

MEDIA RELEASE

THE
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THEATRE

19 September 2022

The Court Theatre Promises Bold and Compelling Storytelling for 2023



A bold and compelling collection of plays by international and Aotearoa New Zealand playwrights will take centre-stage in the Ryman Healthcare 2023 Season at The Court Theatre.

“We have shaped a season of truly compelling storytelling, designed to reflect and include the diverse audiences of Ōtautahi Christchurch and Aotearoa” says Chief Executive Barbara George. “All will entertain you. Some may amuse you; others might give you pause to think or even shock you a little, but together they provide something for everyone to enjoy or relate to.”

Six of the plays onstage at The Court Theatre in 2023 are written or adapted by New Zealand authors in a season that boasts a new Court Theatre commission. With several New Zealand premieres and even an Australasian premiere on the calendar, it is fair to say that The Court is truly bringing the ‘new’ to this new season.

“This season is about creating memorable, meaningful theatre, without compromise” says Artistic Director Dr Alison Walls. In creating her first Court Theatre season, Walls says that she and her team have sought out individually distinctive works that will offer The Court’s diverse audiences “what they already love, but also surprise and challenge them with something new. It is an ambitious season that propels us forward.”

The mainstage season commences with the 2022 postponed *Sense and Sensibility*, reimagined from the Jane Austen novel by New Zealand’s Penny Ashton. This is followed by an Aotearoa double-bill – a one-woman play called *Rēwena* (Whiti Hereaka), which invites the audience to share bread, stories and wisdom; and *Be Like Billy*, in which playwright Rutene Spooner examines his personal relationship with icon Billy T James.

Appropriate, by US writer Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, masks some gut-punching surprises within seemingly familiar and darkly comedic scenes. This is followed by 2022’s postponed *Next to Normal*, the multi-award-winning rock musical with mental health at its heart.

Season Sponsor



Core Funder



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New Zealand

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From Australia comes the inspired-by-a-true-episode event, *The Appleton Ladies' Potato Race* (Melanie Tait), a comedy set in a small rural community that will feel familiar to many New Zealanders.

Clare Barron's *Dance Nation*, which captures the energy and struggles of impending teenage-hood (and fame) has been described simply as, "the future."

Returning audiences to 1979 New Zealand is the searing documentary theatre piece, *The Haka Party Incident* (Katie Wolfe), before the summer musical rounds out the season. *Something Rotten!* is a joyous and riotous mash-up of Shakespeare and all things musical which has been nominated for multiple awards.

In 2023 The Court Theatre will be bringing back the beloved Children's Holiday Shows, with *Cinderella* (rewritten for modern Kiwi audiences by Greg Cooper) and *Te Kuia me te Pungawerewere* (adapted from Patricia Grace's book *The Kuia and the Spider* by Jamie McCaskill). *Disney's Frozen Jr.*, postponed in 2022, joins the line-up for tamariki.

A core part of The Court Theatre's work is supporting and training new theatre makers and The Court Youth Company will create *The Sweet Science of Bruising* as part of the new season. Of course, perennial favourites, The Court Jesters will be back with *Scared Scriptless* on Fridays, end-of-year holiday shows and improv for younger audiences in the *Early Early Late Show*.

Walls describes this season as one that is "defined by artistically and culturally engaged works which share a bold, heartfelt energy that will also inspire our artists and creatives." She notes that certain roles in several of this season's shows will be promoted for open auditions, and that The Court is also "looking to provide opportunities to emerging designers and technicians" in the new year.

2023 represents the second year for The Court Theatre's partnership with Season Sponsor Ryman Healthcare, a partnership which reflects a shared goal of lives and experiences that go beyond the ordinary. "The vibrancy of the Ryman Healthcare 2023 Season at The Court Theatre exemplifies this in every way" says George. "We again offer Ryman Healthcare, and all of our generous show sponsors, our thanks for their support of our vision and our work."

2023 will also be the last full season presented in The Court's 'temporary home', The Shed, in Addington. "The excitement is growing for our new home in the city and we expect to open our summer musical in 2024 in our new and beautiful bespoke theatre" George says. "We are thankful for our continued partnership with Christchurch City Council in making this happen."

Until then, the Ryman Healthcare 2023 Season promises first-class theatre that will be delivered with the exceptional production values for which The Court is known.

Subscriptions for The Ryman Healthcare 2023 Season at The Court Theatre are on sale from 26 September at courttheatre.org.nz or directly from The Court Theatre Box Office.

Individual show tickets are on sale from 28 November 2022.

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The Ryman Healthcare 2023 Season at The Court Theatre

Mainstage Shows:

Sense and Sensibility	11 Feb - 11 Mar 2023	sponsored by Christchurch Casino
Rēwena	25 Mar - 22 Apr 2023	sponsored by Naturally Tiles
Be Like Billy	25 Mar - 22 Apr 2023	sponsored by Naturally Tiles
Appropriate	6 May - 3 June 2023	sponsored by Stuff
Next to Normal	7 Jun - 22 Jul 2023	sponsored by Spark
The Appleton Ladies' Potato Race	5 Aug - 9 Sep 2023	sponsored by Harmans Lawyers
Dance Nation	23 Sep - 21 Oct 2023	sponsored by Pet Central
The Haka Party Incident	25 Oct - 11 Nov 2023	
Something Rotten!	25 Nov 2023 - 27 Jan 2024	sponsored by PwC

Family and Improv:

Cinderella	11 Apr - 22 Apr 2023	sponsored by MoreFm
Disney's Frozen JR.	3 Jul - 15 Jul 2023	sponsored by Toyworld
Early Early Late Show	3-8 Jul and 2-7 Oct 2023 (school holidays)	
The Sweet Science of Bruising	9 Aug - 19 Aug 2023	
Te Kuia me te Pungawerewere Court Theatre	27 Sep - 7 Oct 2023	sponsored by The Friends of The
Jesters' Holiday Show	6 Dec - 23 Dec 2023	
Scared Scriptless	Fridays at 10:15pm	

You can learn more about The Court's 2023 Ryman Healthcare Season, including subscription options, [here](#).

For more information or to arrange an interview please contact:

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