

# MEDIA RELEASE

THE  
**COURT**  
THEATRE

17 August 2021

**For immediate release**

## Whā

Concept by Juanita Hepi

Devised by TJ Snow, Jake Arona, Tāne Rolfe, Moana Ete, Savannah Tukariri, Kerepti Paraone, Rosie Gilmore & Scott Leighton

Directed by Moana Ete

Funded by Mainland Foundation

Touring Canterbury primary schools

**Dates: 23 August – 17 September 2021**

### **Short Show Description:**

In this creatively interactive cultural adventure, best friends TJ, Jake and Tāne travel through Te Waipounamu (the South Island). Throughout their journey they explore four well-known narratives embedded within Kāi Tahu, including Rākahautū, Tahu pōtiki and Hine Haka.

Packed full of physical theatre and waiata, kids will love this inspiring tale.

The Court Theatre production Whā will be travelling schools throughout Waitaha (Canterbury) from 23 August – 17 September 2021.

## **COURT THEATRE PRODUCTION WHĀ PREPARES TO TAKE CANTERBURY SCHOOLS ON AN INTERACTIVE CULTURAL ADVENTURE**



Core Funder

# MEDIA RELEASE

THE  
**COURT**  
THEATRE

## In Depth:

In this creatively interactive cultural adventure, best friends TJ, Jake and Tāne travel through Te Waipounamu (the South Island). Throughout their journey they explore four well-known narratives embedded within Kāi Tahu, including Rākaihautū, Tahu pōtiki and Hine Haka.

Concepted by Juanita Hepi and devised in-house by the show's three cast members - TJ Snow, Jake Arona, Tāne Rolfe - and crew - Moana Ete, Savannah Tukariri, Kerepti Paraone, Rosie Gilmore and Scott Leighton; Whā is a story of friendship, adventure, cultural identity and the Māori legends of the land. Whā shares these precious native stories in an engaging way that entertains and educates at the same time. The cast and crew have created Whā with the audience in mind, inviting each school group to be a part of the story from beginning to end, which helps to keep the energy of the show high at all times.

"As soon as the tamariki arrive, they're part of the show. Ensuring they feel comfortable to shout out answers, jump up on stage and just have fun in general makes the whole experience really enjoyable for everyone involved" says Whā Director, Moana Ete.

"It's also great working with this team. Everyone comes to rehearsal ready to work and happy to be there. As a Director, that's more than you ask for. Energised people with skills to figure it all out but also excited about it" Moana continues.

Participating Canterbury schools can look forward to a multi-sensory experience. To help bring these local stories to life, a number of natural elements, including pounamu are used within the show to create the set and props. Traditional instruments played by the cast throughout the show are yet another special addition to this immersive experience.

When asked what she hopes audiences will take away from Whā, Moana added "I hope tamariki have fun with us - if they can pick up some phrases in Te Reo Māori that they then use with their friends at school and at home, that's an awesome bonus!"

Funded by the Mainland Foundation, Whā is one of a number of educational initiatives The Court Theatre is providing to the Canterbury region in 2021.

"Encouraging, understanding and growing knowledge – our own, and that of others - has always been a priority for The Court Theatre; not only through our Education department, but also through the art we share on our stage. There's something very special about Whā that I know schools will love. To share these indigenous stories in such a creative way, that resonates with our tamariki is very exciting to see" says The Court Theatre's Chief Executive, Barbara George.

Packed full of physical theatre and waiata, kids will love this inspiring tale.

**The Court Theatre production Whā, will be travelling schools throughout Waitaha (Canterbury) from 23 August – 17 September 2021.**

*Core Funder*

# MEDIA RELEASE

The Court Theatre logo is a red square with the words "THE COURT THEATRE" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. "THE" is small and positioned above "COURT", and "THEATRE" is positioned below "COURT".

## Cast

[Tāne Rolfe](#)

[TJ Snow](#)

[Jake Arona](#)

## Creatives

Director

Kapa Haka & Waiata Director

Kapa Haka & Waiata Director

Set, Props & Costume Designer

Cultural Director

Stage Manager

[Moana Ete](#)

[Savanah Tukariri](#)

[Kerepti Paraone](#)

[Rosie Gilmore](#)

[Vanessa Gray](#)

[Scott Leighton](#)

## Register Your School

The Court Theatre will tour to Canterbury primary schools from 23 August - 17 September 2021, with performances running Monday to Friday at 9:30am & 2pm. Tickets are \$7 per child (inclusive of GST), with no charge for teachers. A minimum booking of 100 children is needed.

**Bookings:** phone 03 963 0870 or visit [www.courttheatre.org.nz](http://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:**

**Stacey Wouters, Publicist**

**The Court Theatre, 027 222 0756**

[stacey.wouters@courttheatre.org.nz](mailto:stacey.wouters@courttheatre.org.nz)

*Core Funder*