

MEDIA RELEASE

THE
COURT
THEATRE

27 September 2018

For immediate release

[Astroman](#)

Written by Albert Belz

Directed by Nancy Brunning

27 October – 10 November 2018

The Court Theatre's mainstage

Short show description:

In its world premiere, *Astroman* follows young Hemi 'Jimmy' Te Rehua in 1980s Whakatāne, whose knack for trouble lands him working under grumpy Scotsman Mr Macrae in the Astrocade Amusement Parlour. A uniquely Kiwi coming of age story, *Astroman* is full of comedy, heart and a giant dollop of '80s nostalgia.

ASTROMAN MAKES ITS WORLD PREMIERE AT THE COURT THEATRE TWO HOURS AHEAD OF AUSTRALIA

IN BRIEF:

On the 27th October *Astroman* will be making its world premiere on The Court Theatre's stage, just two hours before opening across the Tasman at the Melbourne Theatre Company.

Astroman is a family comedy set in the 1980s written by Kiwi playwright Albert Belz, following a young Māori boy in Whakatāne finding his place – and potential – in small-town New Zealand.

Director Nancy Brunning (*He Kura E Huna Ana*) describes the play as being "about a young Māori boy genius whose coming of age is influenced by the '80s promise of bigger, bolder and louder."

Speaking about where the story came from, Belz says, "I wanted to write a love-letter to the 1980s and *Astroman* was the result."

The cast bringing the '80s back to life at The Court includes Tola Newbery; Scotty Cotter; Ocean Jones; Tanea Heke; Tom Eason; Matt Chamberlain and Juanita Hepi.

Belz's play was always intended to be a New Zealand story, but after moving to Australia, he started working on an Australian version of *Astroman*, leading to the simultaneous debut dates.

"There are some obvious differences in the ethnicity and related dialogue, but the themes it covers are the same. It's very much a family story and whānau is universal."

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The Court Theatre

PO Box 268

Christchurch 8140

New Zealand

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Astroman will be running for a limited two-week season at The Court Theatre, from the 27th October – 10 November.

IN DEPTH:

On the 27th October *Astroman* will be making its world premiere on The Court Theatre's stage, just two hours before opening across the Tasman at the Melbourne Theatre Company.

Astroman is a family comedy set in the 1980s written by Kiwi playwright Albert Belz, following a young Māori boy in Whakatāne finding his place – and potential – in small-town New Zealand.

Director Nancy Brunning (*He Kura E Huna Ana*) describes the play as being “about a young Māori boy genius whose coming of age is influenced by the ‘80s promise of bigger, bolder and louder. He has a vision of the world that is streaks ahead of Whakatāne and tries to manage his boredom with getting into trouble.”

That trouble lands Jimmy working for grumpy Scotsman Mr Macrae in Jimmy's favourite place in the world, the Astrocade Amusement Parlour. Here, he gets an education of a different sort, with Macrae soon realizing how smart Jimmy truly is.

The play is bringing the world of the 1980s back to life at The Court Theatre, complete with a few video game machines waiting for gamers in the foyer that are sure to transport audience members back in time!

Speaking about where the story came from, Belz says, “I wanted to write a love-letter to the 1980s and *Astroman* was the result.”

Belz's play was always intended to be a New Zealand story, but after moving to Australia, he started working on an Australian version of *Astroman*. In 2017 The Court picked up the play for its Meridian Energy 18/19 season and the Melbourne Theatre Company followed suit, leading to the simultaneous debut dates.

Talking about how one play can be translated across two cultures, Belz says, “there are some obvious differences in the ethnicity and related dialogue, but the themes it covers are the same. It's very much a family story and whānau is universal.”

The whānau in the play are being brought to life by a group of Māori actors coming to The Court from across Aotearoa.

Tola Newbery (*Macbeth & Waiora*) is playing Jimmy, joined by Scotty Cotter (*He Kura E Huna Ana*) as his twin brother, Sonny. Their sister, Natalie, will be played by Ocean Jones, with Tanea Heke (*Waru*) attempting to control the teenagers onstage as mum Michelle. Outside of the family, Two Productions' Tom Eason will be playing antagonist Mick; Matt Chamberlain (*Shortland Street*) as grumpy Scotsman Mr Macrae with Juanita Hepi (*The Biggest*) returning to The Court as Jimmy's teacher, Mrs Mahara.

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"*Astroman* is all about vulnerability, fear, courage and desires. It's the perfect story for anyone unfamiliar with Māori storytelling, video arcades, the '80s... you will learn a lot," says Brunning. "Especially about how to play Pac Man, Defender and Donkey Kong!"

Astroman will be running for a limited two-week season at The Court Theatre, from the 27th October – 10 November.

[Click here to read more](#)

Cast

Hemi 'Jimmy' Te Rehua	Tola Newbery
Sonny Te Rehua	Scotty Cotter
Michelle Te Rehua	Tanea Heke
Natalie Te Rehua	Ocean Jones
Mr Macrae	Matt Chamberlain
Mrs Mahara	Juanita Hepi
Mick Jones	Tom Eason

Creatives

Director	Nancy Brunning
Set Designer	Nigel Kerr
AV Designer	Stuart Lloyd-Harris
Costume Designer	Amy Macaskill
Lighting Designer	Giles Tanner
Sound Co-Designer	Maarire Brunning-Kouka
Sound Co-Designer	Sheree Waitoa
Stage Manager	Jo Bunce

Ticket Prices

Adult	\$55.00 - \$60.00
Senior 65yrs+	\$48.00 - \$53.00
Supporter	\$46.00 - \$50.00
Group 6+	\$48.00
Child (U18)	\$26.00 - \$30.00
30 Below (max 2 per person)	\$30.00

Show Times

- Monday & Thursday 6.30pm
- Tue/Wed/Fri/Sat 7.30pm
- Forum 6:30pm Monday 29th October
Discuss the play with cast and creative team after the performance
- Matinee 2:00pm Saturday 10th November

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Bookings: phone 03 963 0870 or visit www.courttheatre.org.nz

Images can be found at The Court Theatre's [Media Centre](#)

For more information or to arrange an interview please contact:
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