



NEW ZEALAND FESTIVAL SCHOOL FEST

BLESS THE CHILD

2018
TEACHER RESOURCE KIT

EVENT PARTNER

 creative nz
ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND TOI AOTEAROA

SCHOOLFEST PARTNER

 Wellington
Community Trust
supporting community initiatives

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TEACHERS SCHOOLFEST 101 PACK

[DOWNLOAD HERE](#)

This is your guide to getting the most out of your SchoolFest experience. The pack includes top tips for attending performances, dress code, schools' ticket collection, Festival venues, accessibility and more.

2018 SCHOOLFEST

BLESS THE CHILD

CURRICULUM LINKS Drama, English, History, Social Sciences

ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES

Level 5–8

Drama

Developing practical knowledge / Developing ideas / Understanding the arts in context / Communicating and interpreting

- AS91000 - 1.5 Demonstrate understanding of a significant play
- AS91217 - 2.5 Examine the work of a playwright
- AS91516 - 3.5 Demonstrate understanding of the work of a drama or theatre theorist or practitioner
- AS90011 - 1.7 Demonstrate understanding of the use of drama aspects with live performance
- AS91219 - 2.7 Discuss drama elements, techniques, conventions and technologies within live performance
- AS91518 - 3.7 Demonstrate understanding of live drama performance

English

Listening, reading and viewing

- AS90856 - 1.11 Show understanding of visual and/or oral text(s) through close viewing and/or listening, using supporting evidence
- AS91107 - 2.10 Analyse aspects of visual and/or oral text(s) through close viewing and/or listening, using supporting evidence
- AS91479 - 3.8 Develop an informed understanding of literature and/or language using critical texts
- AS91480 - 3.9 Respond critically to aspects of visual and/or oral text(s) through close reading and/or listening, using supporting evidence

History

Understanding: Identity, culture, and organisation / Place and environment / Continuity and change/ The economic world

- AS91004 - 1.4 Demonstrate understanding of different perspectives of people in an historical event of significance to New Zealanders
- AS91232 - 2.4 Interpret different perspectives of people in an historical event that is of significance to New Zealanders
- AS91437 - 3.4 Analyse different perspectives of a contested event of significance to New Zealanders
- AS91005 - 1.5 Describe the causes and consequences of an historical event
- AS91233 - 2.5 Examine causes and consequences of a significant historical event
- AS91438 - 3.5 Analyse the causes and consequences of a significant historical event
- AS91006 - 1.6 Describe how a significant historical event affected New Zealand society
- AS91234 - 2.6 Examine how a significant historical event affected New Zealand society
- AS91439 - 3.6 Analyse a significant historical trend and the force(s) that influenced it

Social Sciences

- AS91041 - 1.3 Describe the consequences of cultural change(s)
- AS91598 - 3.3 Demonstrate understanding of how ideologies shape society
- AS91042 - 1.4 Report on personal involvement in a social justice and human rights action
- AS91043 - 1.5 Describe a social justice and human rights action(s)
- AS91283 - 2.5 Describe a social action that enables communities and/or nations to meet responsibilities and exercise rights
- AS91600 - 3.5 Examine a campaign of social action(s) to influence policy change(s)
- AS91279 - 2.1 Demonstrate understanding of conflict(s) arising from different cultural beliefs and ideas
- AS91596 - 3.1 Demonstrate understanding of ideological responses to an issue(s)

Contains nudity, strong language and violence

Image credit: Matt Grace



CAST & CREATIVES

Writer & Producer

Director

Set Designer

Lighting Designer

Sound Designer

Costume Designer

Stage Manager

Technical Operator

Production Manager

Associate Producer

Shardae

Hinemoa

Khan

Iraia

Pohe

Amanda

Robinson

Taylor

Hone Kouka

Miria George

Mark McEntyre

Natasha James

Chris Ward

Cara Louise Waretini

Karena Letham

Te Aihe Butler

Glenn Ashworth

Helena-Jane Kilkelly

Carrie Green

Moana Ete

Te Kohe Tuhaka

Scotty Cotter

Shania Bailey-Edmonds

Maia Diamond

TBC

TBC

“That child
is our world,
abused,
drugged,
beaten and
still reaching
out for
acceptance.
This is about us.
Us.”

HINEMOA, EXCERPT FROM BLESS THE CHILD

ABOUT THE SHOW

A child has died and Shardaë, mother of the child, is held guilty until proven otherwise.

A power-hungry lawyer, Khan Te Ahi Richards, is reluctantly dragged into the case to defend the mother as the whānau close ranks. And rumbling from beneath is Rūaumoko, god of earthquakes and unborn children.

Now the mother, the lawyer and the wayward ones are all in search of an answer – who took the life of baby Ara?

Challenging and thought-provoking, *Bless the Child* is a story of life and death, good versus evil. In an unflinching look at our society through a Māori lens, it uncovers the truth of our shared humanity – to protect the child.

ABOUT THE COMPANY

Tawata Productions

Tawata Productions is a Māori and Cook Islands theatre company based in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand. Specialising in the rigorous development and presentation of new work, Tawata blurs the lines between text, movement and image presenting a dynamic performance experience from Aotearoa to the world beyond. Our work includes the epic dance party on stage *The Beautiful Ones*. Called the 'Māori Royal Tenenbaums' the indigenous satire *The Vultures*. Multi award winning solo show *I, George Nepia* and the Cook Islands drama told on a suburban rooftop *Sunset Road*.

Tawata presents an annual programme of theatre by Hone Kouka and Miria George as well as Breaking Ground an international indigenous playwrighting festival and Wellington's Māori, Pasifika + international indigenous theatre and dance platform *Kia Mau Festival*.

We have performed in national and international festivals throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, the South Pacific, and the Hawai'ian Islands.

BIOGRAPHIES & STATEMENTS

Miria George, Director

Te Arawa, Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Rongo-ma-tane, Ngāti Tinomana

Miria is a poet, and writer, director, producer of theatre. An award-winning playwright, Miria's work has toured New Zealand, Australia, Hawai'i, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Her first stage play, the award winning *Oho Ake* premiered in Wellington in 2004, produced by Tawata Productions. In 2007, Miria made her international debut as a playwright. Her work includes and what remains, *Urban Hymns*, *Sunset Road*, *The Vultures* and *The Night Mechanics*.

In 2017, Miria was the Fulbright-Creative New Zealand Pacific Writer in Residence at University of Hawai'i, Mānoa and won the Bruce Mason Playwrighting Award.

Miria holds a Masters in Creative Writing from the International Institute of Modern Letters. Also a published poet, *The Wet Season* is Miria's debut collection of poetry, published by the Wai-te-ata Press. Miria is a writer of radio and television.

Alongside artist Hone Kouka, Miria is the co-director of Tawata Productions and the international indigenous theatre and dance platform, Kia Mau Festival.

Hone Kouka, Writer, Producer

Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Kahungunu MNZM

Hone is an acclaimed Māori writer, producer and director, the youngest winner of the Bruce Mason Playwrighting Award and multi award winner. He has had plays produced in South Africa, Britain, Hawai'i, Canada, Australia, Japan, New Caledonia, as well as throughout New Zealand, with three plays being translated into French, Japanese and Russian.

Kouka, along with Miria George founded theatre and film production house Tawata Productions, producing the works of Māori and Pacific artists. Hone became a member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for his services to Contemporary Māori Theatre in June 2009.

Hone recently had two films screening at the Berlin Film Festival 2016 – *Born to Dance* [screenwriter] and *Mahana* [Executive Producer]. In 2017, he is nominated in the arts category for Wellingtonian of the Year.

In 2018, Kouka's new stage play *Bless The Child* will make it's Premiere at the New Zealand Festival in February followed by a season at the Auckland Arts Festival in March.

“I have no
idea what
their world is
like, I live in a
world so far
removed and
can only talk
about it all in
the abstract.”

HINEMOA, EXCERPT FROM BLESS THE CHILD

FURTHER RESOURCES & READING

OTHER RELATED VIDEOS/MATERIALS

Videos

Tawata Productions | Features snippets of *The Night Mechanics*, *The Vultures*, *Kia Mau Festival* and others

<https://www.youtube.com/user/TawataProductions>

Playmarket – Interview with Hone Kouka

<https://vimeo.com/playmarket>

Set Designer Mark McEntyre talking about designing Court Theatres productions of;

When The Rain Stops Falling

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plYGQajkVuc>

Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0OHlefla7bE>

Visual Artist George Nuku discussing *Bottled Ocean 2116* Exhibition

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-9UCq6E79I>

Reviews

Bless The Child is a New Zealand Festival premiere there are no reviews available.

Here are reviews of Tawata's previous productions;

Fire in the Water, Fire In The Sky

<https://www.theatreview.org.nz/reviews/review.php?id=10358>

The Night Mechanics

<https://www.theatreview.org.nz/reviews/review.php?id=10508>

The Vultures

<https://www.theatreview.org.nz/reviews/production.php?id=6014>

The Vultures Review

<http://pantograph-punch.com/post/review-the-vultures>

YOUR SHOW EXPERIENCE

Before seeing a theatre production

- Research the story and content upon which the performance is based. What is the student knowledge around New Zealand reaction to child abuse, poverty, white privilege?
- Why do you think the playwright chose this title?
- What are the expectations from what you've heard, seen or encountered about this show?
- View and analyse videos/photos of the creative teams past works.

Things to think about during the show

Before entering the theatre:

- How, if at all, does the exterior of the theatre capture my attention?
- How does this theatre exterior compare to other theatres I have seen or are nearby?
- Who else seems to be attending the show? What is the make-up of the audience [i.e. age, gender, ethnicity, race]?

As I enter the theatre:

- What sense of energy do I feel in the theatre space?
- Which of my senses seem to be most activated [touch, sight, sound, smell]?
- How do I navigate the building to find my seats? Who helped me? Are my seats easy to find?

Once in the theatre:

- What strikes me about the design of the theatre? The physical space? The lighting? Looking at the frame of the stage [proscenium etc.], does anything catch my eye?
- What do I notice about the set design or curtain when looking at the stage? What might I understand about the production before it even starts?

Observations about the production:

- What captures my attention during the play? Is it the actors? The set? The music? Why?
- Does the plot engage me? Do I care about the characters? Why?
- How do the actors seem to interact with one another? With the set and the world of the play?
- How do the director, actors and designers [costume, lights and set] stage the action to focus the drama for me?
- What questions do I have about this production? What is the meaning of the play?
- How did it feel when the lights came up and I was brought back to the reality that I was in a theatre and it is now time to leave?

BACK IN YOUR CLASSROOM

ACTIVITY 1

Positive, negative & interesting

Following the attendance of *Bless the Child*, ask your students to reflect on the questions below. You might choose to have them answer each individually, in groups for round-table discussions or all together as a class.

1. What was your overall reaction to *Bless the Child*? Did you find the production compelling? Stimulating? Intriguing? Challenging? Memorable? Confusing? Evocative? Unique? Delightful? Meaningful? Explain your reactions.
2. What were the most compelling characters or themes in the play and why did you find them interesting?
3. Do you think that the pace and tempo of the storytelling were effective and appropriate? Explain your opinion.
4. If you were asked to describe *Bless the Child* to a friend who didn't see the play using only one sentence, what would that sentence be?
5. Which characters were you most drawn to in *Bless the Child* and why?
6. What qualities of character were revealed by their action and speech?
7. Was there a character to whose personality or ideas you most related?
8. In what ways did your favourite characters reveal the themes of the play? Explain your response.
9. How are the non-dialogue scenes effective or non-effective? Why?
10. How does weather support and reflect the narrative?
11. How are supernatural elements incorporated?
12. There are dramatic representations of weather effecting action in Shakespeare [*Twelfth Night*, *A Midsummer Nights Dream*, *The Tempest*, *King Lear*], is it still relevant to refer back to Shakespeare? Or is the wealth of natural mythology in Aotearoa enough?

ACTIVITY 2

Favourites & the five ws

What were your favourite three key moments in the production? Which characters and relationships were involved in these moments? Answer the five Ws (What, Who, Why, When, Where) for each of these three key moments.

Moment 1	Moment 2	Moment 3
What happened?		
Who was there?		
Why did it happen?		
When did it happen?		
Where did it happen?		

ACTIVITY 3

Production technologies used in *Bless the Child*

In the boxes below, describe one example of each production technology you saw in the show.

1. Lighting	How did it help to communicate the ideas of the show. Why was it effective?
2. Costume	How did it help to communicate the ideas of the show. Why was it effective?
3. Sound/Music	How did it help to communicate the ideas of the show. Why was it effective?

ACTIVITY 4

Write a review

Have your students take on the role of theatre critic by writing a review of the production of *Bless the Child*.

A theatre critic or reviewer is essentially a “professional audience member”, whose job is to provide reportage of a play’s production and performance through active and descriptive language for a target audience of readers (for example, their peers, their community, or those interested in the arts).

Critics/reviewers analyse the theatrical event to provide a clearer understanding of the artistic ambitions and intentions of a play and its production; reviewers often ask themselves, “What is the playwright and this production attempting to do?” Finally, the critic offers personal judgment as to whether the artistic intentions of a production were achieved and effective.

Your performance review should include:

Introduction

- Include the name of the production, production company and key creatives (writer, director, leading actors).

Body paragraphs

- Tell the reader something about the major themes/ideas of the production.
- Make judgements about the production but make sure you justify your opinions.

Conclusions

- Make an overall recommendation about why people should see this performance.

Don’t forget to include a snappy headline that encapsulates the show.

Note: Encourage your students to email their reviews to the New Zealand Festival SchoolFest team on schoolfest@festival.co.nz for publication.

ACTIVITY 5

Compare & Contrast

What other New Zealand works cover social justice issues? How has the style of writing and the spoken vocabulary of the characters changed?

Some examples include; Coaltown Blues; Children of the Poor; Tooth and Claw; Scarlet & Gold; Goodnight Irene; United We Stand; Cutting Loose; Irish Annals of Aotearoa; Whaea Kairau: Mother Hundred Eater; Objection Overruled; Pass It On; Wednesday to Come; Songs to the Judges...