Regio News

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July 14, 2026

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News

The timeless spirit of dance

***Ultra Folly*: soloist Jemima Scott and artist Ruby Ryham. Photo by Ross Brown.**

Infusing the chilliest month of the year with light, warmth, and brilliance, the Royal New Zealand Ballet (RNZB) will bring a stunning triple bill to St James Theatre from the 16th to the 18th of July. For the 2026 RNZB *Winter Season* in association with Viking, RNZB artistic director Ty King-Wall has programmed three distinctive works: the New Zealand premiere of Sir Frederick Ashton's *Birthday Offering*, Sarah Foster-Sproull's striking contemporary *Ultra Folly*, and Andrea Schermoly's powerful tribute to the women of Aotearoa, *Stand to Reason*.

Sir Ashton is widely regarded as one of the greatest choreographers in ballet history. As founding choreographer, and later director, of The Royal Ballet, Sir Ashton shaped the identity of British ballet with works that combined extraordinary technical detail with expressive grace and artistry. Featuring seven ballerinas and seven cavaliers in a grand display of virtuosity, elegance, and personality, *Birthday Offering* is considered one of his most dazzling classical creations.

Born in Dunedin and trained at the New Zealand School of Dance, Foster-Sproull is one of Aotearoa's most acclaimed contemporary choreographers, recognised internationally for her intellectually rigorous and emotionally charged work. Originally created for the RNZB in 2020 and inspired by the centuries-old musical theme *La Folia*, *Ultra Folly* is a bold and deeply atmospheric contemporary ballet that explores intimacy, restraint, and the fragile nature of human connection.

Schermoly is a South African-born choreographer whose international career spans some of the world's leading ballet and contemporary companies. *Stand to Reason* was created for RNZB's *Strength & Grace* programme, which marked the 125th anniversary of women's suffrage in Aotearoa, and is a powerful and timely celebration of courage, conviction, and collective action.

Honoured to dedicate the RNZB 2026 *Winter Season* to the late Matz Skoog, King-Wall says the stylistically diverse and uplifting works embrace a testament to the "strength, skill, and stamina of our dancers".

"This is a celebration of the ways in which ballet can offer not only escapism, but also introspection."

The sheer joy of Latin jazz

Aotearoa Jazz Orchestra music director John Rae. Photo by Alexander Rae.

There ain't no better way to kick the winter blues than dusting off your dancing shoes and heading to Meow Nui on Saturday the 25th of July for an electrifying night of Latin jazz with the Aotearoa Jazz Orchestra (AoJO).

Featuring three of Aotearoa's most prominent Latin jazz trailblazers – Rafael Ferrer Noel from Cuba, Mikey Trujillo from Peru, and Carlos Navae from Mexico – the programme delves deep into the archives to explore the musical traditions and innovations that emerged out of the cosmic meeting between jazz and Afro-Latin sounds. Their collective experience brings authenticity, fire, and deep cultural knowledge to a night celebrating the legacy and global resonance of the genre.

Audiences can expect music that came out of the explosive partnership between Dizzy Gillespie and Cuban percussionist and composer Chano Pozo in the late 1940s. The partnership fundamentally shaped modern jazz, rewiring bebop and combining harmonic sophistication with Afro-Cuban rhythms and percussion traditions. Their new sound opened the door for generations of musicians to explore the creative possibilities of jazz and Latin music. The concert will also highlight the genre-defying music of Irakere, a Cuban ensemble formed in the 1970s by pianist Chucho Valdés.

AoJO exists to celebrate, elevate, and export our finest talent to audiences worldwide. Founded on decades of dedication with the late great Rodger Fox playing a key role in its formation, our official national jazz orchestra is more than an ensemble – it's a landmark cultural initiative.

Fiesta Fiesta is a chance for AoJO to stretch into new territory, embracing the rhythmic complexity, harmonic richness, and sheer joy of Latin jazz at a large scale – with all the intensity to match the energy of their creators.

The evening promises brass that soars and percussion that gets into your bones and refuses to let you sit still. Vamos a bailar and leave the winter firmly behind you.

Cover:
Shani Liu. Let There Be Light, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

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News

Out of darkness, light

Jaime Martín. Photo by Paul Marc Mitchell.

The New Zealand Symphony Orchestra is set to spotlight one of the country's most exciting young musical talents. Making his NZSO solo debut, Shan Liu will perform Sergei Prokofiev's dazzling Third Piano Concerto in *Let There Be Light*, a dazzling concert led by renowned Spanish conductor Jaime Martín at Michael Fowler Centre on the 24th of July.

Still in Year 12 at Auckland's Westlake Boys High School and already recognised nationally and internationally for his extraordinary artistry, Liu's solo debut with the NZSO marks a major milestone in the career of a young musician whose rise has been swift and remarkable. In 2025, Liu won the National Concerto Competition and became the youngest winner in the Christchurch event's 57-year history. This July, he was the only New Zealand finalist to compete in Brisbane's prestigious Lev Vlassenko Piano Competition. His performance of Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3 earned him Second Prize and will soon be witnessed by *Let There Be Light* audiences with the full might of the NZSO.

Maestro Martín has appeared with leading orchestras all around the world. He is chief conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Ireland's RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, as well as music director of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. Under his direction, this impressive concerto showcase will be more brilliant and electrifying still.

Let There Be Light also sees Martín conduct *Lumière et Pesanteur*, a luminous contemporary piece by celebrated Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho, and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's powerful Symphony No. 4, one of the great symphonic statements of resilience and hope. The result is a programme that journeys from darkness toward hope in an unforgettable concert event.

Check out Local Library

Under the direction of Conrad Newport, Peter Hambleton and Jude Gibson are having a great time rehearsing Dave Armstrong's highly anticipated new comedy, *Local Library* – "a real winter heart warmer", Jude delights.

"Two lonely people clash in the local library, leading to loads of laughs and some poignant moments as their relationship develops. The script is so clever, it's easy to play the truth of the situation…"

Let's bookmark that truth. At the heart of *Local Library* are Paul Homewood and Helen Nielsen, two people whose lives have narrowed in different ways. Paul is a conservative retiree filling his days with odd jobs for neighbours after the loss of his wife. Helen is a librarian approaching retirement who feels increasingly disconnected from her workplace, family, and community. When a dispute over rental magazines results in Paul being banned from his local library, Helen offers him a deal: if he wants his library privileges restored, he must read a book she recommends.

Dave says while the play may be a comedy, it is also a story about loneliness, connection, and the unexpected ways people can find common ground.

"In a time when public debate can feel increasingly divided, *Local Library* asks us to consider what happens when we choose curiosity and conversation over judgement."

Peter raves about Dave's delightful script, saying its "wit and clever craftsmanship land beautifully with us actors".

"We're also loving working with our masterful director Conrad Newport, and a hugely talented creative team full of enthusiasm."

Conrad says the production combines humour, warmth, and emotional depth, creating a distinctly New Zealand story that is at once entertaining and timely.

Local Library runs at Circa Theatre from the 25th of July to the 22nd of August. The team who have crafted and brought it to life are amongst Aotearoa's most respected creators, artists, and performers, resulting in a polished "love letter to books, libraries, and the conversations they spark", Circa marketing manager Jane Carruthers says.

"It's also a reminder that friendship can be found in the most unexpected places."

SNIPS

Amalgamation?
Do you think Wellington City Council should merge with other councils? Find out more about the proposal and join the amalgamation conversation by the 19th of July at letstalk.wellington.govt.nz/amalgamation

Porirua by-election
Porirua City Council will hold a by-election in October to fill the seat left vacant after the sudden death of councillor Mike Duncan. You need to live in the Onepoto General Ward to vote in the by-election, but you don't need to live in the ward to stand as a candidate. Nominations are open now until midday on the 6th of August, with documents available from the council front counter on Cobham Court; the Titahi Bay, Cannons Creek, and City Centre libraries; or poriruacity.govt.nz/elections

Your flight rights
Consumer NZ has launched a flight complaints portal and a flight rights information hub for passengers who've had a cancelled or delayed flight, a missing bag, or another airline problem. Find both at consumer.org.nz

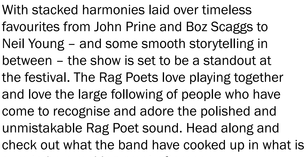
That Rag Poet sound

The Rag Poets have been playing together for about 15 years, with a few members tagging in and out over time. Performing on Sunday the 26th of July at Studio 73 in Greytown as part of the New Zealand Festival of Christmas, this pack of well-known Wellington musicians features Carl Evenson (from The Fourmyula) on vocals and percussion, Rob Clarkson on drums and Alan Norman playing accordion and 12-string guitar (both part of The Warratahs), Gary Creary on guitar, and George Barris playing bass.

The gang will revisit old faves and heady Wellington hits from the 60s and 70s that'll transport you down memory lane as you move, groove, and sing along. Over the years, the individual talents of these seasoned musicians have morphed together to produce a sound they call their own. Audiences can expect a mix of Kiwi classics, Americana, Southern roots, and ballads alongside a bunch of original tunes, each of them given the Rag Poet treatment.

With stacked harmonies laid over timeless favourites from John Prine and Boz Scaggs to Neil Young – and some smooth storytelling in between – the show is set to be a standout at the festival. The Rag Poets love playing together and love the large following of people who have come to recognise and adore the polished and unmistakable Rag Poet sound. Head along and check out what the band have cooked up in what is sure to be a rocking great afternoon.

Comedic catharsis

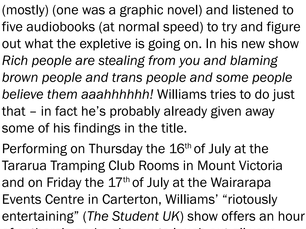


Each year the world seems to get a little more crazy. Lots of things don't make sense. People want to a point a finger at someone or something, so they turn to X or AI or the conspiracy theorist down the road for answers.

National treasure and comedy sensation Guy Williams has been trying to figure out how "the worst dickheads have taken over everything with their insane bullsh&#t". He's read three books (mostly) (one was a graphic novel) and listened to five audiobooks (at normal speed) to try and figure out what the expletive is going on. In his new show *Rich people are stealing from you and blaming brown people and trans people and some people believe them aaahhhhhh!* Williams tries to do just that – in fact he's probably already given away some of his findings in the title.

Performing on Thursday the 16th of July at the Tararua Tramping Club Rooms in Mount Victoria and on Friday the 17th of July at the Wairarapa Events Centre in Carterton, Williams' "riotously entertaining" (*The Student UK*) show offers an hour of catharsis and a chance to laugh out all your worries and frustrations.

Williams is one of Aotearoa's most iconic comedians. First getting his break fooling the TVNZ 1 *Breakfast* show by appearing live on air as a libertarian pro-whaling activist, he has since gone on to feature on *Taskmaster NZ*, *Guy Montgomery's Guy Mont-Spelling Bee*, and to host Netflix's cult hit *New Zealand Today.*



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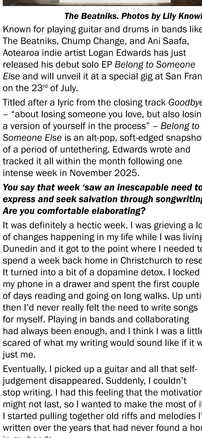
Music news

by Madelaine Empson

Salvation through song



The Beatniks. Photos by Lily Knowles.

Known for playing guitar and drums in bands like The Beatniks, Chump Change, and Ani Saafa, Aotearoa indie artist Logan Edwards has just released his debut solo EP *Belong to Someone Else* and will unveil it at a special gig at San Fran on the 23rd of July.

Titled after a lyric from the closing track *Goodbye – "about losing someone you love, but also losing a version of yourself in the process" – Belong to Someone Else* is an alt-pop, soft-edged snapshot of a period of untethering. Edwards wrote and tracked it all within the month following one intense week in November 2025.

You say that week 'saw an inescapable need to express and seek salvation through songwriting'. Are you comfortable elaborating?

It was definitely a hectic week. I was grieving a lot of changes happening in my life while I was living in Dunedin and it got to the point where I needed to spend a week back home in Christchurch to reset. It turned into a bit of a dopamine detox. I locked my phone in a drawer and spent the first couple of days reading and going on long walks. Up until then I'd never really felt the need to write songs for myself. Playing in bands and collaborating had always been enough, and I think I was a little scared of what my writing would sound like if it was just me.

Eventually, I picked up a guitar and all that self-judgement disappeared. Suddenly, I couldn't stop writing. I had this feeling that the motivation might not last, so I wanted to make the most of it. I started pulling together old riffs and melodies I'd written over the years that had never found a home in my bands.

The biggest hurdle was always lyrics. Writing and composing music has always come naturally to me, but singing something so personal felt incredibly exposing. I remember telling myself, 'It's going to feel cringe no matter what, so I may as well say exactly what I want to say.' That ended up becoming the defining characteristic of the EP. Every song is completely honest and, regardless of how I feel about the finished product, I'm proud that it's genuinely me.

Considering your experience playing live in bands, how are you feeling about the upcoming solo tour?

I'm beyond excited… These shows will be a different experience from playing with The Beatniks and other such projects. Those gigs are all about energy, dancing, and creating chaos in the best possible way. My solo music is a little more reflective, so I can't promise any stage dives, but I'm looking forward to taking the audience on more of a journey and letting the songs tell a story.

That said, the Wellington show will see some of that chaos return. To close out the night at San Fran, I'm bringing The Beatniks together for our first show in Te Whanganui-a-Tara since late last year, which should make for a pretty special stop on the tour.

Experimentation and evolution

South Summit feel like their sophomore album *RUN IT BACK* is "a really honest snapshot of where we're at as a band right now". Since their 2024 debut *The Bliss*, they've "spent a lot of time touring, writing, and growing together, and all of those experiences naturally made their way into these songs".

Those two years certainly haven't been quiet for the Perth five-piece, who were propelled onto the world stage following *The Bliss'* debut at number two on the ARIA Albums Chart. They've since secured heavy Triple J support, appeared at major festivals like Groovin The Moo and SXSW Sydney, played Sydney Opera House, and embarked on a huge Australasian headline tour.

In tracking these feats, *Run It Back* captures a period of evolution and experimentation for a band already known for their genre-defying blend of indie rock, reggae, and hip-hop.

"We've definitely pushed ourselves a bit more with the sound, but it still feels like South Summit at its core. It's a bit more mature, a bit more adventurous, and we're really proud of how it's turned out", drummer Nathan Osborne tells me.

Rather than speaking to one particular theme, the songs "touch on all sorts of things", Osborne continues: "life, relationships, good times, tough moments, and everything in between".

Out just a handful of weeks ago in mid-June, South Summit will *RUN IT BACK* to Aotearoa for their third headline tour of the country, which closes out at San Fran on the 1st of August.

"We're always stoked to come back to New Zealand. The crowds have been unreal every time we've played there, so it's become one of our favourite places to tour."

Pure ecstasy

Finn Scholes primarily plays trumpet. But after that, he plays vibraphone, then keyboards, then tuba, and has even started dabbling in flute! Joined by two of New Zealand's top musicians – drummer and composer Alistair Deverick and multi-instrumentalist Sean Martin-Buss – his band Carnivorous Plant Society has taken a break from touring recently to compose, animate, and learn even *more* instruments. The result is a show featuring all of the above, plus synths, bass, harmonica, and pan flute, with vocals brought to life against a stunning backdrop of hand-drawn animations.

All through July, Carnivorous Plant Society will play up and down the motu thanks to Arts on Tour NZ. In concert, Scholes looks forward to "the many times we will get to be on stage riding the amazing waves of music this band creates". Psychedelic exotic jazz, to be exact. When I ask him to characterise the genre with a colour, sound, texture, scent, and feeling, he chooses sage green, a mixture of music from around the world with a bizarre twist, something quite furry, the smell of a wet rainforest, and the feeling of pure ecstasy.

Scholes has always loved every aspect of music, "all the way from listening to practising in dingy in derelict bars", and has had some epic career highlights and collabs along the way. He has composed for *The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie,* played with Tiny Ruins, Katchafire, Dave Dobbyn, Neil Finn, and more, and lists Carnivorous Plant Society's numerous festival appearances amongst the many amazing moments.

Weaving stories with song, let Carnivorous Plant Society transport you to the far reaches of the globe, from Southeast Asia to South America and right back to your seat at Whirinaki Whare Taonga in Upper Hutt on the 26th of July.

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The Grove *by Isabella Smith*

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

Photo courtesy of Wellington Sculpture Trust.

Glen Hayward.

Photo courtesy of Wellington Sculpture Trust.

In 1849, *The Inconstant* foundered at the entrance to the Wellington harbour. For £80, British entrepreneur John Plimmer salvaged and moved the ship to his jetty on the shores of Lambton Quay – in front of what is now Plimmer Steps – and used it as a warehouse known as Plimmer's Ark. The 1855 earthquake lifted the shoreline and tipped the ship over, rendering it unusable. With land reclamation efforts it was eventually buried, until 1997, when the wooden remains of the hull were unearthed beneath the Old Bank Arcade during renovations. Fast forward 20 years and the Wellington Sculpture Trust were donated some of the remaining timbers for the use in commissioning a sculpture.

While the original wood was too damaged to incorporate, Whanganui-based artist and sculptor Glen Hayward looked over the timbers and noticed bent nails sticking out of the wood. He became interested in the significance of the nails in the structural integrity of *The Inconstant* and Plimmer's Ark and as markers of tension within the joinery of the timber. Looking at archival photographs of the excavated remains, he noted the way the upright ribs of the wood sticking up out of the ground mirrored the boat's shipwreck origins.

The Grove, installed in 2022 within the waterfront's Whitmore Plaza, is a collection of 16 copper-headed nails of varying heights. Like a palimpsest with older layers of text still visible beneath the new text, if you peel back the layers of *The Grove*, you find residues of the past. Modelled on the nails found sticking out of Plimmer's Ark, the sculpture not only honours Wellington's maritime history, but tells a story of endurance. "The standing nails, though brand new, harken to something older, something left behind. A past that sits in the present like a memory", Glen says.

In Glen's work, "things are always standing in for something else". Often described as an illusionist, he has exhibited extensively in Australasia, sculpting replicas of everyday items in wood. "I think this has something to do with the way that appearance is always deceptive. And yet appearance is the only way that we can access some version of, I won't say truth, but something that resonates more deeply than just a surface libidinal investment."

There is a porousness in the way Glen works. His stepdaughter calls it angel numbers, Carl Jung called it synchronicity. Glen describes it as a kind of passivity: being "passive enough to be receptive to the things that are going to be possibly interesting." To be receptive to fortuity or chance, there is a certain amount of distancing required to glean messages from events. Glen was walking along the Whanganui River and saw an old jetty, with old wooden poles sticking up out of the water reminiscent of the ribs of Plimmer's Ark. "There was something about the endurance of this material with all the currents and winds."

Later, when walking the beach at Castlecliff he came across tall wharf poles that had been removed from the Wellington Waterfront by a demolition crew and brought up to Whanganui. "Often, I find that when I'm actively trying to do something, it ends up being the worst way to get a good solution. In terms of navigation, if I psychically sit back from something, then whatever the solutions to the problems I am stuck on start to appear." Discovering the wood was the sort of uncanny experience that is hard to ignore.

The wharf poles initially came from trees felled and shaped in Australia before they were shipped to Wellington. "I am often working with these residues", Glen says. "You have to see spirit as still somehow residing, reinscribed in our chopping boards and in our architecture."

Glen talks about carving as an archaic process, a form of proto writing that was first used on clay tablets as records of goods. "Carving is the verb form of sculpture", he says. It moves away from the cultural propulsion toward excess and instead creates something positive through the act of removal.

The wood needed to be treated to endure the harsh weather and saline air on the waterfront. Glen employed the traditional, centuries-old Japanese wood preservation technique shou sugi ban where the timber is charred consistently at a very high temperature. The resulting carbon layer gives the wood its distinctive black colouring, while at the same time creating a barrier that naturally seals the wood and protects it from rot and decay. "What I love about the sugi ban method is that in some way you're using a weathering system to protect something," Glen says. "It has this quality of removing material from the world to make the world present. It's pre-emptively destroying in order to protect."

Glen is currently working on a project for Sculpture on the Gulf on Waiheke. He is constantly interrogating his own thought processes and the ways in which he engages with his art practice and his sense of self and place.

"Public space is where you don't have a community. In a way, it's where you are rubbing up against people who not only do you disagree with, but you disagree about what the disagreement is." For Glen, public art is a way of engaging and dealing with these spaces. The sculptures become participatory, a site of phenomenological encounter. "I want to be part of something, but I don't want to dominate it. I like the idea that someone might rest their back against a sculpture while reading a book. *The Grove* is not really a space where we do that because it's quite open. But I love watching people walk through it. There's a story we're telling whenever we're moving about in space, and sculpture gets to participate in this."

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Our brand of sausage

by Madelaine Empson

Have you heard the idiom ‘See how the sausage is made’? Zane Jarvie, one third of surreal sketch comedy circus trio Laser Kiwi, says it refers to how messy and complex the process of making a sausage can be. Or anything, really. Like, for example, a work in progress show.

Laser Kiwi is making a new sausage (series of shows) titled *It’s a Sign*. When I ask Zane what his three favourite sausages are, he replies, “Chorizo so yum so versatile. A cucumber (shaped like a sausage) fresh and crisp. And sausage dog so cute.”

That’s where the riffing on sausages stops because there’s (probably) not going to be any in *It’s a Sign – Work in Progress #2*. Instead, Laser Kiwi will be “playing with some very different ideas”. Considering they’ve involved everything from airborne cucumbers to jars of olives in their stage shenanigans, I’m curious as to what “different” looks like to Zane and Degge Jarvie and Imogen Stone.

“When you put it like that, from an audience perspective, the different ideas will probably seem well within our brand of different… so we should have said more of the same different!”

Adding the caveat that there will be no circus, “so no being angry about the lack of flips (not that any of us can flip)”, Laser Kiwi notes the shows are comically priced on an ascending scale on the assumption they’ll improve. *It’s a Sign – Work in Progress #2* takes place smack bang in the middle of the series at Newtown Community Centre Theatre on the 17th of July.

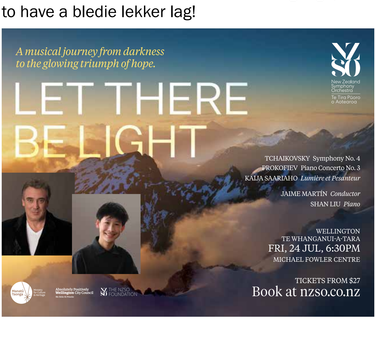
Afrikaans comedy sensasie

Goeie dag almal! If you’re missing laughing in your own language, South African comedian and writer Mel die Storieverteller (Mel the Storyteller) is crossing the Indian Ocean and landing here in Aotearoa to perform her solo show *Internet Sensasie* (*Internet Sensation*) at the Little Theatre in Lower Hutt on Sunday the 19th of July.

All in Afrikaans, audiences are taken on a wild ride through Mel’s riotous world, navigating a digital jungle packed with attention seekers, oddball characters, and unexpected chaos. Her stories are fresh, outrageously funny, and balance humour with vulnerability. Expect tales about Oom Riekert’s big mistake, a planned fistfight in a dodgy joint called KuduKraal, and the secret sickness on her forehead…

Having accrued an enormous online following with her sharp and relatable comedic sketches on social media, this year she cemented her position as one of South Africa’s most hilarious and influential voices, receiving Huisgenoot’s TikToker of the Year and Netwerk24’s Influencer of the Year.

Mel has performed *Internet Sensasie* a whopping 74 times. Now, Mel goes international, entertaining and inspiring audiences with an electric and deeply engaging performance that proves she is one of the most irresistable voices in Afrikaans comedy today. The show is the perfect chance for the Afrikaans community in Greater Wellington to connect with one another, with their language, and to have a bledie lekker lag!



GoodFor community

Looking to inject new life into GoodFor Wellington – a wholefoods refillery store located on Jessie Street, Alison Aldred took over ownership earlier this year. With over 600 products ranging from flours, herbs, rice, and grains to Ecostore products, homewares, face creams, and deodorants, GoodFor Wellington is an incredible supplier of all things organic, minimal waste, and locally sourced.

You can use a paper bag, purchase a jar, or bring in your own to stock up on products from the bulk bins – including over 50 herbs and spices – which reduces waste, cost, and allows you to select your own quantities. Bring in a bottle and top up your cooking oils, vinegars, and washing detergent liquid, or grab all the cereals, dried fruits, and nuts you need for the perfect morning granola.

Providing products that are good for your health and good for the planet is at the heart of everything GoodFor Wellington does. Pop in for a visit and join the community.

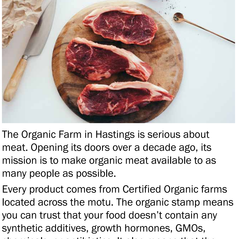
Planetary health

Organic food is packed with the nutrients that a lot of commercially grown foods lack. And what's *good* for your gut is good for the planet too.

Often our fruit, vegetables, meat, and beauty and household products come with a bunch of nasty additives that we might not always be aware of, such as pesticides, synthetic compounds, harsh chemicals, growth hormones, and antiobiotics – not to mention the single-use plastics – that not only cause harm to our bodies, but harm the soil, the air, our waterways, and the animals we consume.

Aotearoa has a wide range of organic and natural food, beverages, and products on offer. From suppliers right through to farmers, bakers, harvesters, and winemakers. These companies care about the environment and about what you're putting in your body. Whether it be certified organic products, or companies that care about sustainable packaging, small shifts towards organic and eco consumption is a small shift towards improving planetary health too.

Good for you



The Organic Farm in Hastings is serious about meat. Opening its doors over a decade ago, its mission is to make organic meat available to as many people as possible.

Every product comes from Certified Organic farms located across the motu. The organic stamp means you can trust that your food doesn't contain any synthetic additives, growth hormones, GMOs, chemicals, or antibiotics. It also means that the cattle and sheep roam freely on organic pastures, with all beef 100 percent grass-fed.

Grocers and markets all over New Zealand stock The Organic Farm products. Kiwis can order from The Organic Farm website too, knowing that any meat they order has come from a sustainable and ethical source with no added nasties.

The Organic Farm range features sausages, shoulders, racks, mince, rumps, steaks, and everything in between. Head online or to a stockist near you for meat that's both good for you *and* for the planet.

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Close-up

by Isabella Smith

Through the window

Music and the Mystical Experience had its world premiere up in Tāmaki Makaurau earlier this month as part of the 2026 Doc Edge Festival. The film follows sound engineer and psychedelic music reasearcher Michael Sutherland alongside 28 musicians as they create a six-hour long improvisation album designed to accompany psychedelic therapy sessions. Featuring interviews with artists, studio footage, and shots taken on the coast and in the hills around Pōneke, *Music and the Mystical Experience* is both an exploration of the unique creative process that went into making the album as well as a showcase of the importance of music in psychedelic therapy.

I caught up with Isabel Corfiatis – filmographer, director, editor, and many things in between – to discuss the film ahead of its screening on Saturday the 18th of July at Roxy Cinema as part of the Doc Edge Festival.

How did you end up on the team, were you along for the whole journey?

Michael asked if I wanted to help him make a documentary and I jumped at the chance. It's something I'd been wanting to do for a long time. It's such a cool subject to do it on as well. The only issue was that the music had already been recorded. There was no footage. At the time, Michael didn't know he wanted to make a documentary – he didn't want any distractions in the recording studio, no phones, no nothing. Luckily, he ended up recording a second album. We got the footage of that being made, which explained quite well how the first one was made.

You had a lot of roles during the making of the film. How did you manage putting on all the hats?

It didn't feel like there was a huge amount of pressure. It wasn't as stressful as it is with a scripted film. At the same time, it's a lot of work when you're a team of two or three doing everything. But it also means you have quite a bit of control. Everyone did as much as they could with everything they could. We all worked cohesively as a team, which was nice.

What was it like translating all the footage into a cohesive story?

It was really difficult. I'd never made a documentary before, let alone a feature. I didn't realise how much of the writing is done in the editing room. We didn't really have a plan. We had scenes we wanted to get during the recording, but we didn't have anything written out. It was all about showing up and seeing what happened. Afterwards we had hours of footage and were like, 'Oh, we have to stitch this all together now, we have to make a story here.' Obviously, there was a story before we started, but we needed to make everything fit in a way that makes sense and to put a visual spin on things. It took a long time. It was a huge challenge. I think we ended up with something that feels really true to us and true to what Michael's trying to show as well.

Does the film raise awareness for music within psychedelic therapy?

Before making this film, I'd never heard of any of the stuff that Michael's doing before. It's really unique. Michael explains a lot about it in the film. There's definitely an emphasis on raising awareness about how important this part of psychedelic therapy is. That without the music you don't have a proper therapy setting. It's incredibly important. If you use the wrong music, it can produce a completely different atmosphere. It's something that Michael wants people to think seriously about when they're doing psychedelic therapy. I can see how passionate he is, and it comes through in the film. It's really cool to see how passionate all the musicians are about the album too.

What is it about the documentary format that interests you?

I grew up watching a lot of documentaries and a lot of films in general. There's something about getting to look through a window into people's lives, especially when they're doing something that's interesting and that they're passionate about. You get to be a fly on the wall. Documentary is a very people-oriented format. It's so special to see people in their natural environment doing their thing. It's something you can't really get in scripted film. In a documentary, you can't predict what's going to happen. You can't predict what the subject is going to do, and every time they will surprise you. As long as the camera is rolling, you go with the flow, take your hat off a minute, and let everyone else lead you.

What sparked your interest in film?

I started making videos when I was a kid, at the age of nine or so. I always had other career options in mind. All these random, very different things. But I was always making films. I was always behind the camera, writing something, doing something. I would rope my friends in and get them to hold the camera or act in the movie. It was only after high school that I was like, 'Wait, this is what I'm supposed to do, this is the only thing I really love to do.' It's the only thing I can't *not* do. I can't stop thinking about making films. That part of my brain doesn't switch off. I think deep down I've always known I never really wanted to do anything else.

What's your happy place: being director, script writer, all of the above?

Each one is so different. Writing a film, when you're in the flow of it, is really exciting and fun, and you get to build it in your own time. But then when you're on set directing, it's an amazing feeling, you're so focused and in the moment. You're making all these bits and pieces come together. Every role offers something different. I love them almost equally. If I had to pick, possibly directing, but again it would depend on the project and the day.

In the film industry, the hierarchies aren't really conducive to straddling multiple roles. Is grassroots an important aspect for you?

Yeah, definitely. The only thing that makes that hard is getting funding to actually make films. In the future, I want to have projects where people can earn a living. But I think it's important to be able to start from the ground up and have everyone who's at a similar level come together and be like, 'Yeah, let's make this thing.' Because you're all passionate about it, you want to succeed no matter what it takes – even if it means you don't make money for a while. You can do things without a lot of money up to a certain point, but funding is needed for films.

It's been a start from nothing and build it up situation. We're in the building up phase now, and I'm really enjoying it – I can see it taking off. It's quite exciting. There are a lot of people who've helped me along the way, a heck of a lot. I'm very grateful for everyone.

What's next for you?

We finished a short film a little while ago, which is now in the process of being entered into festivals. Then I've recently written a feature script which I'm keen to make – that's the next project. I can't wait to get it going. In the future, more documentaries, more scripted features. Just keep going. Because as soon as you make one thing, you immediately start thinking about the next one.

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Highly recommended in Kāpiti

Every step of the way

Looking to buy or sell on the Kāpiti Coast? There are no safer hands than Jill Lampitt's, whose decades-long experience both in Kāpiti and abroad makes her the perfect person to find the keys to your new home, or to find someone to hand yours over to. A proud member of Tommy's since 2009, she has a natural understanding of the unique appeal this beautiful corner of Aotearoa has to offer.

Originally from the United Kingdom, Jill combines her international experience with in-depth knowledge of the Kāpiti market. Whether you're a growing family or looking to retire, upsize, downsize, invest, or for a lifestyle change, Jill has an innate ability to spot the perfect match between buyer and property.

Jill Lampitt's consistent five-star ratings are a testament to her expertise, consistency, and client-focused approach. She is passionate and dedicated, ensuring her clients have a positive experience every step of the way.

Cutting-edge

It would be hard to find a shed in New Zealand that doesn't have a STIHL chainsaw, hedge trimmer, lawn mower, leaf blower, or power tool in it. STIHL has been a household name for 100 years. Neighbours recommend it to neighbours, knowing that STIHL machinery is reliable, high quality, and always keeping up with cutting-edge technology.

The STIHL SHOP in Paraparaumu offers all your favourite STIHL products. Their huge range of outdoor appliances can assist you in the maintenance of any property, whether you're after a battery-powered chainsaw or a petrol line trimmer, a lawn mower that you can sit on or one that you push. Their products ensure that you've got the right tools no matter how big the load of firewood, or how high the branches are that need a prune.

There's a reason Kāpiti is looking so sharp, and that is thanks to STIHL.

Why a reverse mortgage?

Many New Zealanders reach retirement with most of their wealth tied up in their home but limited cash available for everyday living. For some, a reverse mortgage can provide access to that equity without the need to sell or move.

A reverse mortgage allows homeowners to borrow against their property while continuing to live in and own their home. No regular repayments are required, with the loan generally repaid when the home is sold or the owners permanently leave.

At Mike Pero Mortgages, we've helped retirees use reverse mortgages for home maintenance, medical expenses, debt repayment, replacing a vehicle, travelling, and supplementing their pension. Key benefits include the ability to remain in your home, flexible access to funds, and a guarantee that the loan balance will never exceed the net sale proceeds of the property.

Reverse mortgages aren't suitable for everyone, so it's important to explore all available options before making a decision.

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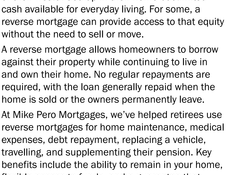

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Gallery news

by Isabella Smith

Brutality and beauty

Photo by Thomas Teutenberg.

George Watson's (Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Mutunga, Morion) latest exhibition *The Choice*, on display at Te Pātaka Toi Adam Art Gallery until the 11th of October, brings together a dearth of references: from 19th-century literature and intricate fretwork of a Victorian villa to Deermaster and Bullmaster farm gates that denote rural life in Aotearoa.

"On one hand there is a biographical element, these materials and forms having been a part of my own growing up", George says. "More generally, they are used in relation to thinking about the division and privatisation of land, extractive industrial models of farming, and the blunt-edged work of containment and control of animals, in contrast with romanticised ideas of pastoral life."

The works are physical and tactile. They comprise found and prefabricated materials that are mostly functional, mass produced, and familiar. Lace and ribbon and a synthetic whale bone coil recall colonial aesthetics, domesticity, and social etiquette. Heavy jute sacks used for grass-seed export of ryegrass and clover, and a weathered union Jack adhered with hand stitching, recall New Zealand's positioning as a colonial outreach.

"I am interested in the proximity of brutality and beauty, in ornament, excess, power and control, and the ways that these ideas reveal themselves though sculptural means, such as the gates adorned with latches", George continues.

The title *The Choice* pays homage to Robyn Kahukiwa's famous painting of the same name, that features symbolic associations around urban migration, assimilation, and what is inherited, systemic, and destined. "I think Robyn Kahukiwa is a luminary and an influence for many artists in Aotearoa. Rather than being stylistically influenced by her, I've always appreciated her staunch and seemingly uncompromising attitude towards working and living as an artist."

While producing this collection, George was reading Dionne Brand's book *Salvage: Readings from the Wreck* about the 19th-century novel. It "is a blend of autobiography and literary criticism, rereading classic English literature – such as *Jane Eyre* or *Mansfield Park* – to understand how they helped license colonialism, slavery, and imperialism, offering a kind of 'script' or template for social aspiration." At the time she re-read *Sense and Sensibility* and *Wuthering Heights*, while also listening to lots of Charli xcx.

The interrogation and excavation of texts, textiles, architecture, and rural structures reveal colonial inheritances and the way these histories haunt us in the present. George is interested in the social and political function of allegory, and there is no starker one than cutting into the gallery wall to reveal its internal structures.

An artist living in Tūrangi-a-Kiwa Gisborne, this year she was awarded the Jann Medlicott Award for Contemporary Art. The "exhibition marks a departure for me in some ways, an attempt to think on a different scale and through different methods of install practice", George says. "I wanted to move away from having discreet or autonomous objects in the space, in favour of a larger installation in which all the elements are interconnected."

Vessels of knowledge

Photo by Chantelle Gribbon.

"Weaving is very underestimated. People don't understand how much history is contained in weaving, even the most humble thing. Weaving carries knowledge and history of housing, fishing, boatmaking through lashings and sails, knowledge of muka [harakeke fibre], and other materials."

Diane Prince (Ngā Puhi, Ngāti Whātua, Ngāti Kahu) is a Te Whanganui-a-Tara-born multidisciplinary artist whose practice covers raranga (weaving) and painting. A longtime veteran of Māori politics and land struggles, her work is a visual expression of her stand on Māori rights and wāhine Māori issues.

To coincide with the appearance of Matariki in the sky marking the Māori New Year, Diane's exhibition, *Te Whakanui i a Matariki*, is on display in the eight three-metre tall LED lightboxes lining Courtenay Place. The works are fine line pencil drawings on paper depicting traditional kai, plants, and the vessels that protected them as tūpuna navigated across the Pacific.

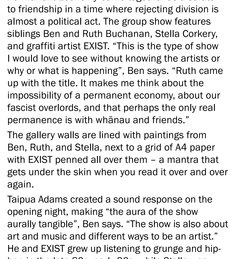
Today these ancient containers are conveyors of food knowledge: cooking techniques, storage, harvesting, traditional rituals, tribal alliances, and inevitable celebrations.

"I approached this project as a weaver", Diane says. "The rimurapa [bull kelp], hue [gourd], kete became a focus, pivotal to understanding aspects of our parents and grandparents' world. Each container is based on what I've woven, and my friends have woven. The knowledge came from whānau, kuia, aunties, and friends."

Together with poet and artist Iwa Holmes, Diane began organising celebrations for Matariki in 1993. In 1995 what emerged was a festival – with the name Te Whakanui i a Matariki gifted by one of their kaumātua [elders] – that brings people together to share mātauranga about planting, the maramataka [lunar calendar], and indigenous ways of doing things.

On display until the 4th of October, the drawings in *Te Whakanui i a Matariki* reflect on survival and the tenacity it takes to survive.

Side by side



Hot Wire, 2021 by Stella Corkery.
Photo courtesy of William Austin Gallery.

Permanent Economy came together as a salute to friendship in a time where rejecting division is almost a political act. The group show features siblings Ben and Ruth Buchanan, Stella Corkery, and graffiti artist EXIST. "This is the type of show I would love to see without knowing the artists or why or what is happening", Ben says. "Ruth came up with the title. It makes me think about the impossibility of a permanent economy, about our fascist overlords, and that perhaps the only real permanence is with whānau and friends."

The gallery walls are lined with paintings from Ben, Ruth, and Stella, next to a grid of A4 paper with EXIST penned all over them – a mantra that gets under the skin when you read it over and over again.

Taipua Adams created a sound response on the opening night, making "the aura of the show aurally tangible", Ben says. "The show is also about art and music and different ways to be an artist." He and EXIST grew up listening to grunge and hip-hop in the late 80s, early 90s, while Stella was listening to hardcore and punk, the spirits of which permeate her works. There were "moments when punk and hip-hop were side by side in radness. I feel like that moment still resonates and keeps re-happening in weird ways through art and music".

Whether you're drawing aural ties across the works or picking up on repeated motifs and textural similarities, the gallery is full of connections that take on lives of their own. Head along to William Austin Gallery for the last week of the show, on until the 18th of July.

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Taste temptations

Step inside El Turko Charcoal Grill and the aroma of charcoal smoke and warm spices hits instantly.

Located in the heart of Lower Hutt, El Turko serves authentic Turkish cuisine cooked fresh over open flames. From juicy lamb skewers and tender chicken kebabs to flavour-packed iskenders, every dish is made to order and served with homemade dips, fresh salads, and Turkish-style rice.

Start with traditional dolmades or shakshuka, then finish with flaky baklava or sweet Turkish delight.

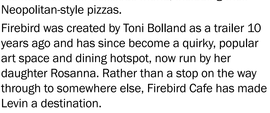
Proudly owned by Murat and Turkana, El Turko brings the warmth of Turkish hospitality straight to your table.

If you've ever been to Firebird Cafe in Levin, you'll know how special it is. Part café, part live music and events venue, Firebird has been injecting creativity and community into Oxford Street for over five years.

Handmade in-house food using local produce is at the heart of their delicious menu, including their Neopolitan-style pizzas.

Firebird was created by Toni Bolland as a trailer 10 years ago and has since become a quirky, popular art space and dining hotspot, now run by her daughter Rosanna. Rather than a stop on the way through to somewhere else, Firebird Cafe has made Levin a destination.

Casa Sabrosa is Wellington's most popular Filipino restaurant. Located on Lambton Quay, their menu is full of comforting and authentic Filipino cuisine that feels like home, including their best-selling beef bulalo – a soup they give free to all their happy customers – Bangsilog, empanada, Spanish bread, and their signature cheese roll and chicken skin. During these winter months, try their beef mami soup, tapsilog, or pork adobo meals. Their wide range of Filipino pastries and desserts are the perfect treat to enjoy while drinking a coffee, including the brazo de Mercedes and leche flan. Open for breakfast, lunch, or an early dinner, pop in for a visit and experience the authentic taste of the Philippines right here in Wellington.



Food can transport you across the globe. At Ammu South Indian Restaurant, they blend traditional recipes with modern flair. Try their crispy dosas and be transported to the bustling streets of Chennai in South India. Enjoy a plate of chicken Manchurian and discover the cultural fusion of India and China. Try a Goan fish curry and find yourself beside the Arabian Sea.

Using fresh ingredients, genuine flavours, and warm hospitality, Ammu restaurants are located in Upper Hutt and Masterton, or you can enjoy the flavours from the comfort of home. Their philosophy is simple: serve quality food that tastes great every time.

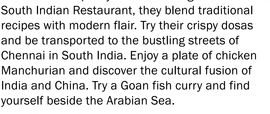
Déjà Vu on Cambridge Terrace is a French-inspired gourmet pizza takeaway joint that has taken Wellington by storm.

Their decadent pizzas are named after quintessential historical figures and fictional characters ranging from the three musketeers and Voltaire to Joan of Arc and Louis XIV.

Created by chef Antoine, these playful pizzas are full of bold flavours and combinations. One thing that stays the same across the menu is that Déjà Vu doesn't skimp on the toppings. Offering pick-up, delivery, and available on various food delivery services, why not order yourself a pizza that has attitude and grab a sweet treat while you're at it?

Have you ever heard of malatang? It's a popular street food in China similar to hot pot. Mala means numbing and spicy, tang means to boil or blanch. In essence, a bunch of tasty and flavourful ingredients are thrown together into a spicy broth, creating an explosion of zesty goodness.

At Tiger Chinese Restaurant on Holland Street you can build your very own malatang! Grab a bowl and some tongs and choose your ingredients from the huge array of products on display. From meats and mushrooms to vegetables and various specialty items, not to mention every different type of noodle you could imagine, no malatang is ever the same – but it will always be packed full of flavour.



The perfect fish and chips lie in the balance of tradition and modern excellence.

Coopers Catch in Kaikōura is all about the fundamentals: premium ingredients, time-honoured recipes, and food that is cooked to order – ensuring every piece of fish is crisp and every chip is golden.

Whether you dine in or take away, their focus is on a consistently superior experience. It isn't just about a meal; it's about professional, friendly service that makes you feel welcome from the moment you walk through the door. By blending old-school quality with modern efficiency, Coopers Catch is proud to serve the best of both worlds.

Tempt your tastebuds

Tell us which restaurant on this page you would like to go to.

The restaurant with the most votes wins. We then draw a winner from our readers who voted for that restaurant and they win a $100 voucher to enjoy a meal.

Name .....

Address .....

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Email entries to: admin@regionalnews.kiwi or post to: Competition, PO Box 15163, Miramar 6243. *Entries close Tuesday 28th July 2026.*

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Making a difference in our community

Less maintenance, more living, the benefits of a serviced apartment

Bonnie chose to move into a Summerset serviced apartment when maintaining her previous home started to feel overwhelming. She wanted a place that would support her future needs and give her family peace of mind.

"I was living in a lifestyle village worrying about the maintenance of that place and realising that as you got older, you were going to need more help. I looked around and thought, I want something that's going to keep me safe so my kids can just relax and not have to worry," said Bonnie.

With her loyal dog, Flash, by her side, Bonnie has found joy and companionship in her serviced apartment, fully embracing this fresh chapter and new friendships.

"This place, it's got a bit of magic. It feels like you've arrived somewhere where everybody's buoyant, like I'm on holiday on a cruise. Every day you can have fun," said Bonnie.

"It's just so vibrant. You wake up in the morning and there's noise and life going on. You want to hear this place. They're laughing, joking and enjoying themselves. And really, where else do you see that at eight or nine o'clock in the morning? I can be sitting outside my place, and somebody will come along and say, 'Hello Bonnie, how are you?' And invite me along to an activity. It's the availability of company, all the time. That's what I like about it. Everybody's so nice." Surrounded by a vibrant community, Bonnie feels confident knowing her future is secure thanks to caring and supportive staff.

"The staff are so empathetic and caring, they sort of ooze it. You can see by the looks on the Nurse or Manager's face, how much they really do care. That's the part that I like, you'll get a bit of sympathy when you need it, and you get care when you need it."

Knowing she's in the right place and busier than ever, Bonnie encourages others to make the move while they can still enjoy everything village life offers.

"For us older ones, if you don't do something about it sooner rather than later, you don't have the same options. So, think about it and think about what's best for your family. Do it while you can enjoy it."

Want to see what serviced apartment living could look like for you? Pop into Summerset Boulcott or Summerset Waikanae for a chat with the sales team, or find out more at summerset.co.nz

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Devine Law is a friendly law firm based in Wellington that offers a wide range of legal services. Established by Fintan Devine in 2010, they have decades of experience in property, commercial, employment, and civil law.

Devine Law provides services for all stages of life, whether you're looking to purchase your first home, subdivide your property, or want to discuss your retirement. Devine Law specialises in wills, enduring powers of attorney, elder law, and trusts and estates. They can help you organise your affairs, be it updating your will or buying into a retirement village.

At the core of Devine Law, Fintan's focus is on providing concise and cost-efficient advice to best serve the needs of his clients. He says, "The legal profession is two things; knowledge of the law and client relationships." These two pillars have enabled him to foster long and productive professional relationships with his clients. Fintan offers sound advice, with one of his clients saying, "As well as having all the necessary technical skills, Fintan's integrity is of the highest order."

Devine Law has provided meaningful services to private individuals in the Wellington region for over 25 years. Their professionalism, strategic and technical skills, and personability has meant that some client relationships have lasted across generations of families. If you're looking for advice on a property purchase, your will, trust, or retirement plan, get in touch today.

Aged care is health care

Most New Zealanders think of hospitals when they think about healthcare. But every day, thousands of older New Zealanders receive complex healthcare somewhere else: in aged residential care.

When an older person can no longer be cared for safely at home, they do not stop needing healthcare. In many cases, they need more of it.

Residents in aged residential care receive 24-hour nursing support, medication management, rehabilitation, dementia care, palliative care, clinical oversight, and regular medical review. These services are delivered by skilled health professionals every day. That is healthcare.

Every rest home, hospital, and dementia care bed is part of New Zealand's health infrastructure. These services care for people who would otherwise remain in hospital longer or be admitted more often. They support families during some of life's most difficult moments while ensuring older New Zealanders receive the right care in the right place.

As our population ages, the demand for aged residential care will continue to grow. Strengthening aged care is not simply about supporting older people. It is about protecting the capacity of our entire health system.

The conversation about healthcare must include aged residential care. Because aged care is health care. When aged residential care is strong, New Zealand's health system is stronger.

Learn more at www.aca.org.nz

Please support the Women's Refuge Annual Street Appeal in Wellington

To put your name forward to collect on Friday 24th July please email Kim at **officeadmin@wwr.org.nz**

To donate online, please visit **givealittle.co.nz/org/wellingtonwomensrefuge**

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Aged Care Association NEW ZEALAND

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Aged Care *is* Health Care

When an older New Zealander can no longer be cared for safely at home, aged residential care becomes part of our health system.

Every rest home, hospital and dementia care bed supports older New Zealanders, their families and helps reduce pressure on our hospitals. When aged care is strong, our whole health system is stronger.

This is my bed.

Give hope to homeless Kiwi families.

Tonight, a sofa becomes a bed in an overcrowded home, as families do what they can to get by.

This is the hidden homeless.

New Zealand has record levels of child homelessness. Children need a safe family home. These hidden homeless families need your help.

THE SALVATION ARMY

Te Ope Whakaora

Winter Appeal

Please donate today.

SalvationArmy.org.nz/Winter

Call 0800 53 00 00

Making a difference in our community

Hope, warmth, home

Home is the place we return to at the end of a long day. It's where children sleep safely, where families gather, and where we find warmth when the winter cold sets in. But for too many people across Aotearoa New Zealand, home is uncertain.

The Salvation Army's Hope for Homeless Families Winter Appeal is revealing the truth behind the statistics. Growing numbers of children are sleeping in cars, cold garages, or moving from couch to couch because there is nowhere else to go.

One family supported by The Salvation Army knows just how quickly life can unravel. When housing options ran out, Jack and Tula* and their four children moved between friends' and relatives' homes, never able to stay for long. Eventually, they had no choice but to live in their van. Thanks to Salvation Army support, the family was able to move into a four-bedroom social housing home.

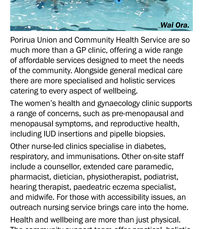
"Words cannot describe the relief of having a stable roof over our heads," Jack says. "We finally have space to put down roots and start again."

Stories like Jack and Tula's remind us that homelessness can happen to anyone, and that practical support, compassion, and hope can make a life-changing difference.

Please support the Winter Appeal. Visit www.salvationarmy.org.nz/winter and give what you can. Your gift could ensure that every family, every young person, and every child in New Zealand has a safe place to call home.

*Names have been changed.

Every aspect of wellbeing



Wai Ora.

Porirua Union and Community Health Service are so much more than a GP clinic, offering a wide range of affordable services designed to meet the needs of the community. Alongside general medical care there are more specialised and holistic services catering to every aspect of wellbeing.

The women's health and gynaecology clinic supports a range of concerns, such as pre-menopausal and menopausal symptoms, and reproductive health, including IUD insertions and pipelle biopsies.

Other nurse-led clinics specialise in diabetes, respiratory, and immunisations. Other on-site staff include a counsellor, extended care paramedic, pharmacist, dietician, physiotherapist, podiatrist, hearing therapist, paediatric eczema specialist, and midwife. For those with accessibility issues, an outreach nursing service brings care into the home.

Health and wellbeing are more than just physical. The community support team offer practical, holistic support to help individuals and whānau, including with broader needs like transport and housing.

Some of the programmes run by the team include Wai Ora, a free aquafit class, a weekly walking group around Aotea Lagoon, and Moto Nui, a 10-week programme for people with mild to moderate dementia, delivered through a Pasifika approach.

PUCHS is a low-cost health provider, dedicated to ensuring accessible care for all. With a diverse and highly skilled clinical team, their door is open to support you in living a full, happy, and healthy life.

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Making a difference in our community

Help fund a cure

Wellington movie lovers are invited to enjoy an inspiring evening at the iconic Penthouse Cinema on Monday the 20th of July, with every ticket helping fund groundbreaking Parkinson's research.

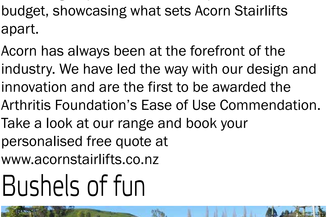
Hosted by Cure Parkinson's NZ, the special fundraising event features two short films showcasing exciting research taking place in New Zealand, followed by *Beyond the Edge* – the acclaimed feature film celebrating Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay's historic ascent of Mount Everest.

Guests will also hear from Cure Parkinson's NZ CEO Daniel McGowan, who will provide an update on the organisation's work to accelerate treatments that can slow, stop, and ultimately cure Parkinson's disease.

More than 13,000 New Zealanders live with Parkinson's, and that number continues to grow. Every ticket purchased supports research that offers hope to thousands of Kiwi families.

Visit www.cureparkinsonsnz.org.nz/events for more.

Stairlift solutions



Your home is a cherished part of your life: a place to welcome family and friends, make memories, enjoy, and relax. It is a simple truth that staying in your own home gives you a wonderful feeling of self-reliance. With a tailor-made Acorn Stairlift, you can stay right where you are, keeping your home, your freedom, and your independence.

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Bushels of fun

The Wairarapa Garden Fiesta is back for its sixth year on the 15th of August at Clareville's A&P Showgrounds.

Opening its doors at 8am, the Wairarapa Garden Fiesta is made up of loads of stalls – both inside and outside – displaying, selling, and demonstrating all things gardening.

Head along in the morning and grab a coffee and something from the food trucks before perusing what's on offer, from plants, flowers, and vegetables to tools, sheds, furniture, arts and crafts, and everything in between. For the green thumbs there'll be exhibitions showcasing ride-on mowers, ways to compost, and tips and tricks around the garden.

If you'd like to join the event, some stallholder spaces are still available. Wairarapa Garden Fiesta is the perfect place to look for new ideas or inspiration for the upcoming season. Suitable for all ages, the festival will be bushels of fun for the whole whānau.

Making a difference in our community

Meaningful farewells

Wellington City Funerals is the only funeral home in the capital city that is owned and operated by people who live in Wellington. Not only do they not have shareholder targets like corporate-owned funeral homes, but they work with locally owned small businesses and sustainable, environmentally friendly options wherever possible, providing high-quality boutique services at a fair and accessible price.

Stu Print and Mary Little first met as funeral directors in 2022, quickly forming a dynamic partnership that inspired the founding of Wellington City Funerals earlier this year. Located in the charming Tinakori Road village, their mission is to provide high-quality, professional funeral services for their community. With over a decade's funeral experience between them, they help whānau create a farewell that feels right, taking care to accommodate all cultural, religious, and family traditions.

Whether death is expected or not, it's normal to feel shock. Stu and Mary will guide you through and ease the stress of the many decisions that need to be made after a death, from organising the funeral service, flowers, and casket to cremations and burials, transport and care of body, newspaper notices, and ways to remember your loved one, be it a memorial bench or something else bespoke.

There is no single way to say goodbye. Wellington City Funerals are here to help you create a service that is memorable and meaningful for you and your whānau.

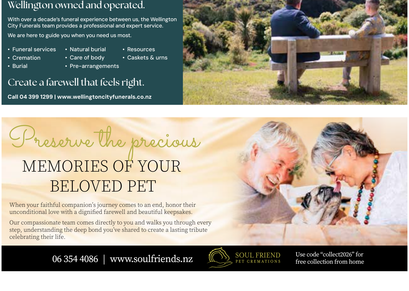
Making memories

From the moment you bring them home, a pet becomes a loyal companion. For elderly people, their presence is constant and comforting, and they provide a kind of devotion that is pure, uncomplicated, and genuine. They love us unconditionally for who we are, keeping us company, bringing direction to our days, and making us smile. So when it comes to the end of their time with us, the impact can be overwhelming. As a team of animal-lovers, Soul Friends Pet Cremations understand that and are dedicated to providing comfort by creating beautiful memorials.

If your cat, dog, or bird companion needs attendance, rest assured they are treated as part of the Soul Friends family until they can be returned to yours. The Soul Friends team can answer the difficult questions with a transparent explanation of their process, because no area of this work is secret or taboo from their point of view. They also guarantee that the cremains (ashes) you receive back are that of your pet.

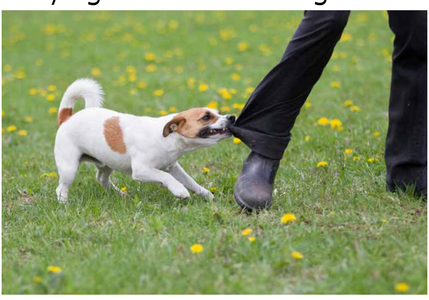
Most importantly arranging for your pet's afterlife care need not be difficult. Soul Friends will come to you, visit for a while to share stories, work through your memorialising ideas, and walk the journey with you every step of the way. Grief services are also available to help you before saying goodbye, on the day, and after until the joy of memory returns.

It may be hard now, but Soul Friends wants to help you can keep the memories alive forever.



Making a difference in our community

Staying safe around dogs



Dog bites are increasing annually, with ACC reporting over 29,000 dog-related injuries that required medical attention in 2025. That's 79 incidents a day.

Learning to keep safe around dogs is mainly common sense, remembering basic rules such as asking permission to touch. If the owner has to restrain the dog for you to pat it – *don't*. We get sent photographs regularly where we see owners who don't understand their dog's body language and consequently this puts other people at risk. Quite often those at risk are children.

The Dog Safe Workplace, directed by a parent and dog owner, educates companies and communities on canine behaviour, drawing from all the stories we hear about dog bites.

There are some very simple rules to follow. Ask permission – and teach your children to understand that if the owner says no, that is ok. Never approach a dog that is unattended and if a dog runs up to you, stand still. If you are given permission to touch the dog, let the dog come to you. Only pat the dog on the side or back – don't put yourself or your child at the head of the dog. Don't rely on the owner to know the dog's body language and whether it wants to engage.

If you need advice for your company or your family, The Dog Safe Workplace are here to help. Call us or visit www.dogsafeworkplace.com

Making a global difference

Many Wellingtonians may not know that in Newtown, Gillies McIndoe Research Institute is carrying out local research with global relevance. Our scientists study complex conditions including brain cancers, vascular anomalies, and keloid scarring. Using advanced 3D laboratory models, we investigate how these conditions grow and change, identify possible treatment targets, and explore whether existing medicines could be used in new ways to help promising research move closer to patients sooner.

This work has already led to important progress, including a world-first 3D strawberry birthmark model, new insights into biological differences between male and female strawberry birthmarks, and new thinking about the barriers that make glioblastoma so difficult to treat. In collaboration with AFT Pharmaceuticals, Gillies McIndoe has also developed two topical creams for strawberry birthmarks and keloid scars.

As an independent biomedical research charity, Gillies McIndoe is supported by philanthropy. In the current economic environment, funding research is challenging, but support helps keep this work moving and train the next generation of scientists right here in Wellington.

We welcome the community in. To meet our scientists and book a lab tour, email info@gmri.org.nz to. If you would like to support this work and donate, please leave a note saying 'Wellington research'.
To learn more, follow us on social media platforms or visit www.gmri.org.nz

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Making a difference in our community

An easy cure

In 1987, Aotearoa became the first country in the world to introduce a state-sponsored needle exchange programme. Now, the New Zealand Needle Exchange Programme (NEP) operates through a network of 20 needle exchange sites, two mobile exchanges, and 197 pharmacy and alternative outlet partners from Whangārei to Invercargill, who distribute over three million needles each year.

NEP offer free peer testing for Hepatitis C at all their branches. Hepatitis C transmission is closely related with sharing needles and other injection equipment, with an estimate of 500 new cases diagnosed in Aotearoa each year. It is often asymptomatic in its early stages, making it difficult for people to know if they've contracted the virus. That's why regular testing is crucial for managing risk for people who inject drugs.

The good news is testing for Hepatitis C is more accessible than ever, and with early detection, it has a 99 percent cure rate when treated with the fully funded antiviral medication Maviret. At NEP outlets, they offer free, sterile syringes and needles; safe needle disposal; resources on safe injecting practices; and a confidential, non-judgemental environment for rapid testing that takes just five minutes.

The NEP website offers a wide range of helpful resources, including where to find your nearest outlet. Injecting drug users frequently experience stigma which often presents a barrier to accessible care. Harm reduction is based on empathy, trust, and creating safe spaces.

By Māori for Māori

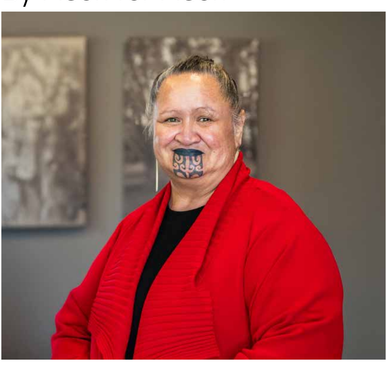


Photo by Michal Goga.

Toitū te Ao is the only kaupapa Māori-driven HIV support and advocacy organisation in Aotearoa. Centred on hauora, it supports and advocates for Māori living with and affected by HIV through promoting mātauranga and research, enhancing awareness, reducing stigma, and supporting whānau.

Pou tāhuhu Milly Stewart was brought up around the skirts of her kuia. She was nurtured to embrace the wholeness of their wisdom and what it means to be Māori. She embarked on a journey of self-discovery, first attaining a Bachelors in Bicultural Social Work then a post-graduate in Professional Supervision, which enabled her to advocate for Māori within Pākehā-dominated institutional settings.

Māori continue to face inequities driven by stigma, their voices often going unheard within spaces that shape their lives. In 2020, Milly established Toitū te Ao, responding to the absence of a kaupapa Māori lens within the sector in order to whakamana Māori and Indigenous peoples through support grounded in manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, dignity, and respect.

Toitū te Ao's services include free, rapid HIV and syphilis testing, one-on-one peer support for the recently diagnosed, assistance navigating support services, counselling services, and connection with peers living with HIV. Toitū te Ao's contributions to research, community building, and for Māori by Māori support has led to it being involved in projects both in Aotearoa and internationally.

Making a difference in our community

Let's break it down

World Hepatitis Day is observed each year on the 28th of July to correspond with the birthday of the Nobel Prize-winning scientist Dr Baruch Blumberg, who discovered the hepatitis B virus and developed a diagnostic test and vaccine for it.

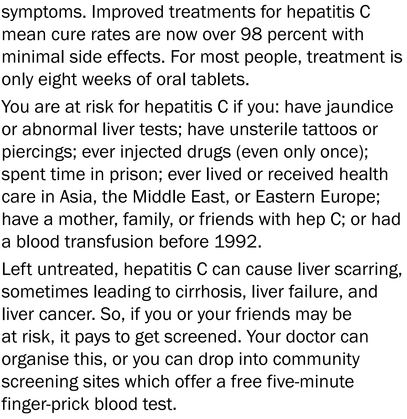
This year, the theme for World Hepatitis Day is Let's break it down: an urgent call to remove the barriers that stand between people and the services that can save their lives.

The tools needed to eliminate viral hepatitis already exist. Despite effective vaccines for hepatitis B given free as part of New Zealand's National Immunisation Schedule, accurate diagnostics, curative treatments for hepatitis C fully funded by the government, and lifelong therapies for hepatitis B that prevent infection and reduce liver cancer and cirrhosis, many people remain undiagnosed, untreated, or unable to access care due to stigma, limited awareness, health system gaps, and persistent inequalities.

The campaign is all about turning proven science into action. While progress is being made to eliminate hepatitis in New Zealand, greater urgency and collaboration are critical to closing the gaps in care.

Removing stigma and discrimination from discussions around hepatitis is integral to improving and saving lives. World Hepatitis Day calls on communities to advocate for increased political commitment to hepatitis elimination, to combat stigma, strengthen partnerships, and ensure that friends and whānau are getting tested. The goal is to eliminate the virus by 2030.

Easy test, easy cure



Regional hep C team.

Feeling tired and not sure why? What kind of party animal were you and your friends back in the day? You could have the hepatitis C virus but be unaware you have been infected.

Diagnosis and treatment for hepatitis C is now easy, and cure rates are high. However, many people do not realise they are infected. Current estimates are that 18,000 to 20,000 people in NZ have hepatitis C, but many won't have any obvious symptoms. Improved treatments for hepatitis C mean cure rates are now over 98 percent with minimal side effects. For most people, treatment is only eight weeks of oral tablets.

You are at risk for hepatitis C if you: have jaundice or abnormal liver tests; have unsterile tattoos or piercings; ever injected drugs (even only once); spent time in prison; ever lived or received health care in Asia, the Middle East, or Eastern Europe; have a mother, family, or friends with hep C; or had a blood transfusion before 1992.

Left untreated, hepatitis C can cause liver scarring, sometimes leading to cirrhosis, liver failure, and liver cancer. So, if you or your friends may be at risk, it pays to get screened. Your doctor can organise this, or you can drop into community screening sites which offer a free five-minute finger-prick blood test.

You can email the community hepatitis C team at hepcservice@tuora.org.nz for help or visit www.stickittohepc.co.nz

Making a difference in our community

Tech talks with Pat

Gaming and kids: a survival guide

by Pat Pilcher

The weather's doing its usual thing and every weekend, the kids vanish into whatever game captured their imagination the week before. As someone who's spent more hours than I'd like testing tech gadgets, I figured now is a good time for tips on safe gaming.

Before the controller gets handed over, chat about usernames. No real names, no ages, nothing that gives away who or where your kid actually is. Turn off location sharing too; most games don't need it. Make sure your kids know how to block or report someone being a pain.

Easier said than done, I know. But jumping into a game with your kids shows you're actually interested and opens the door to good conversations. Ask what they love about it or how they found it. You'll learn more from 10 minutes playing together than an hour of lecturing.

Gaming isn't always sunshine and rainbows. Bullying and stress happen. Build in coping strategies early: a breather, a change of game, or reminding them that asking for help is never uncool.

Plenty of popular games have in-game currency or loot boxes that work suspiciously like a pokie machine. Kids don't always clock that real money is involved, especially with card details already saved. I've heard from mates whose credit cards copped a nasty surprise after "just one more skin" turned into 50 bucks gone in an afternoon. Some of these mechanics are genuinely designed to hook developing brains into gambling-like spending. Worth a frank chat now, and maybe pulling saved card details as a precaution.

Most platforms offer solid parental controls covering screen time, content ratings, and who your kids can chat with. Roblox now uses facial age estimation to sort accounts into age-appropriate groups. Set these up sooner rather than after something's gone wrong.

A little groundwork now means more relaxed downtime for everyone and fewer surprises when you finally prise that controller away for dinner.

Live well, stay well

The Hepatitis Foundation of New Zealand has a vision: viral hepatitis B elimination by 2030 in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Hepatitis B is one of the world's most common infectious diseases. As the leading cause of liver cancer, 1.1 million people die globally from chronic hepatitis B each year – either from liver failure or liver cancer. About 254 million people worldwide have the virus, 94,000 of which are in New Zealand where Māori, Pasifika, and Chinese and Southeast Asian New Zealanders are disproportionately affected.

Hepatitis B is spread through blood and other bodily fluids, so anyone can catch it. While there's no cure (yet), the virus can be managed with regular blood tests. Most people who have it don't know it, but good treatments are available and regular health monitoring not only helps people to live well, but picks up early warning signs of liver disease and cancer. The childhood vaccine programme makes it preventable.

The Hepatitis Foundation of New Zealand aims to increase the number of people diagnosed and receiving regular care for hepatitis B from 20,000 to approximately 94,000 by 2030. The impact of achieving this goal will be that more people live well and stay well with hepatitis B. Fewer people will get cancer, with greater likelihood to access a cure when it becomes available.

If you're over 35, Māori, Pacific, or Asian and have not been vaccinated, or if you have a family member with hepatitis B, visit www.hfnz.nz for more information about a free blood test.

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or email: dispensary@silverstreampharmacy.co.nz
Open Monday-Friday 8.30am to 6pm
and Saturday 9am to 5pm

Let's break the stigma.
Hepatitis B can affect anyone.
World Hepatitis Day 28 July
More than 94,000 people are living in New Zealand
with hepatitis B. Most don't even know.
Hepatitis is the leading cause of liver cancer.
Getting tested is the best way to protect your health.
Contact us to get a free blood test: www.hfnz.nz | 0800 33 20 10
The Hepatitis Foundation of New Zealand

Back to contents

Frustration and surrender

Photo by Nicola Sandford.

Vera Ellen has been busy, to say the least. Off the back of a 27-date tour of the UK and Europe supporting Aldous Harding, she is returning to Aotearoa for an album release tour, celebrating her fourth studio album *Heaven Knows What Time*, which came out in May this year.

The title reflects the album's central tension: frustration and surrender to forces outside of our control. Written during a two-week songwriting residency with NZ Pacific Studio in Greytown, its tone marks a shift from her previous release, *Ideal Home Noise*, which emerged from a dark chapter full of deep introspection.

"After the heaviness of *Ideal Home Noise*, I feel it is pressing that I now create an uplifting record that has a guided message of hope, but from a mature perspective", Vera wrote in her residency application. But the resulting album resists neat resolution, moving through themes of joy, love, self-assurance, humour, moodiness, and heartbreak, featuring celebrated singles like the joyous anthem *gayfever* and the sophist-pop duet with Hemi Hemingway *when it's over.*

The Guardian recently wrote, "Arising New Zealand empress Vera Ellen and band were a revelation, a shimmering reminder that pop 'n' roll can still nudge one's soul."

The Aotearoa Music Award-winning and Taite Music Prize-winning artist takes to the stage at Meow on Friday the 24th of July. Head along to witness Vera's raw, captivating performance and find out why she has established herself as one of Aotearoa's most exciting acts.

Wintry repose

Winter Harvest Bounty by Nely Golovkova.

The spacious, vaulted hall of the Wellington Cathedral of St Paul will host the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts' (NZAFA) *Winter Exhibition* this month from the 17th of July through to the 16th of August.

The exhibition features 65 works from 51 artists selected by NZAFA, ranging from photographs and portraits to still life and landscapes. With no constraint on medium, the works have been produced in ink, charcoal, collage, and pastels. Alongside standard oil, acrylic, and watercolour paintings, there are other mixed media and three-dimensional forms.

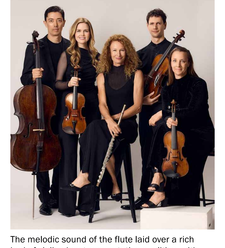
NZAFA director Wayne Newman says, "There has been a wonderful response to the unspoken theme of this exhibition.

Even though we did not impose one, dozens of works capture the sense and the feel of the season."

Some highlights include JM Beltran's image of the Milky Way above the Church of the Good Shepherd on the shores of Lake Tekapo, Denis Slowley's intensely observed depiction of a rusting boat, Vivian Manthel-French's view of the windswept dunes opposite Kāpiti Island, and Nely Golovkova's watercolours capturing the play of light across a seasonal citrus harvest.

Wayne describes the works on display as worthy representatives and demonstrations of mastery within each artist's medium. The NZAFA is dedicated to the promotion, creation, understanding, and enjoyment of visual arts. Head along and witness the extraordinary talent, capturing this wintry season against the awe-inspiring backdrop of the cathedral in Thorndon.

Folk-laden chamber music



The melodic sound of the flute laid over a rich bed of violins has transportative qualities, with the sweetness of the wind instrument adding variety to the textured and resonant warmth of the strings.

The recently formed Elouan Quartet, comprising New Zealand Symphony Orchestra (NZSO) musicians Jessica Oddie (violin), Anna van der Zee (violin), Alexander McFarlane (viola), and Ken Ichinose (cello), will be joined by NZSO principal flute Bridget Douglas for an afternoon of mixed ensemble chamber music at the Waikanae War Memorial Centre on the 19th of July.

The programme explores the rich storytelling traditions and folk influences woven into classical and contemporary music, bringing together a diverse range of composers.

Elena Kats-Chernin's *Night and Now* – which reflects the Australian composer's Russian childhood and demonstrates her signature blend of lyrical beauty and rhythmic drive – will be followed by Mozart's Flute Quartet, which embodies his fascination with folk melodies and dance forms and is one of the best-loved works for flute and string. The second half of the programme shifts to an Aotearoa perspective, featuring Ken Wilson's *Introduction, Theme and Variations* before closing with *Night Club* from Astor Piazzolla's *Histoire du Tango*, tracing the evolution of Argentine tango from its working class roots to a sophisticated concert form.

The concert is brought to the stage by Waikanae Music Society. Now in its 48th year, the society is one of the most successful classical music presenters in the country.

An equine fever dream

by Madelaine Empson

Photo by Mason Rudd.

Pōneke songwriter and guitarist Michael Llewellyn blends indie and folk sensibilities with literary storytelling, infusing fluid lyrics in the vein of Nick Cave and Leonard Cohen into the heart of his gritty grooves. With "Gravelly grace and lyrical weight" (*RNZ*), he is "a songwriter unafraid to go deeper".

Following his debut Oh *My Darling* (2021) and sophomore record *I'm Gorgeous* (2025), Michael spent 12 months in relative silence, living off nothing but white toast and sparkling water. Now, he's busy preparing for his first Australian tour and the release of his third studio album *Strange Horses* early next year.

Together with his disorientingly good-looking bandmates Nawakatoa Tekela-Pule (bass), Hamish Morgan (drums), Arran Cargill-Brown (guitar), and Isabella Smith (vocals, percussion), Michael will be returning to the stage to play a one-night-only set of old ponies and new (strange) horses, turning Parrot Dog into a sweaty equine fever dream on Friday the 24th of July.

Full of charm and catharsis, he tells me the setlist "will be like a Midwest gravel side street destined to forever spin out the back of some rock 'n' roll fantasy night club".

"And yes, thank the lord," he responds to the question on our minds, "we will be playing some of the new tunes live and they are feeling really great and dirty."

After the gig, Michael hopes that audiences will "feel uplifted and excited about the existence of friends, strangers, insects, birds, rivers, bees, and everything else anyone has ever come across since the invention of the time space continuum".

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One-stop shop

RMR Decorators are an award-winning, Wellington-based painting and interior finishing company owned by Marc and Rebecca Rudolph. Whether it's a new build or renovations, Marc works alongside his brother Harry – who is also a part owner and licensed building practitioner – and their team to manage both structural preparation and final aesthetic finishes, offering a full wrap-around service. They specialise in interior, exterior and roof painting; specialty wall covering installations; metal ceiling batten installation; plaster board installation; plastering and skimming; and roof rust repairs and re-sprays.

Proud members of Master Painters New Zealand, last year RMR Decorators were adorned with several accolades after attending the Master Painters NZ Conference. The awards included Master Painter of the Year, Residential Master Painter NZ, and wins in both the Exterior and Interior work categories.

The team at RMR take immense pride in the services they deliver to clients across Wellington, Hutt Valley, Wairarapa, and Kāpiti. They have assisted in painting award-winning homes: both modern builds and refurbishments of old villas that have featured in the *Master Builders House of the Year* magazine.

Award-winning builders and renovation experts Kiwi Built recently said, "We have engaged RMR Decorators over the past few years, and they have been an invaluable asset to our projects. Their team consistently goes the extra mile to ensure their work is of the highest quality. Additionally, they provide insightful feedback on areas for improvement during our everyday interactions. Having worked with numerous painters over the years, the relationship we have developed with RMR Decorators is truly exceptional. We couldn't ask for a better group of professionals to collaborate with."

Revamping your home with a coat of fresh paint can work wonders, providing a much-needed makeover. Not only does repainting enhance the look of your house, but it also acts as a protective barrier against damage from UV rays, rain, and temperature changes.

Heading inside, the colour of the walls forms the backdrop of every memory made. It sets the tone of the room and creates harmony among the furniture. A statement wall adds a spark, and veneers made of plywood or stone add a rustic warmth. The ways to express yourself in the home are endless.

For over two decades, RMR Decorators has been the leading choice for all your painting and decorating requirements. Our team boasts over 27 years of industry experience, ensuring a skilled, committed, and friendly approach to every project. Begin your next project today by visiting our website at www.rmrdecorators.nz.

Masterful joinery

Ladd Joinery have been on the job for over 30 years. Based in Tawa, proud owner, manager, and registered master joiner David Ladd has built the business up to become a respected and trusted name in the building industry, guaranteeing quality workmanship and exceptional service.

David and his small and dedicated team produce quality custom joinery, including kitchens, laundries, and bespoke cabinetry for residential homes and corporate fit-outs. Ladd Joinery operate from a large commercial workshop featuring a kitchen showroom that demonstrates working kitchens. Here, you can select products and materials and watch your new kitchen come to life on the factory floor. Working closely with independent kitchen designer Perfect Order, Ladd Joinery ensure they build you a kitchen that suits your style, layout, and budget – all with a five-year warranty.

Recent clients said, "The craftsmanship from David Ladd Joinery is excellent and we would not hesitate to recommend to anyone thinking of updating their kitchen. Our new kitchen is even better than we imagined."

The team supply, manufacture, and install all commercial projects, including fit-outs for retailers, schools, government departments, and medical centres.

Their attention to detail, smooth processes, and high standards of work mean that their client base has grown across decades.

If you're after a revamp at home or in the office, get in touch with Ladd Joinery to turn an idea into a measured up, bespoke reality.

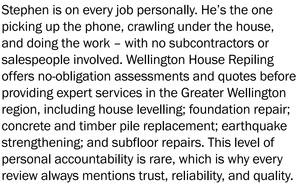
Solid foundations

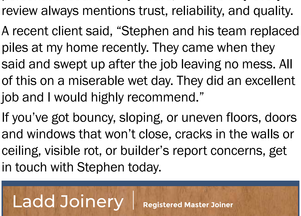
Living in Wellington means clay-heavy soils, high rainfall, steep slopes, and active faultlines, with many residential homes being of old stock that predate modern foundation codes. That's why getting your piles and foundations checked, repaired, or replaced is an essential part of living in the capital city. Luckily, Wellington House Repiling, owned and operated by licensed building practitioner Stephen Pihama, specialises in house foundations, offering a professional service built on formal qualifications and hands-on experience.

Stephen is on every job personally. He's the one picking up the phone, crawling under the house, and doing the work – with no subcontractors or salespeople involved. Wellington House Repiling offers no-obligation assessments and quotes before providing expert services in the Greater Wellington region, including house levelling; foundation repair; concrete and timber pile replacement; earthquake strengthening; and subfloor repairs. This level of personal accountability is rare, which is why every review always mentions trust, reliability, and quality.

A recent client said, "Stephen and his team replaced piles at my home recently. They came when they said and swept up after the job leaving no mess. All of this on a miserable wet day. They did an excellent job and I would highly recommend."

If you've got bouncy, sloping, or uneven floors, doors and windows that won't close, cracks in the walls or ceiling, visible rot, or builder's report concerns, get in touch with Stephen today.





Buy, build, renovate

Abundant wellbeing

Family-owned, locally run business Oranganui Flooring Limited have been transforming spaces into something unique for over five years. Owned by Tim Allcock and Maraea Kātene, they specialise in high-end residential flooring, working closely with homeowners to shape their dreams. Oranganui means abundant wellbeing. Creating a safe space that provides mental and spiritual sustenance for homes is at the heart of the products and services that they provide.

Services include residential and commercial flooring installation and preparations, be it vinyl, carpet, timber, or polished concrete. Oranganui's craftmanship and attention to detail give spaces a refined and architectural edge. Their professionalism and tailored approach to every project have earned them the trust of clients who value precision, quality, and bespoke finishes.

From custom-made timber staircases to Italian floor and wall tiles, Oranganui Flooring provide exceptional care and customer service that goes above and beyond.

Brick by brick

Don Watson Brick & Block Laying Limited have been providing brick masonry and block laying services to the Greater Wellington region, Horowhenua, and Manawatū for over 30 years. Structurally sound and aesthetically pleasing, brick remains one of the most popular buildng materials due to its low maintenance, affordability, durability, and energy efficiency.

Don Watson brick, block, and masonry services are suitable for jobs inside the home and out, whether you're building a new house, refurbishing an old one, adding an extension, or landscaping the garden. Options include building decorative brick walls and veneers for single and double-storey residential homes; outdoor brick structures such as BBQs, fencing, fireplaces, and outdoor pizza ovens; interior and exterior schist stonework; and concrete block retaining walls and foundations.

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Covering Wellington, Kāpiti, Horowhenua, and Hutt Valley, the Totalspan team of 13 are big on service and dedicated to providing customers with personalised, solutions-based, great-value buildings across residential, lifestyle, rural, and commercial sectors. Whatever building you need – from shelters to sheds, storage units to stables and everything in between – Totalspan can find the perfect size, colour, and specifications for your site. They will manufacture it in their Christchurch-based factory using New Zealand steel framing and COLORSTEEL® cladding and roofing. Workmanship and structural integrity are both guaranteed.

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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 or give them a ring for a free quote.

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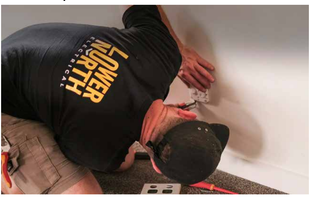
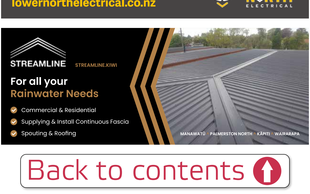


There are plenty of jobs that homeowners can do themselves around their properties, but electrical ones are best left to the professionals. Lower North Electrical service homes and businesses across the Wellington Region, no matter how big or small the project is.

The dedicated crew of friendly and enthusiastic electricians are passionate about their profession, which is why they take pride in completing every job on time and within budget. They prioritise communication and always pay close attention to detail, ensuring they've exceeded expectations.

"We love what we do," director Alistair says. "From fault-finding to new builds – every day is different. Finding the best solution to give a customer the outcome they want, and seeing the end result, gives us great satisfaction."

Whether you need help with lighting, hot water heaters, kitchen projects, electric vehicles, rewiring, alarm systems, or anything else that uses power, Lower North Electrical have got you covered.



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Winter wonderland – Otago

More to explore

Clyde. Photo courtesy of Tourism Central Otago.

A vastly untouched wonderland filled with snowy ancient mountains, alpine herb fields, and fast-flowing rivers, Central Otago is one of New Zealand's nature hotspots. Visitors can pedal or trek past river gorges, farmland, old mining settlements, and luxurious vineyards, not to mention go boating and fishing lake and riverside. What's more, in this natural wonderland, the towns are chocka with history and brimming with personality.

With cafés, boutiques, museums, and art galleries tucked into heritage buildings that harken back to the time of the gold rush, the quaint villages are the perfect place to while away a winter's day. Alexandra is framed by towering mountains and full of parks. Charming Ophir is a living museum filled with restored buildings, including New Zealand's oldest post office. Naseby is full of treasures and tales. Cromwell has eateries and cellar doors aplenty, Roxburgh is nestled into a landscape excellent for exploring, and Clyde is where history comes alive.

Winter adventures

Across flat plains flanked by snow-clad mountain ranges, past pristine lakes, beneath enormous southern skies, Central Otago is famous for its wealth of bike trails.

Biking in the winter means rugging up warm, breathing in crisp, clean air, and enjoying the transformation of Central Otago into a winter wonderland. With shops in Clyde, Wānaka, and Cromwell, Bike It Now! are perfectly positioned for access to Aotearoa's best routes, including the Otago Central Rail Trail, the Clutha Gold Trail, and the Lake Dunstan Trail. They can be as hands on or off as you need them to be, whether all you're after is a bike – including e-bike hire – or want them to organise meals, transport, and accommodation in one of their tour packages.

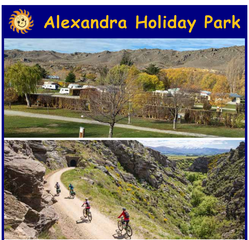
Winter is a time for adventure. Bike It Now! can have you on the trail in no time, immersed in some of New Zealand's most storied and striking landscapes for what's sure to be an adventure of a lifetime.

Majestic manu

Taking a drive on the Otago Peninsula in Ōtepoti Dunedin is spectacular all on its own, but what awaits you down the very end at Taiaroa Head, where the harbour inlet opens out to the Pacific Ocean, is even more awe-inspiring.

The Royal Albatross Centre is located on the windswept headland beside the only mainland toroa (northern royal albatross) breeding colony in the world. These majestic manu with three-metre wingspans return to Taiaroa Head every September to reunite with their lifelong mates after spending a year alone at sea.

At the Royal Albatross Centre, visitors can take a 60-minute or 90-minute fully guided tour, featuring views from the glassed observatory and a presentation on the albatross breeding cycle and the rich and layered history of the headland. Open all year, head along to this iconic wildlife attraction to get up close and personal with the world's largest seabird.



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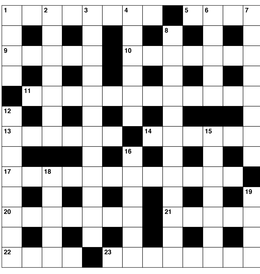

Across

1 - Grainy (8)
5 - Opposite of thick (4)
9 - Insect grub (5)
10 - Trailer (7)
11 - Showed not to be true (12)
13 - Keep hold of (6)
14 - Resolutely (6)
17 - Insistently (12)
20 - Two lines of verse (7)
21 - Strange and mysterious (5)
22 - Foolish (4)
23 - Reproduce recorded sound (4,4)

Down

1 - Precious metal (4)
2 - Where you go to catch a flight (7)
3 - Impossible to achieve (12)
4 - Be attractive (6)
6 - Lift up (5)
7 - In these times (8)
8 - Lawfully (12)
12 - Yielded (8)
15 - Tropical disease (7)
16 - Horizontal supporting beam (6)
18 - Brusque (5)
19 - Eat like a bird (4)

The Veils: Fragile World Tour 2026

Meow Nui, 4th Jul 2026
Reviewed by Graeme King

Photo by Frances Carter.

Released last month, the *Fragile World* album has been described as "capturing The Veils in an urgent and instinctive mode", and is their eighth studio album in 22 years. The Veils is less of a traditional band and more leader and songwriter Finn Andrews (vocals, keys, guitar, bass) enlisting an assortment of top New Zealand musicians on rotation. This 10-date New Zealand tour has the full band for the first six shows and finishes with Andrew's four solo performances.

For such a talented songwriter, in concert Andrews was a man of so few words, he didn't even introduce the band members by name! Changing instruments fluidly but efficiently, almost with each song, Tom Healy (guitar, bass, backing vocals), Dan Raishbrook (guitar, pedal steel guitar, bass), Dave Khan (violin, guitar, keys, percussion, backing vocals), and Joe McCallum (drums, percussion) took versatility to a whole new level.

The first song *Aurora* from the new album, featuring Andrews' plaintive vocals and gorgeous piano, set anticipation levels high amongst the devoted audience. The start of *Are You Awake Tonight?*, also from the new album and featuring Andrews' powerful vocals, had shades of Springsteen's *Thunder Road*. On *Swimming with the Crocodiles,* featuring McCallum's solid drum groove, Andrews switched to electric guitar. Khan's eerie violin intro on *Not Yet* led into an almost hypnotic guitar-driven funk rhythm. The piano intro for *The Dream Of Life* was poignant, and Andrews described *My Foolish Heart* as his attempt at a country song! *No Limit of Stars,* featuring Khan's gorgeous violin, had the crowd entranced and the hairs standing up on the back of my neck. Stunning. The set finished with crowd favourites *Low Lays the Devil* and *Jesus For The Jugular*, but we didn't want the show to end.

To rapturous applause, Andrews came back on stage and, prior to *The Tide That Left and Never Came Back,* said he lived in Wellington, a city he loves, for a little while last year and had a lovely time… "Maranui Cafe – very nice!" Kahn then joined him on violin for the climactic last track *Axolotl*. Their Wellington fans love The Veils too – hopefully they'll be back here soon.

Enter the Kanosphere

Raybon Kan has been in the business of making people laugh for three decades now. The man knows how to read a room, delivering his offbeat, clever wit with absolute ease.

Performing his latest show *Pumping Irony* across two nights on the 24th and 25th of July at Studio 73 in Greytown as part of the New Zealand Festival of Christmas, audiences can expect stories, observations, and opinions, told in Kan's unmistakable style.

Besides the picture of Arnold Schwarzenegger with Kan's face slapped on top, what we know about the show is that "Raybon Kan gets oiled up, tightens his grip, flexes his pecs, and engorges every vein in his all-new comedy show. No pain, no gain, sacred or profane, aroused or mundane, up and down memory lane, Tarzan or Jane – this show takes on the weight of the world and turns dumb bells into smart bells. And with midwinter Christmas, maybe even Jingle Bells."

When we ask Kan whether *Pumping Irony* is poking fun at the manosphere, he says "no, this is the Kanosphere. But it's not a cult and I'm not recruiting tradwives or telling people how to hammer their faces to look better". He continues, "I want the show to be a place that people look forward to and are happy to be immersed in for that hour". Ultimately, Kan hopes for people to come away from the show thinking, 'Well that was silly.'

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Book reviews

The Lost Climber's Legacy

Written by Julia Millen
Writes Hill Press
Reviewed by Margaret Austin

Julia Millen is a trainer, a climber, and a mountaineer. On top of all that, she's a writer! Her first novel, following 17 earlier works, is a true mystery of an intriguing nature. Twists, turns, and shocks enough to satisfy the most demanding literary mounter.

To say nothing of mystery and suspense. These are signalled at the outset by the central character Jennifer in her words: "She'd put the past behind her, moved on, and had no intention of going back. Never look back." Fate was about to fly in the face of such a determination. Jennifer is gradually unfolding of what's deeply bothering Deirdre forms the following narrative.

Deirdre, or Dee as she prefers to be called, has had quite a life. Having to recall it 30 years on, when receiving the disturbing news that her husband remains of a climber have been found in a South Island glacier, brings a mixture of tension, excitement, and guilt. All that time ago, on a mountain expedition in the company of fellow climbers – all men but one – she'd enjoyed sexual encounters with a fine while the others were absent. Jealy mingling.

Anyone of them has had an accident. But which one? And what was Dee's connection with him? And with what consequences? The narrative moves back and forth in an increasingly gripping ascension involving all characters – Dee's ailing mother and daughter included.

Descriptions of climbers' actions in the face of obstacles and hazards are graphic. Readers may easily imagine Millen has faced them personally. Slippery snow-spattered rock and overhanging; treacherous ice must be navigated, bad weather endured, and hunger and thirst unabated until safety is reached in the form of a hut or shelter, or at least a handful of scoggin. Relief is palpable. References to the 60s will arouse wry grins in readers who recall landline telephones, messy cassette tapes, and hand-dyed sweaters for the gift.

Put your boots on, rope up, and go searching for the lost climber's legacy.

In The Best Interests

Written by John and Elisa Mendzela
Mendburst
Reviewed by Kerry Lee

As husband and wife John and Elisa Mendzela discovered, sometimes truth can be far strange and more dangerous than fiction. In the 1980s, the Western couple flew into Papua New Guinea through teaching at the Kerevat College. Not long afterwards, they uncovered systematic corruption involving the sexual exploitation of Kerevat's students.

In The Best Interests: Intrigue and Payback in Papua New Guinea is a book I found hard to put down once I picked it up. The narrative non fiction memoir had me shaking my head at the hurdles that both John and Elisa had to jump over to get someone to listen to them and act on their accusations.

John and Elisa take turns narrating the story. The shift in perspectives gives readers a full view of what is going on and fleshes out the changes that both faced in order to tell their side of the story and to get Papua New Guinea authorities to act.

The authors write extremely descriptively, painting a very realistic picture of what they were facing and how many roadblocks were put in their way. Neither of them shy away from describing the problems they encountered, the emotional toll that was taken, and the people who stood by them.

This was a novel that will stay with me for a long while. As someone living in a developed country, I cannot begin to fathom the problems developing nations faced roughly 30 years ago. *In The Best Interests* is one of those stories that will keep turning over and over in your head, simply because it is so difficult and terrible to comprehend how something like that could have been allowed to happen and why so many people would enable it.

Dedicated in part to the Papua New Guineans of today who refuse to let the bad overwhelm the good, I wholeheartedly recommend *In the Best Interests* to anyone who likes non-fiction mixed with a bit of intrigue. Easily my book of the year.

Money, Money, Money

Written by Rachel Davies and Angela Meyer
Allen & Unwin
Reviewed by Ja Lucre

Money, Money, Money joins a long list of books that help you reset your money mindset. I found it stands out though, mainly because authors Rachel Davies and Angela Meyer are relatable. In *Money, Money, Money*, they share their relationships with money and experiences that show they understand what it is like to arrive at a particular destination in life without the whole money thing figured out. They discuss what it was like raising children while looking towards a future that would most certainly see them in the poverty trap that befalls many women in their later years.

Davies had reached the age of 48 with no KiwiSaver and hardly any savings.

For Meyer, her money was always wrapped up in much more than numbers – "It was also my worth, validity, hopes, dreams, and so much more," she says.

In *Money, Money, Money*, the authors also share the stories of other women: their experiences with money, their relationships with it, and their beliefs – the good and the bad. As the subtitle of *Money, Money, Money* dedicated to educating and empowering women in financial matters, they managed to really dig into all aspects of money and its complex nature while keeping things simple and straightforward.

There are checklists at the end of each chapter which help you identify where you stand, giving you a helpful list to mentally tick off. The checklists aren't just practical; they help you gain insight into your own unique money psychology, beliefs, and experiences.

I particularly enjoyed the upper and lower limits chapter where Davies and Meyer talk about what your top and bottom limits are. What's too little money for you? What numbers do you need to get down to before you start panicking? What's the exact number when it feels like everything? These questions really got me thinking deeply about my own numbers and what does and doesn't feel comfortable.

Money, Money, Money doesn't help you crunch numbers so much as it helps you understand your own motivations and money possibilities in a real and intentional way.

Salt Quilt

Written by Airini Beautrais
Te Herenga Waka University Press
Reviewed by Margaret Austin

Prospective readers will no doubt find *Salt Quilt* an intriguing title for a poetry collection. The book's cover illustrates that such a bedspread actually exists! For writer Airini Beautrais, 'salt' and 'quilt' provide a useful analogy for life: past and present, sadness and sweetness are juxtaposed throughout these provocative poems, demonstrating the necessity for considering and accepting both.

Nostalgia works well in poetry as is illustrated in several of Beautrais' verses. In *Swingball*, she celebrates typical activities and delights of the 70s: holiday homes for the kids, clean jokes, Monopoly, and the game of swingball, concluding with the philosophical observation of maturity: "No one can play a thing like childhood."

By far the most powerful poem is, if you'll excuse the pun, *An analysis of power*. Here Beautrais exposes some of the appalling hallmarks of today's world: climate change, the care taken to manufacture and preserve expensive cars, "all the messages sent / from satellite and cellphone towers" and the powers them with cliches such as "but there's no seeing forests for trees / without an analysis of power." The poem nevertheless concludes with a plea for toughness, even tempestuous.

Cancer Moon: Poet Life consists of a 20-page musing on things astrological, mythical, poetical, and political. And more besides. We learn of our poet's beginnings as a writer, and that she attributes them in part to her star sign. Sceptical as I am about such matters, I note that I am studying Beautrais' work during the month of Cancer. Was that meant?

"Did you really write that poem?" a friend asks me", she writes, "then, cool!". Beautrais' work is better than cool: it's self-searching, reflective, salutary, and true.

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Te Whi: I'm Home Tour

St James Theatre, 26th Jun 2026
Reviewed by Nikita 雅涵 Tu-Bryant

Liam Te Wehi (Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Whātua, Te Whakatōhea), or Te Wehi because "Liam doesn't sound as cool", is the epitome of today's open access to fame. Not that he was seeking it... A humble man, he thought he'd spend his days fencing. Singing covers on TikTok, he soon posted his own songs that went viral for their blend of reggae, soul, and country music. He's now touring his chart-topping debut album *I'm Home*.

Friday night's sold-out concert is during yet another weather warning for Wellington, but this doesn't dampen the spirits of the sea of cowboy hats in attendance. I assumed the audience had been through the merch, but they'd all arrived wearing their own – Te Wehi's fans out in full force. The iconiss is thawed by Tāmaki Makaurau's endearing The Western Guide, warming us up with American country music against a campfire backdrop. The crowd are lively, creating a welcoming yet electric atmosphere that is a joy to be amidst.

Te Wehi and his band break into original track *Mr Officer*, and the live sound for this genre is on: mainstream reverb on the drums, a screaming audience that reaches the Gods, immediately up, seats forgotten. I've always preferred original music at shows rather than covers, but Te Wehi embedding crowd favourites into his setlist feels like an honest reflection of his journey here. In true Māori tikanga, he is here to serve the collective, not himself. He tips his hat with dedications, like to mothers with *Mama Don't Cry* from *I'm Home* and later to Whakatōhea legends *Kora* with *Burning*.

With barely a breath in between songs, Te Wehi and band keep the crowd bopping. The lights and visuals are constant, amplifying the experience silhouetting the six, but I did enjoy the subtler moments allowing poignancy to settle. Most of the harmonies are prerecorded, so I'm pleased when the band harmonise with Te Wehi for a later number. Comprising Simione Petelo (guitar), Culistofa Petelo (drums), Doulos Atinae (keys), Nafu Tofiliu (keys), and Ebed Tiai (bass), the band are flawless, with two wireless guitarists up front allowing for across-the-stage play. A highlight is the guitarist shredding upstage, haloed by a ring of smoke.

A quick encore is received well, concluding Te Wehi's 90-minute high-vibe show.

La Mer

Presented by the NZSO National Youth Orchestra
Conducted by Dane Lam
Michael Fowler Centre, 3rd Jul 2026
Reviewed by Tamsin Evans

Dane Lam. Photo by Ashley Smith.

Conductor Dane Lam, visiting from Hawaii, welcomed the audience and summed up the 2026 New Zealand Symphony Orchestra (NZSO) National Youth Orchestra (NYO) as "the jewel in the artistic crown of New Zealand" and "the future of music making". Of course, he was right.

This was a programme conceived around big themes of the sea and voyaging. In *Pray for the wanderer* by the 2026 NYO composer-in-residence Jack Bewley, a bold, confident timpani and trumpet opening was followed by assured and beautifully sustained cello and violin from the section leads. With lots of contrast, repeating themes, and complex rhythms, this was not an easy piece, but the orchestra handled it expertly, bringing to the fore Lam's vision for music making in New Zealand.

Benjamin Britten's *Four Sea Interludes* opened with violins and flutes, superbly balanced by the musicians. The quality of the tone in the strings was exceptional all evening. A strong brass section and timpani built impressive final phases as the cold North Sea storm finally blew itself out.

From Britten's North Sea we travelled to the Pacific Ocean. Michael-Thomas Foumai's *Kealaikahiki Suite* celebrates the 1976 voyage of the double-hulled wa'a *Hōkūle'a* from Hawaii to Tahiti that revived ancient, non-instrument navigation. The huge ending of the piece reflects the enormous energy the voyage injected into a cultural revitalisation across the Pacific.

Familiar and well loved, Claude Debussy's *La Mer* gave the orchestra opportunity to show their mettle. Maturity, confidence, skill, and musicianship were all on display. The strings and woodwind captured the bright sound of light on water. Crisp, alert ensemble playing gave life to the energy and playfulness of the waves. Brass and percussion drove us to an exciting conclusion.

Although many in the audience were family, whānau, and friends, the musicians absolutely earned their enthusiastic response and confirmed the 2026 NZSO National Youth Orchestra is part of the future of music making in Aotearoa.

InBetween Nowhere and Everything

Presented by In The Mo' Theatre Co
Written and directed by Nathaniel Smith
BATS Theatre, 7th Jul 2026
Reviewed by Numi Stössner

InBetween Nowhere and Everything was advertised as a story about cowboys in space, and as I enter BATS Theatre, I am more than ready to leave this rainy evening behind and escape into the cosmos. My first impression of the set (Jamie Sayers) is that of a makeshift spaceship: a simple table, a bed, and a cowboy poster attached to the wall. A mysterious girl (Mīren Welsh Ahipene Duffin) enters in a ghost-like fashion, moving nostalgically through the room before playing a song on an old tape recorder (sound design by Tim Johnston). This is the last moment of peace the audience experiences for quite some time.

The stillness is shattered as three figures burst onto the stage in a dramatic escape: a lover (Alex Quinn), a killer (Zoe Harris), and a nobody (Simon Ulm) seek refuge in the ship as they flee from combat. Coming from different planets, they are now stuck with one another in a small spaceship, seemingly lost in the middle of nowhere. For the next hour, the audience is able to intimately experience the transformation each of them undergoes in the face of impending death.

Sharing the same cramped room, food rations, and even a makeshift litterbox, it comes as no surprise that the unlikely comrades slowly start to reveal their darkest secrets. Time is only measured by their dwindling rations. From guitar songs that evoke cowboys gathered around a bonfire, to a romantic dance of longing and some spontaneous poetry, the play evolves on many different levels, always keeping it interesting. Supported by the ghost woman, who haunts them into reliving their memories, three broken people embark on a last effort to fix themselves before it is too late.

For much of the play, there seems to be a lot of screaming, and some of the dialogue is difficult to follow due to thick accents and loud background sounds. Yet by the end, one thing is eerily clear: the characters share far more than they ever imagined.

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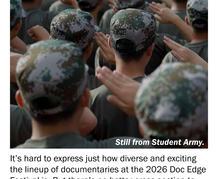
Doc Edge Festival

by Isabella Smith

In praise of shorts!



Still from Student Army.

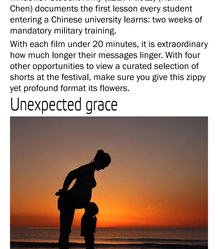
It's hard to express just how diverse and exciting the lineup of documentaries at the 2026 Doc Edge Festival is. But there's no better cross-section to highlight the skill and variety of the programme than the collection of shorts playing at Roxy Cinema on Thursday the 23rd of July as the festival nears its close in the capital city.

The View From Here is a collection of four shorts. Filmed from windows, storelines, and occupied villages, they bear witness to the world's most urgent fractures.

The animation *Ember* (Vladyslav Kalenskyi) follows an elderly couple trapped in their village near Kyiv as it falls under Russian occupation. *Free Fish* (آزاد ماهی) (Bijan Mida) was filmed during one of Gaza's deadliest years and follows two brothers separated by siege and displacement, yet bound by the sea. In *Memories of a Window* (Amin Pakparvar and Mehrnaz Salimian), after a woman is shot while documenting the crackdowns and protests in Iran, a film student writes her a letter raising the question: can revolution emerge from behind windows? *Student Army* (紅旗下的蛋) (Hank Chen) documents the first lesson every student entering a Chinese university learns: two weeks of mandatory military training.

With each film under 20 minutes, it is extraordinary how much longer their messages linger. With four other opportunities to view a curated selection of shorts at the festival, make sure you give this zippy yet profound format its flowers.

Unexpected grace



Earlier this month, 30 awards were presented at the Doc Edge Festival awards ceremony, recognising outstanding documentaries from Aotearoa and abroad. Described by judges as "an intimate and deeply affecting work that finds profound meaning within the challenges, sacrifices, and unexpected grace of everyday life", Jon Earle's *featherStrength* was awarded Best New Zealand Feature and Best New Zealand editing.

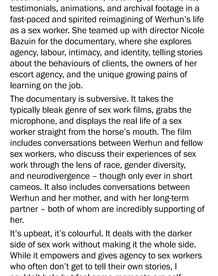
featherStrength is a decade-spanning portrait of care. Filmed entirely by Earle, it captures intimate fragments of his and his family's daily life as their world is transformed and limited to the four walls of their home after their daughter is born with severe disabilities. Earle says *featherStrength* "started as a coping mechanism", with his time, energy, and ambition redefined by meeting the demands of fulltime care. Overwhelmed by loneliness and isolation, the film was shaped by a single challenge: "being fully present as a father while also bearing witness as a filmmaker".

featherStrength asks a simple but profound question: how do we live the life we didn't plan for? Through cinematic images, personal footage, and conversations with his wife and daughters, *featherStrength* is a meditation on acceptance. The Doc Edge Awards judges say, "Its cinematic rigor, unwavering authenticity, and lasting emotional impact exemplify aspirations of documentary storytelling."

featherStrength will be showing on Sunday the 19th of July at the Roxy Cinema, preceded by the short film *Chilapa Girl*.

Modern Whore

80 minutes
R16
★★★
Reviewed by Isabella Smith



Modern Whore is a hybrid film based on a memor of the same name by Andrea Werhun. It blends documentary with fiction, featuring reenactments, testimonials, animations, and archival footage in a fast-paced and spirited reimagining of Werhun's life as a sex worker. She teamed up with director Nicole Bazuin for the documentary, where she explores agency, labour, intimacy, and identity, telling stories about the behaviours of clients, the owners of her escort agency, and the unique growing pains of learning on the job.

The documentary is subversive. It takes the typically bleak genre of sex work films, grabs the microphone, and displays the real life of a sex worker straight from the horse's mouth. The film includes conversations between Werhun and fellow sex workers, who discuss their experiences of sex work through the lens of race, gender diversity, and neurodivergence – though only ever in short cameos. It also includes conversations between Werhun and her mother, and with her long-term partner – both of whom are incredibly supporting of her.

It's upbeat, it's colourful. It deals with the darker side of sex work without making it the whole side. While it empowers and gives agency to sex workers who often don't get to tell their own stories, I couldn't help but feel some moments are self-indulgent. It makes sweeping statements about sex work based on Werhun's very specific experience, while at the same time barely reaching below the surface. The over-dramatisation is often jarring and slapstick, and while it covers a lot of themes, it sometimes reads like the diary of a teenager. Then again, without her unreserved confidence, a film with total agency like this one would never get made.

All that being said, I appreciate that *Modern Whore* is radical and important. Sex workers are often betrayed only as victim or villain, and here is a film featuring a three-dimensional and uncategorisable woman who is both empowered and embodied. In Canada sex work is not legal, making it a critical film about labour rights. Here in Aotearoa, it will challenge the biases of some of its more prudish and discriminatory audiences. Ultimately, I was engaged throughout and I would encourage people to head along and check it out. It will be screening as part of the Doc Edge Film Festival at the Roxy Cinema on Saturday the 25th of July.

A profound metaphor

The climb to Deir Mar Musa al-Habashi monastery involves 340 steps up a treeless ridge of stone and dry earth in the Qalamoun mountains. It is dedicated to Moses the Abyssinian, who lived as a hermit in the Syrian desert before being martyred in 405AD. The monastery, built into the cliffs overlooking the vast desert, was founded in the sixth century around an abandoned Byzantine watchtower. Driven away by instability and scarcity, the monks abandoned it in the 1700s and left it to shepherds and hunters.

Nearly 300 years later in 1982, an Italian Jesuit Paolo Dall'Oglio decided to restore the ruins of the ancient monastery, alongside Syrian Catholic monk Julian Yacoub Mourad. Dall'Oglio advocated for peaceful dialogue between Syrian Muslims and Christians, and the space has since become a place of radical hospitality, friendship, and interfaith collaboration. During the civil war of 2011, Dall'Oglio and Mourad were abducted by ISIL. While Mourad fled, Dall'Oglio was never seen again.

On as part of the Doc Edge Festival, *Mar Musa* is a film directed by Shahab Bormani that follows the monks and nuns of the Christian monastery through intimate, observational storytelling as they navigate postwar devastation and work towards peace in a fractured land. Through cinematography and a hypnotic score, the film emerges as a profound metaphor for Syria itself. *Mar Musa* won the Best International Sound category at this year's Doc Edge Awards. It will be playing on Wednesday the 22nd of July at The Roxy Cinema.

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Viewpoint
A word from Maddi...
Watch this space

by Madelaine Empson

Last weekend, I was scheduled to perform a solo pole routine for my studio's winter showcase. When dancing on stage, I am a certified Loose Unit™ (actual feedback I've received from a judge) whose style is more cannonball chaos than gorgeously graceful. In the past I've gyrated whilst removing three turtlenecks in quick succession, scaled a pole as a ninja, impersonated both the CIA and the FBI, and hung upside down with Thing from *The Addams Family*, to name but a few shenanigans. This time, rather than going big I wanted to pare it all back. No shiny costumes, no funny gags, no stage persona: just the music, the pole, and me.

The thought of being so vulnerable absolutely terrified me, even though I'd be dancing at one of the most supportive places in the world (shoutout to Empire Aerial Arts). And – sad spoiler alert – I backed out on the day and didn't conquer my fear. Not this time, anyway. But I'm proud of myself for other reasons.

The morning of, I started getting the kind of anxiety that felt plain wrong. Instead of the usual nervous butterflies and fluttery giggles that precede a performance, I felt physically sick and tired all over, as if I'd sleep on a bed of ice shards. Cascading waves of nausea, clammy fingers, razorblade throat, the works. The feeling didn't pass and I found myself crying in the shower, emotionally exposed, exhausted, and stuck in that horrible cycle of being anxious about being anxious about being anxious about being anxious.

After agonising much more than I needed to (classic), I decided not to perform and my studio was, of course, a dream about it. I still went to support the other dancers for as long as I could. I then left to cry some more into a bowl of pasta (pro tip: if you're not crying into pasta, you're not doing it right), have a bath, and spend time with my partner Dan, whose understanding and unconditional acceptance of my state meant more to me than I'll ever be able to put into words.

When I woke up the next morning, rather than let the disappointment take hold, I felt infinitely better because I had trusted my body and taken care of myself. We live, we learn, and we try again next time.

Cosmic conversations
Hell's huge black spider

by Richard Hall, astronomical communicator

The largest and most brilliant region of the Milky Way comes directly overhead on clear, dark evenings in New Zealand. We see a huge bulge in the Milky Way, which is divided by a vast Dark Rift. According to legend, this rift is the hole in the sky from which the Scorpion emerged. Wrapped around this region of the Milky Way are the brilliant constellations of Scorpius (the Scorpion) and Sagittarius (the Archer).

Sometimes called the Dark Rift, the Great Rift is composed of vast clouds of cosmic dust and gas that blot out the light of more distant stars. These clouds are the raw material from which new stars are formed. Indeed, along the plane of the Milky Way, we find glowing nebulae where there are clusters of newly formed stars.

Hidden behind the Great Rift in Sagittarius lurks a monster. Beyond the dark clouds, 27,000 light-years away is the galactic centre. The central region of our galaxy is a vast spherical system of 50 billion stars, 20,000 light-years in diameter. In this region, the stars are crowded together and form a bulge in the disk. The distance between stars varies from 10 times closer than in our region of the galaxy to 100 times closer near the galactic centre. Like bees around a honey jar, the stars crowd toward the centre until it becomes a cosmic tornado.

Here, swathed in a web of gravity is Hell's huge black spider, a gigantic black hole in the fabric of space and time. The hole is a billion kilometres in diameter and has the gravitational power of three million suns. Snared in a web of gravity, it means the hole are turned into comet-like bodies as they head toward their doom. Eventually, they merge with the black hole's accretion disk – a gigantic whirlpool of matter that spirals inwards toward the hole.

Here is utter oblivion. Anything entering the hole vanishes from the universe. Here, even space and time cease to exist. If you were to fall into this hole, you would fall through time. You would see the entire future of the universe. But there would be no coming back. These secrets would be for you alone.

A Kiwi abroad
The beautiful game

by Alessia Belsito-Riera

By the time this column arrives in your grip, dear reader, I hope to be celebrating New Zealand's advancement to the next stage in the long and arduous journey that is the FIFA World Cup. Having played an exceptional first game against Iran – one I would personally dub the most exciting in the tournament thus far – my hopes of seeing the All Whites defy the odds are sky high.

Just a stone's throw from Los Angeles' SoFi Stadium where New Zealand played their opening match, Catalina Island has also been swept up in the excitement. On any given day, locals and tourists are sporting their jerseys and every bar and eatery in town is buzzing with cheers at all hours. When else can you excuse a 10am beer except during the football world cup? For a country that isn't particularly keen on 'soccer', I'm thrilled to see all the commotion. I for one am cheering for Team USA *and* Aotearoa – especially considering Italy is once again squadra non grata. If you listen closely, you may even hear our cheers from across the Pacific!

Despite FIFA 2026 being particularly weighty, it has been touching seeing players and fans alike greet each other generously, with open hearts and minds. As Ghana scored the tie-breaking goal in the 94th minute, I watched a Panamanian fan cheer alongside his Ghanese seatmate despite his own country's loss and possible exclusion from the next stage of the tournament. I've seen opposing nations help each other up on the field and exchange jerseys after a match. Social media is flooded not with hate, but with love as visitors flock to the USA, Canada, and Mexico – the overwhelming majority of posts say how welcoming host citizens have been and what a joy it is to celebrate the beautiful game alongside folks from around the world while experiencing new cultures and traditions. It's the most united our globe has been in a while.

This joining of 48 nations has illustrated that no matter how complicated our world becomes, humans will always be humans, and more often than not, when given the chance, will meet each other not with hate for our differences, but with love for our similarities.

Advice from Alan
Privacy breaches

by Alan Knowsley, consultant, Rainey Collins Lawyers

A couple of examples show why it is important when using information to ensure privacy is respected and the Privacy Act complied with.

The Privacy Commissioner found a breach of privacy when a council published information about a building consent, including correspondence between the customer and the council. This included personal information not relevant to the consent. That personal information was used by another person in an unrelated court claim regarding the customer.

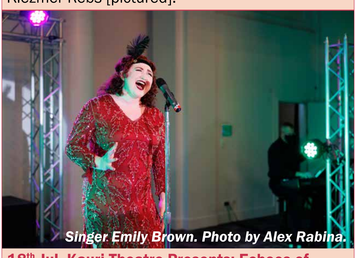
The council claimed it was required to upload the consent application and supporting documents to its website. The Privacy Commissioner held that even though the council was required to upload the consent application, it should not have included unnecessary personal information nor the various emails which predated the consent application. The notice in the application about publication could not retroactively apply to prior emails. The council agreed to remove the personal information and emails, apologise, and provide a confidential amount of compensation for its breach of privacy.

The Privacy Commissioner reminded all agencies that a statutory exception does not mean they can ignore all privacy rights and they must limit disclosure to that necessary for the purpose of the application. They also need to be clearer in their marketing so customers can choose not to include information that they do not want disclosed.

Also, the Privacy Commissioner has assisted in the resolution of a complaint about the use of an employee's photo. The employee consented to her photo being taken at work but thought it was for internal purposes. A couple of years after leaving that employment, she became aware her photo was used in a marketing campaign, including billboards in shopping centres and on the factory walls. The company claimed they had consent to the use but agreed to pay compensation as well as to stop using the image and to remove it from all marketing.

It pays to ensure you have very clear processes for obtaining consent that outline why you are collecting the information and how it will be used, and to be able to produce that evidence even years later should an issue arise.

19th, 26th Jul, 9th, 16th Aug. Friends of Pātaka Winter Music Series: *Pātaka Art + Museum, Parumoana Street, Porirua* – 1pm. Now in its 21st year, the Friends of Pātaka Winter Music Series will feature four incredible acts to warm up winter, including the Bishop Viard College NIU Choir, Te Hau Trio, New Zealand Swing Quartet, and Klezmer Rebs [pictured].



Singer Emily Brown. Photo by Alex Rabina.

18th Jul. Kauri Theatre Presents: Echoes of Broadway: *Thistle Hall, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. This one-night-only open-mic concert is for musical theatre singers around the region to show off their favourite songs with no strings attached. Hosted by MC Tia Minnoch with live accompaniment by Sue Windsor, the show will see an impressive lineup of songs from the likes of *SIX*, *Hadestown*, *Evita*, and *Just In Time*.

31st Jul, 1st Aug. Wellington Sea Shanty Society: *Breaker Bay Hall, Breaker Bay Road, Wellington* – various times. All aboard to set sail alongside some of Te Whanganui-a-Tara's saltiest scallywags. The Wellington Sea Shanty Society have released their newest EP *Never Mind the Rowlocks* – a riotous blend of punk and stompclap shanties – and are celebrating with nautical games and singalongs for adults and tamariki.

Photo by Gareth Bradley.

17th Jul. Li'i Alaimoana: *The Fringe Bar, Allen Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. In *Is This Guy For Real?*, comedian Li'i Alaimoana presents his new hour(ish) of comedy to raise funds for his son's national rugby tournament in Rotorua. The Billy T-award winner is pushing his mid-forties, and life is changing much too fast for his liking. He'll get into the nitty-gritty of it all while keeping audiences smiling and laughing.

22nd Jul. Stories About My Body: *Penthouse Cinema and Cafe, Ohiro Road, Brooklyn* – 7pm. After a sell-out season at the New Zealand International Comedy Festival, acclaimed actor and writer Morgana O'Reilly brings her one-woman show to the big screen. Blending stand-up, storytelling, and heartfelt honesty, the film is a funny, fearless, and personal exploration of womanhood, bodies, and the stories we carry.

Vixen Temple. Photo by Crystal Hart.

25th Jul. Fable: A Fairytale Drag Evening: *Ivy Bar & Cabaret, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 10pm. From cursed Atua and wicked ancestral ghosts to divine beings, mythical creatures, and legendary heroes, *Fable* will transform the stage into a living storybook. Expect jaw-dropping looks, cinematic performances, dark fantasy, high camp, and larger-than-life storytelling as each performer re-imagines iconic tales through drag.

What's on Wairarapa

17th Jul. Guy Williams: *Wairarapa Events Centre, Holloway Street, Te Aro* – 7pm. According to comedian Guy Williams, rich people are stealing and blaming other people. In his new show, he'll lay all their plans bare.

18th Jul. Elton John vs Billy Joel: *Copthorne Hotel & Resort Solway Park, High Street, Masterton* – 7:30pm. After wildly successful sell-out gigs across New Zealand, Cam and Sam deliver an intimate show performing the greatest hits of Elton John and Billy Joel.

19th Jul. CORO – Coronation Street Parody: *Studio 73, Main Street, Greyton* – 3pm. Coming up on Coro: someone's up the duff, there's yet another scene in the local pub (of course), and two Kiwis battle with Manchester accents!

21st Jul-2nd Aug. Greytown Little Theatre Presents: A Sherlock Holmes Radio Mystery and Butter in a Lonely Dish: *Studio 73, Main Street, Greytown* – 7:30pm. Join the studio live audience for the 1947 Christmas Season as two radio plays are performed in the style of Hercule Poirot mysteries.

24th-25th Jul. Shaun Khan: *Studio 73, Main Street, Greytown* – 7pm. Rayburn Kain gets oiled up, tightens his grip, and flexes his comedy muscles in *Pumping Irony*.

26th Jul. The Rag Poets: *Studio 73, Main Street, Greytown* – 4pm. 60s and 70s hits come alive with The Rag Poets' epic harmonies and melodies.

Kāpiti

17th-19th Jul. Paekākārīki Book Fair: *St Peter's Village Hall, Beach Road, Paekākārīki* – various times. Find your next great read or a long-treasured tale at this charity book fair supporting the local community.

18th Jul. Midwinter Solrée: *The Waterfront Bar and Kitchen, Marine Gardens, Raumati* – 7pm. Canapés and cocktails, photos and fancy dress, music and more will keep the blues away on the winter eve.

19th Jul. Waikanae Music Society Presents: Elouan Quartet with Bridget Douglas: *Waikanae Memorial Hall, Pehi Kupa Street, Waikanae* – 2:30pm. *Folk Tales and Folk Tunes* explores the rich storytelling traditions and folk influences woven into classical and contemporary music.

Events

16th Jul. Ruckus Presents: Fight Knight: *Sweet Axe Throwing Co., Cambridge Terrace, Te Aro* – 7pm. Prepare to be transported to an age of chivalry and combat at this medieval cage fight featuring raw energy and precision strikes from warriors of olde.

17th Jul. Gaelic Rabari Live Cultural Programme: *Indian Community Hall, Kemp Street, Kilbirnie* – 6:30pm. Immerse yourself in Indian culture at this evening event dedicated to celebrating the traditions, art, music, dance, and practices of India with renowned Gujarati folk singer Geeta Rabari.

18th Jul. Book Launch: Out of the Box: *Te Matapihi ki te Ao Māmārī, Wellington City Library, Victoria Street, Te Aro* – 2:30pm. Celebrate Deaf and disability pride with the launch of Trish Harris' new novel *Out of the Box*, plus a dance by Nobody Beat, music by Fonotī Pati Umaga, and poetry by Crip the Lit.

Music

15th Jul. Tragedies: *Valhalla, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. Join Wellington trip-hop trio Tragedies in celebrating the release of their upcoming single *Taupiri*, a queer love song for the end of the world that celebrates the small moments of bliss carved out of dark times.

17th Jul. The Zimbelstern Foundation Presents: In The Bleak Midwinter: *Old St Paul's, Mulgrave Street, Thorndon* – 7pm. Enjoy a midwinter concert of festive music performed by the choir of Wellington Cathedral led by Michael Stewart.

17th Jul. Mehana: *Vogelmorn Hall, Morninglton Road, Brooklyn* – 7:30pm. Expect a vibrant mix of Balkan sounds, from soulful and haunting melodies to high-energy dance tunes that will get you moving.

17th Jul. King Parrot: *Valhalla, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. Join Wellington trip-hop trio Tragedies in celebrating the release of their upcoming single *Taupiri*, a queer love song for the end of the world that celebrates the small moments of bliss carved out of dark times.

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18th Jul. Chamber Music New Zealand Presents: Phileo Quartet: *Michael Fowler Centre, Wakefield Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. Comprising members of the Vienna Philharmonic, and founded by New Zealand violinist Benjamin Morrison, the Phileo Quartet will bring the unique warm timbres and waltz-like momentum of one of the world's greatest orchestras to Wellington.

23rd Jul. Lugan Edwards: *San Fran, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. To celebrate the release of his debut solo EP *Belong to Someone Else*, Logan Edwards brings intimate acoustic moments and heavier indie rock arrangements to the capital.

24th Jul. New Zealand Symphony Orchestra Presents: Let There Be Light: *Michael Fowler Centre, Wakefield Street, Te Aro* – 6:30pm. Aotearoa New Zealand piano prodigy Shan Liu features in a concert about hope with conductor Jaime Martín.

24th Jul. Mortal Sin: *Valhalla, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 7pm. For the first time ever, Ausbie thrash legends Mortal Sin – who have toured with the likes of Metallica and Testament – come to Aotearoa for a concert celebrating the 40th anniversary of their debut album *Mayhemic Destruction*.

24th Jul. Vera Ellen: *San Fran, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. Aotearoa Music Award and Taite Music Prize-winning artist Vera Ellen presents her new album *Heaven Knows What Time* in Welly.

25th Jul. Bach Choir of Wellington Presents: In Stillness, Peace: *Metropolitan Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Hill Street, Thorndon* – 2pm. This programme brings together choral music that approaches stillness not as silence or withdrawal, but as an active state shaped by restraint, attention, balance, and trust.

25th Jul. Aotearoa Jazz Orchestra Presents: Fiesta! Fiesta!: *Meow Nui, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. Celebrating the energy, rhythm, and richness of Latin jazz, the Aotearoa Jazz Orchestra will be joined by three of Aotearoa's leading Latin American musicians: Rafael Ferrer Noel, Mikey Trujillo, and Carlos Navas.

25th Jul. Girls Rock the Boys: *Abandoned Taproom Petone, Fitzherbert Street, Petone* – 8pm. Women rockers take to the stage with a fulthrottle celebration of the songs that shaped generations.

26th Jul. Arts On Tour NZ Presents: Carnivorous Plant Society: *Whirinaki Whare Taonga, Ferguson Drive, Upper Hutt* – 8pm. The responsible jazz band featuring vibraphone, tuba, harmonica, pan flute, and more will spring to life against a backdrop of hand-drawn animations.

29th Jul. DJ Vadim: *Meow, Edward Street, Te Aro* – 7:30pm. Born in Leningrad and raised in London, DJ Vadim has spent more than two decades carving out a singular place in global underground music culture.

1st Aug. South Summit: *San Fran, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 7pm. South Summit's new album *Run it Back* features threads of funk, hip-hop, and R&B while still being driven by their signature blend of reggae and rock.

Performance

16th Jul-1st Aug. Royal New Zealand Ballet Presents: Winter Season: *St James Theatre, Courtenay Place, Te Aro* – various times. Winter brings a programme of three works celebrating the heritage of the RNZB and the contributions of outstanding artists of the past, present, and future.

17th Jul. Laser Kiwi: *Newtown Community Centre, Colombo Street, Newtown* – 8pm. The world's only surreal sketch circus troupe presents their second of three work-in-progress shows.

18th Jul. Lads, Lads, Lads – Coronation: A Drag King Show: *The Fringe Bar, Allen Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. Primping, preening, and pelvic thrusting collide as these drag princes vie to become kings.

18th, 19th Jul. Rising Star: A Drag Competition: *Ivy Bar & Cabaret, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 9:30pm. Olivia Dreams hosts the first instalment of this year's *Rising Star* competition, which will be followed by several jaw-dropping heats in the lead up to the November finale.

19th Jul. Mei die Storieverteller: *Little Theatre, Queens Drive, Lower Hutt* – 4pm. Mei the Storyteller brings Afrikaans comedy to Aotearoa along with fresh, unexpected, and ridiculous stories!

22nd Jul. Work in Progress Laughs!: *Moon, Riddiford Street, Newtown* – 7:30pm. Heavyweight comedians Alayne Dick, Brenda Hamblyn, Oliver Pot, Joana Joy, Ralph Hilaga, Keegan Thomas, Beck Ward, Kipling Cox, and Mike Fowler come together to present some new ideas they've been hatching.

25th Jul-22nd Aug. Local Library: *Circa Theatre, Taranaki Street, Wellington Waterfront* – various times. In this new comedy from Dave Armstrong, a senior librarian and a grumpy patron are engaged in an intense book war, but will they become unlikely friends when a larger threat looms?

30th Jul. Drone Strike: *Backbencher Pub, Molesworth Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. Local scandals, global disasters, bad leaders, worse ideas, and more will be torn to shreds in this political satire comedy show.

Galleries

Until 18th Jul. Permanent Economy: *William Austin Gallery, Willis Street, Te Aro*. New and recent work by Ben Buchanan, Ruth Buchanan, Stella Corkery, and EXIST collide in a multi-disciplinary exhibition.

Until 30th Jul. Every word, thought, object, mineral, place and person: *Te Pātaka Toi Māori Art Gallery, Kelburn Parade, Kelburn*. This pairing of Ana It's a *Dusty handrail on the track* with Fiona Pardington's *Mauria Mai, Tono Ano (Bringing to Light/Claiming Again)* creates connections between the literary, artistic, political, and scientific culture of the Romantic period and today.

Until 4th Oct. Te Whakanui i a Matariki: *Courtenay Place Lightbox, Courtenay Place, Te Aro*. This series of drawings depict traditional kai, reflecting on survival and the tenacity it takes to survive.

Until 26th Oct. LEGO® Star Wars™: The Exhibition: *Tākina Wellington Convention and Exhibition Centre, Wakefield Street, Te Aro*. Step into a world of epic battles, gargantuan spaceships, and breathtaking landscapes from a galaxy far, far away.

17th Jul-16th Aug. Winter Exhibition: *Wellington Cathedral, Hill Street, Thorndon*. New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts has curated a selection of 65 artworks by 32 artists across the motu for a winter-themed exhibition.

Festivals

15th-26th Jul. Doc Edge: *Various locations and times in Wellington*. Discover 75 films, 12 immersive projects, and an epic industry event at this Oscar® qualifying documentary film festival.

16th Jul-2nd Aug. BARBARIANISM & Extreme Metal Fest: *Valhalla, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 5:30pm. 27 bands come together over four days of rif-ripping metal music from across the motu.

For your inclusion in the what's on listings email: whatson@regionalnews.kiwi. Close off for the next issue's listings is noon Tuesday 21 July

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 puzzles on page 32

4	9	5	8	2	6	7	1	3
8	2	7	3	9	1	6	4	5
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