

# MARAMA

DIRECTED BY NINA NAWALOWALO  
THE CONCH



PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN MCDERMOTT PHOTOGRAPHY

**FREE PROGRAMME**

POST-SHOW TALK: THURSDAY 3 MARCH

WITH SUPPORT FROM



ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND Te Ao Teatara



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**AUCKLAND  
ARTS  
FESTIVAL**

# MARAMA

## THE CONCH

### Q THEATRE, RANGATIRA

WEDNESDAY 2 MARCH 8.00PM

THURSDAY 3 MARCH 6.30PM

FRIDAY 4 MARCH 8.00PM

SATURDAY 5 MARCH 2.00PM & 8.00PM

SUNDAY 6 MARCH 5.00PM

1 HOUR NO INTERVAL

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*Nau mai haere mai ki Te Ahurei Toi O Tāmaki Makaurau. Welcome to AAF 2016. We are delighted you have come.*

The Festival moves through moments in history and reflects on the impact they have on our world. It moves across cultures and into places where there are no borders. It shows us human beings coming together through music, performance and art.

We are delighted to present this major new visual theatre work and offer our thanks to the artists whose vision, hard work and passion made it happen. Congratulations Nina, Tom, Gareth and Fabiana and the entire Conch team.

Have a fabulous Festival.

*Marama* is a powerful call from women of the Pacific – the voices of a vanishing world. The devastating effects of deforestation on their homelands and culture are brought startlingly to life through waiata, chants, dances and rituals gracefully and magically performed. As their story unfolds and as the women emerge from and disappear into their ever-changing environment, we are reminded of the ancient connection between a woman's body and the earth and the strength and fragility of the ground upon which we all dwell.

## **COMPANY**

### **Artistic Director**

Nina Nawalowalo

### **Executive Producer/Director**

Tom McCrory

### **Producer**

Sasha Gibb

### **Lighting Designer**

Fabiana Piccioli

### **Original Set Designer**

Nicole Cosgrove

### **Remount Set Designer**

John Verryt

### **Original Choreography**

Sarah Foster-Spruill

### **Sound Designer**

Gareth Farr

### **Costume Designer**

Seraphina Tausilia

### **Production Manager**

Anne Kaiser

### **Stage Manager**

Shaun Martin

### **Lighting Operator**

Joe Newman

### **Sound Operator**

Geordie McCallum

## **CAST**

Awhina Rose-Henare Ashby

Susan Galutia

Gloria Konare

Tupe Lualua

Grace Tiba

Kasaya Manulevu

Rudimiller Mafi

Merlin Connell-Nawalowalo

## FROM THE DIRECTOR – NINA NAWALOWALO

Vinaka vaka Levu for coming this evening.

My desire to create *Marama* comes from a profound sense of urgency, necessity, and a belief in the vital role that theatre has to play in social change.

For two years I lead an EU funded project, in partnership with The British Council in the Solomon Islands, setting up a National Women's Theatre Company. Called 'Stages Of Change' this project was a vehicle to raise awareness about violence against women and girls, which has reached epidemic proportions. The women I worked with changed my life and my work.

While there, I also witnessed scenes of the painful destruction of the landscape through deforestation. In my mind these images joined. Seeing a broken woman's body or a broken landscape seemed part of the same broken mentality. Where the trees are torn down for profit, the cultural roots that link us to the land are ripped out and violence of all kinds prevails. I saw logging boats drive into the beaches of islands, heavy machinery drive off, and within days, the whole side of a mountain stripped.

Yet there are still vast areas where the forest exists in its original form. I was moved by its intense beauty; one of the last true untouched places on earth.

Drive one hour out of Honiara and the one road ends, the tarmac runs out, turns to sand and then stops completely. Beyond this are the tracks known only to the locals. One day, on a local bus, we stopped where there were no signs and a

lady stepped off the bus, left the road and walked into the jungle, swiftly disappearing into the trees.

A kind of magic had occurred.

It struck me deeply that this was a powerful metaphor, that the edge of the jungle was like this woman's reality; a place where worlds meet, from which she steps into the world of 'the other' and returns into her own...that the jungle conceals and protects, shelters, like her body, the inner life hidden from view.

I began to see this in the Pacific women I met, that, in response to the world of others, in a world where so much has been stolen, women have taken their treasures into a deeper place where few know the pathways.

And so I have sought a way to bring this into the theatre.

To do this I have brought together an extraordinary group of women who are all Marama – high born women – within their own cultural lines – from five different parts of the Pacific. I bring these women into Te Ao Marama, the world of light, to seek Marama – clarity – to bring the urgent voice of these threatened landscapes onto the world stage.

The women are from Malaita and Makira in the Solomon Islands, Kiribati in Micronesia, Samoa in Polynesia, Fiji and right here in Aotearoa.

Their realities are not remote or exotic. The impact on their culture and resources is driven by a global economy. I am not interested in presenting a spectacle entitled "The last of a dying world" but an urgent call for a sense of shared humanity. The voice of this shared Earth which supports us all.

## COMPANY BIOGRAPHIES



### **NINA NAWALOWALO ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

Nina Nawalowalo's work has been presented at over 40 festivals, including London International Mime Festival, British Festival of Visual Theatre, Moscow Arts Festival, The Sydney Opera House and the Barbican Centre, London. Awards include the International Brotherhood of Magicians Comedy award, CNZ Pacific Innovation and Excellence award and Outstanding Theatre Award in Edinburgh 2014.



### **TOM MCCRORY EXECUTIVE PRODUCER/DIRECTOR**

Tom McCrory is co-founder of The Conch and has been co-director on all works since 2002. Originally from London he read Drama at Bristol University before going on to study for 2 years under the world-renowned physical theatre artist Jacques Lecoq in Paris.

Tom's work has been presented at many festivals including The British Festival of Visual Theatre, Diskurs European Festival of Experimental Theatre, The National Review of Live Art and the Edinburgh Festival where his play *French Kiss* was selected in the top ten plays by *The Independent*.



### **SASHA GIBB PRODUCER**

Sasha joined The Conch at the end of 2015, after working as General Manager for the last 6 years with Te Rākau Hua O Te Wao Tapu Trust under the direction of Jim Moriarty. Sasha's passion for Pacific Theatre led her to begin Jandals Inc in 2012; a theatre collective of graduates of Whitireia NZ's arts programmes, formed with the intention of supporting Wellington's young Pacific practitioners.



### **FABIANA PICCIOLI LIGHTING DESIGNER**

Winner of the 2013 Knight of Illumination Award for Dance for *iTMOI* (Sadler's Wells) which featured at AAF 2015, Fabiana's extensive career in design includes her work on *Go Down*, *Moses* created by Romeo Castellucci (Theatre de la Ville, Paris), *We/Part* (Rome Ballet), *Breathe* (Errol White Company), *Romeo and Juliet* (Rose Theatre, Kingston), *Inked* (Askash Odedra), *Pests* (Clean Break), *Dust* (English National Ballet, Akram Khan Company), *Within*, *Immersed*, *Timeless* and *Now Is* (Aditi Mangaldas Dance Company), *Race Race*, choreographed by Paolo Mangiola, (Teatro Vascello Rome), *Pirates* (Improbable Productions) *Confluence*, *Beautiful and Beautiful Me* and *Svapnagata Festival* (Sadler's Wells).



### **JOHN VERRYT REMOUNT SET DESIGNER**

John Verryt has enjoyed an extensive career designing for live performance in all disciplines, working with many of New Zealand's foremost companies, directors, choreographers, musicians, designers, dancers and actors.



### **SARAH FOSTER-SPROULL ORIGINAL CHOREOGRAPHY**

Sarah is a choreographer, performer and teacher in NZ and abroad. She works with The University of Auckland, Unitec Performing and Screen Arts, and The New Zealand School of Dance. Additionally she has ongoing choreographic relationships with Footnote New Zealand Dance, Okareka Dance Company, The Conch, Tamsyn Russell, T.H.E. Dance Company and VOU. Sarah is the Director/Choreographer of her own company *Foster Group*.



### **GARETH FARR SOUND DESIGNER**

Gareth is a composer and percussionist. He studied in NZ and New York, where he graduated Master of Music. Awarded four Chapman Tripp Theatre Awards for Outstanding Composer of Original Music, he was also awarded the Order Of New Zealand Merit in 2006 and in 2010, the Arts Laureate Award. Gareth composed music for three works in AAF 2016.



### **SERAPHINA TAUSILIA COSTUME DESIGNER**

Seraphina is a Wellington based costume designer and maker. Since moving to Wellington from Dunedin in 2012 she has been working in film and theatre including feature films with Blue Skin Films and Torchlight Films and theatre productions *The Phantom of the Opera* and *The White Guitar*. *Marama* is Seraphina's third production with The Conch.



### **ANNE KAISER PRODUCTION MANAGER**

Anne has made a career working on various productions around the world for 12 years. After working on a production in New Zealand in 2012, Anne decided to leave her home country of Germany and now calls Cambridge, NZ home. Working as a freelance production manager she divides her time between her young family and travelling as often as she can. She has worked on *Marama* since its inception in 2015 and is a proud member of the production team.



### **SHAUN MARTIN STAGE MANAGER**

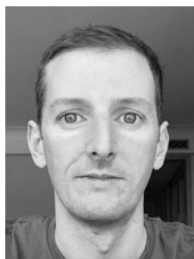
Shaun graduated from the Whitireia Stage and Screen Course in 2006 and has spent the last 9 years working in a variety of roles in the performing arts and education sectors including work with Clarity Productions, Jandals Inc, Whitireia NZ, Te Rakau Trust and Te Putahitanga a Te Rehia; the Māori Theatre Practitioners collective in Wellington.



### **JOE NEWMAN LIGHTING OPERATOR**

Joe Newman previously worked with The Conch on their production of *Masi* whilst studying at Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School. Since graduating, he has worked at Centrepont Theatre, Capital E, BATS Theatre, as a Technician on the Performance Arcade and WGT LUX Festivals, and operated the lighting for *Evita* and *The Pianist*.





### **JAMES BLAKE SOUND OPERATOR**

Based in Ireland James has worked as a live sound engineer for over ten years. Productions he has worked on include the Wexford opera season, *Riverdance* and *Heartbeat of Home*.

His most recent project was a five month run as sound operator for *Once*, the musical, in both Dublin, Ireland and Seoul, Korea.

## **THE CONCH**

The Conch was founded in 2002 and has enjoyed 14 years of groundbreaking success nationally and internationally. It is unique globally as the only company led by a Melanesian woman theatre director and founded on a kaupapa pasifika of Vaka Viti – Fijian cultural values. They have at their heart an outstanding theatre artist in Artistic Director Nina Nawalowalo widely recognised as one of the most important and innovative theatre makers in the world. They are proud to be a Wellington based company and proud to take the unique voice of New Zealand theatre to the world.

<https://www.facebook.com/TheConchNZ/?fref=ts>

[www.theconch.co.nz](http://www.theconch.co.nz)

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Carla van Zon, David Inns, Angela Green and the fabulous AAF Festival team, the wonderful Sally Barnett, Wendy Martin for the introduction to Fabiana, Elspeth Tilley and Massey University, Chris Winter, Makerita Urale and Pacific Arts Creative NZ, Ingrid Leary and The British Council, The Women of 'Stages of Change' Solomon Islands, Auckland Live, Karen Abplanalp, Genevieve Nalder, Bridget Nawalowalo, Fanaati Mamea, The Royal New Zealand Ballet, Denise Wiremu, The Luafutu Aiga, Aunty Ems 200%, Suzanne Tamaki, Susan Wana and Kimberly Skipper, Ledua Taucilagi and her wonderful family, Margret Mary Hollins, The Henare Ashby Whanau and Ngati Te Tarawa, Sharon Mazer, All the families and children of our company for their endless love and support.

There are so many more to thank – you know who you are – vinaka vakalevu.

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES



### **AWHINA ROSE-HENARE ASHBY CAST**

Awhina-Rose Henare Ashby (Ngāpuhi; Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Te Tarawa) graduated from Auckland's Excel School of Performing Arts in 2007 and then from Toi Whakaari, New Zealand Drama School in 2012.

Awhina has toured nationally and internationally, including with Ngākau Toa's Māori language production of *Troilus and Cressida* (dir. Rachel House) which performed to critical acclaim at the Globe Theatre in London. In 2015 Awhina appeared in *The Mooncake and the Kūmara* at Auckland Arts Festival and again in its national tour later that year.



### **TUPE LUALUA CAST**

Tupe Lualua's (BApapa, GDipArts, BA(Hons)) portfolio covers over 12 years of experience spread across the performance and education sectors. Currently a lecturer and community advisor in Samoa Performing Arts at Whitireia, Tupe has worked with The Conch on their Youth programme and as performer in both their new works, *Marama* and *The White Guitar*.



### **GLORIA KONARE CAST**

Gloria joins The Conch from Sulufou Island north of Malaita Province in the Solomon Islands. Her culture, with its wide collection of traditional chants, dances and stories, reflects her unique way of life and she has brought this into her work with The Conch. In 2013, she joined The Stages of Change programme in the Solomon Islands and began working with the company.

Through this she was invited to be part of the *Marama* cast.



### **SUSAN GALUTIA CAST**

Susan is from the Solomon Islands. Her mother is from Santa Ana Island in the Makira province and her father from the Choisuel province. Susan's interest in theatre was cultivated through her Church drama group. In 2013, she began working on The Stages of Change programme and has since enjoyed learning about visual theatre and

working with The Conch.



### **GRACE TIBA CAST**

Grace first met the Conch through The Stage of Change programme in the Solomon Islands and was excited to be offered the opportunity to work with the company on the development of *Marama* in Kerikeri. Grace and her family also contributed some of the set and costume elements in *Marama*, including the vine which was hand made by Grace's family.



### **KASAYA MANULEVU UNSEEN PERFORMER**

Kasaya Manulevu is of Fijian decent. Her father is from Cautata (Tailevu) and her mother is from Muani (Kadavu). Kasaya began working with The Conch in 2003 on *Vula* which went toured to Guam, Palau, Auckland Arts Festival, The Barbican and Holland. In 2009 she performed her first 20-minute solo show, *Yalewa* at Bats Theatre in Wellington. In 2013, she worked on The Conch's production of *Masi* which made its debut at the NZ Festival and toured to Fiji and Sydney Festival.



### **RUDI MILLER UNSEEN PERFORMER**

A current student of Victoria University, Rudi joined The Conch as an intern in 2015. Rudi has a passion for working in the community and is thankful for the opportunity to work alongside a theatre company with such a strong awareness of its role in social change.



### **MERLIN CONNELL-NAWALOWALO UNSEEN PERFORMER**

Merlin joined The Conch in 2011 gaining skills as an intern and performing as an animator unseen in *Masi* for the 2012 NZ Festival. Merlin worked on the tour of *Masi* to Suva, the Sydney Festival and Vanuatu. He has worked on The Stages of Change programme in the Solomons, with Conchus Youth Theatre Company in Wellington, *The White Guitar* and the development of *Marama* in Kerikeri.

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