. Tricks and treats, frights and bites are guaranteed at this scary drag show.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Nov. Drone Strike Presents: Powderkeg Comedy:

*Backbencher Pub, Molesworth Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. Jerome Chandrasen, Lesa MacLeod-Whiting, Neil Thornton, Mike Fowler, and more comedians will fire shots at politicians, parties, policies, and the general political chaos of our time.

### 6<sup>th</sup> Nov. James Nokise:

*The Fringe Bar, Allen Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. There are three things you can count on this election according to James Nokise: ministerial soundbites that age like milk, policy walk-backs hours after announcements, and his hot comedic takes on the chaotic campaigns in *One Night Rant*.

### 6<sup>th</sup>; 11<sup>th</sup> Nov. Shakespeare Globe Centre New Zealand Presents: Primarily Playing with Shakespeare:

*Tāwhiri Warehouse, Newtown; VUW Memorial Theatre, Kelburn* – 12:30pm. Over 100 bright and talented Year 1 to 8s from 10 different schools perform a 50-minute edited adaptation of *Romeo & Juliet*.

## Galleries

### Until 7<sup>th</sup> Nov. Rumble:

*Bowen Galleries, Ghuznee Street, Te Aro*. Sam Duckor-Jones' work is silly – and serious about it. His practice moves a lens across his heart to capture the fears, triumphs, daydreams, and coping mechanisms of an aspirationally shimmering, live-alone, quiet gay in New Zealand.

### 21<sup>st</sup> Oct-14<sup>th</sup> Nov. Lucia Sidonio: Recent Paintings:

*McLeavey Gallery, Manners Street, Te Aro*. Lucia Sidonio is an Ōtautahi Christchurch-based artist who works predominantly in painting. Playful in narrative, her works explore moments of human connection and intimacy.

### Until 28<sup>th</sup> Mar. Pobblebonk:

*The Dowse Art Museum, Laings Road, Lower Hutt*. Kushana Bush crafts what she has dubbed “little terrariums”: sealed microcosms where plants, animals, humans, and minerals all breathe gulps of the same uneasy air.

## Festivals

### 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> Oct. Wellington Folk Festival:

*Brookfield Outdoor Education Centre, Moores Valley Road, Wainuiomata* – various times. Disappear into the bush and surround yourself with folk music, food, and fun times at this annual music festival over Labour Day Weekend.

### 24<sup>th</sup> Oct-15<sup>th</sup> Nov. Wellington Heritage Festival:

*Various locations and times in Greater Wellington*. Discover more than 160 events exploring the Wellington Region's unique history and heritage.

### 25<sup>th</sup> Oct. Diwali Festival of Lights:

*TSB Arena, Queens Wharf, Wellington Waterfront* – 2pm. Enjoy live cultural performances and family-friendly activities, browse fashion and jewellery stalls, experience henna painting, connect with local community groups, and savour delicious vegetarian food!

### 27<sup>th</sup> Oct-18<sup>th</sup> Nov. British and Irish Film Festival:

*Various locations and times in Greater Wellington*. Explore cinematic excellence from across the British Isles and Ireland at this intrepid film festival.

**For your inclusion in the what's on listings email: [whatson@regionalnews.kiwi](mailto:whatson@regionalnews.kiwi). Close off for the next issue's listings is noon Tuesday 27 October**

**To the best of our knowledge, the information provided to us regarding the above events was correct at the time of press. Our company accepts no liability for events postponed, cancelled, sold out, or otherwise adapted.**

## Regional News

*Connecting Wellington*

### Answers to the puzzle on page 34

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**Back to contents**



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