

MEDIA RELEASE

THE
COURT
THEATRE

24th May 2018

For immediate release

The Biggest

Written by Jamie McCaskill

Directed by Ross Gumbley

16 June – 14 July 2018

Tonkin & Taylor mainstage at The Court Theatre

Show Sponsor: Newstalk ZB

Short show description:

With determination (and not a lot else) Walter, Pat and Mick try to win big at the local fishing competition. They're after a replacement for Stu's dream-boat; the one he spent his life-savings on and then wrote off, landing himself in a wheelchair. Can they catch *The Biggest*?

NEW KIWI COMEDY MAKES A SPLASH AT THE COURT THEATRE

IN BRIEF:

The Court Theatre will be reeling in the laughs when its newest Kiwi comedy *The Biggest* opens this June.

Set in small-town Coromandel *The Biggest* follows Walter, Pat, Mick and Stu as they try to win big at the local fishing competition. They're after a replacement for Stu's dream boat – the one that he spent his life-savings on and then wrote-off, landing himself in a wheelchair.

Only problem is, they don't know how to fish.

Ross Gumbley, director of *The Biggest* and overall Artistic Director at The Court, is particularly proud of the cast he's gathered for the show, including Mark Hadlow; Phil Grieve; Robert Lloyd; Apirana Taylor; Juanita Hepi and Nick Dunbar.

Although set in the far North, the play felt much closer to home for Gumbley.

"When I think about the world of *The Biggest* I think about Christchurch right after the quakes. The quakes were awful, but as a community we were brought together to support each other. And that's what happens in this play. It's about the strength and love that you find in your whanau; in your family and in your friends. And how at the end of the day if we don't support each other through this then life's a whole lot harder."

The Biggest opens at The Court Theatre on 16th June and runs through until 14th July.

Principal Sponsor



Core Funder



Season Sponsor



The Court Theatre

PO Box 268

Christchurch 8140

New Zealand

Email: admin@courttheatre.org.nz

www.courttheatre.org.nz

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IN DEPTH:

The Court Theatre will be reeling in the laughs when its newest Kiwi comedy *The Biggest* opens this June.

Set in small-town Coromandel *The Biggest* follows Walter, Pat, Mick and Stu as they try to win big at the local fishing competition. They're after a replacement for Stu's dream boat – the one that he spent his life-savings on and then wrote-off the first time he used it, landing himself in a wheelchair.

Only problem is, they don't know how to fish.

For Ross Gumbley, the director of *The Biggest* and The Court's Artistic Director, the idea is simple but fantastic.

"It's a great idea for a comedy – a group of characters who have to catch the biggest fish when none of them know how to!"

For writer Jamie McCaskill the inspiration for the play came to him when working in a local pub in Thames.

"I wanted to write a play about raw, rural men and try and find the beauty under their rugged exterior. The characters are based on archetypes of people who used to drink in the Thames pub."

The script reflects McCaskill's aspirations for a raw, rural play; full of dialogue that Gumbley calls 'salty language'.

"It doesn't feel like dialogue from other plays you might have seen – it feels like dialogue from people you know. It's going to be one of those plays where people leave with very sore ribs – and they'll have sore ribs because their partner will be elbowing them in then saying, 'that's you up there! You're like that!'"

The director is particularly proud of the cast he's gathered for the show.

Mark Hadlow returns to The Court to take on the role of Stu, joined by Phil Grieve as Pat; Robert Lloyd as Walter; Apirana Taylor as Mick; Juanita Hepi as Walter's put-upon daughter Cassie and Nick Dunbar as 'local prick' and fishing rival, Jan.

Beyond big laughs, the story also explores the politics of identity – namely the confusion and misunderstanding that McCaskill feels still exists around Māori culture within New Zealand.

"We still don't fully understand how we should value each other's culture in this country. Hopefully *The Biggest* can create conversation that doesn't point fingers but makes us realise that values to Māori culture can be inclusive – and aren't there to alienate non-Māori. I think we need to appreciate all aspects of life in Aotearoa."

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[To read more click here](#)

Cast

Stu Wakefield	Mark Hadlow
Pat Chestnut	Phil Grieve
Walter Mack	Robert Lloyd
Mick Taipari	Apirana Taylor
Cassie Mack	Juanita Hepi
Jan Martin	Nick Dunbar

Creatives

Playwright	Jamie McCaskill
Director	Ross Gumbley
Set Designer	Mark McEntyre
Costume Designer	Hayley Douglas
Lighting Designer	Joe Hayes
Sound Designer	Gil Craig
Operator/Head Technician	Giles Tanner
Stage Manager	Erica Browne
Properties Manager	Christy Lassen
Construction Manager	Bryce Goddard
Production Manager	Flore Charbonnier

Ticket Prices

Adult	\$54.00 - \$62.00
Senior 65yrs+	\$47.00 - \$55.00
Supporter	\$45.00 - \$53.00
Group 6+	\$44.00 - \$52.00
Child (U18)	\$25.00 - \$33.00
30 Below (max 2 per person)	\$30.00

Show Times

- Monday & Thursday 6.30pm
- Tue/Wed/Fri/Sat 7.30pm
- Forum 6:30pm Monday 18th June
Discuss the play with cast and creative team after the performance
- Matinee 2:00pm Saturday 30 June

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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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samantha.mcconnell@courttheatre.org.nz

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