

THE LION FOUNDATION season of

where we once belonged

by Sia Figiel, adapted for the stage by Dave Armstrong



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Welcome

Most recent Pacific Island theatre, television and film has centred on the Samoan experience within New Zealand society. WHERE WE ONCE BELONGED has a point of difference; it's a Samoan story based in 1970s Samoa – a society on the cusp of change. Major immigration to New Zealand has begun and the introduction of television has flooded Samoan village life with all the detritus and ephemera of Western culture. While village elders and church leaders are demanding strict adherence to Fa'a Samoa, the girls of Malaefou village dream of becoming Charlie's Angels. It's a rite of passage too for Alofa and her friends Lili and Moa, and as they reach towards adulthood they have to confront their own personal histories, the entrenched mores of traditional village life and the reluctance to accept change.

This is a coming of age in Samoa that Margaret Mead could never have imagined. Brave, brutal, unflinchingly honest and very, very funny, at its heart WHERE WE ONCE BELONGED is about storytelling. It acknowledges Samoa's su'ifiloi storytelling style: the young girls sitting around gossiping, elders telling their kids the history of their aiga, and the much maligned village seer Siniva telling uncomfortable truths about the cost of change.

My huge thanks to Sia Figiel and Dave Armstrong for giving us such rich material to work with. And my

thanks to everyone who has contributed to developing this work from its initial two-day workshop through to the performances in Auckland Theatre Company's Next Stage season of works in development (including Shimpal Lelesi, Fasitua Amosa, Nora Aati, Jayani Iddawela and Eden Mullholland), and of course Dave Fane and the magnificent cast and creative team who bring you this season of WHERE WE ONCE BELONGED.

Enjoy!

Colin McColl





The Lion Foundation is delighted to bring you the Auckland season of **WHERE WE ONCE BELONGED**.

The Lion Foundation is one of the New Zealand's largest charitable trusts, giving over \$50 million worth of grants on an annual basis to a wide range of community, sport, educational, cultural and health projects throughout New Zealand.

The Lion Foundation has been one of Auckland Theatre Company's core funders for the last five years. In this time the Foundation has specifically supported the work of ATC's Literary and Education Units.

The Literary Unit is the only one of its kind in New Zealand and it has helped bring such memorable plays as *MY NAME IS GARY COOPER*, *HATCH* and *THE TUTOR* to the Auckland stage. It is particularly heartening to now see *WHERE WE ONCE BELONGED* come to fruition through the Literary Unit, with Lion Foundation assistance.

The Lion Foundation is also a proud supporter of Auckland Theatre Company's Education Unit, giving young people the opportunity to experience the thrill of live performance. Over the last five years 50,000 students have been involved with Auckland Theatre Company as audience members and participants.

I sincerely hope you enjoy tonight's performance. We are proud to support this story of self discovery and celebration of Auckland's unique Pacific identity.

To learn more about The Lion Foundation and our community grants please visit our website www.lionfoundation.org.nz or call freephone 0800 802 908.

Phil Holden
CEO - The Lion Foundation

Photo: Robert Catto

THE LION FOUNDATION season of **where we once belonged**

by Sia Figiel, adapted for the stage by Dave Armstrong

Cast **Joy Vaele** Alofa (a Samoan girl) and Pisa (Alofa's mother) **Goretti Chadwick** Lili (Alofa's friend), Miss Cunningham (an American Peace Corps teacher), Siniva (the blind outcast) and others
Pua Magasiva Lealofi (the Minister's son), Asu (Alofa's uncle) and others
Robbie Magasiva Filiga (Alofa's father), Sisifo (Alofa's classmate) and others
Anapela Polataivao Moa (Alofa's friend), Tausi (Alofa's grandmother), Mrs Samasoni (Alofa's teacher) and others

Creative

Directors **Colin McColl & David Fane** Set Design **Michel Tuffery**
Lighting Design **Tony Rabbit** Costume Design **Nic Smillie** Sound Design **John Gibson**

Production

Production Manager **Mark Gosling** Technical Manager **Bonnie Burrill**
Stage Manager **Lauryn Wati** Operator **Robert Hunte** Properties Master **Bec Ehlers**
Fight Co-ordinator **Mark Harris** Set Construction **Calvert Plastics**
Patternmaker & Costume Construction **Sheila Horton**

Co-produced by New Zealand International Arts Festival and Auckland Theatre Company and premiered at Downstage Theatre on 8th March 2008.

By arrangement with Playmarket and in partnership with The Edge.

WHERE WE ONCE BELONGED is approximately 90 minutes long.

Please remember to switch off all mobile phones, pagers and watch alarms.

Where she still belongs?

Sia Figiel talks about her ground-breaking first novel and it's unlikely journey to the stage



How did the idea for the novel come about?

I was living in Berlin at the time. I was actually on a train between Berlin and Prague. I was thinking I didn't see myself reflected in the literature of Samoa at the time. When I say myself, I mean women. It just didn't exist... which is why I felt compelled to write, to tell a female story from a female perspective.

How was the novel received in Samoa when first published?

A lot of people responded positively, I think because of the recognition of themselves in the narrative. That's not to say there weren't any negative responses. By negative I mean people who did not want Samoa's 'dirty laundry' to be aired in public. As far as those people were concerned, these are 'our' stories and only 'we' have access to them. I'm sure there are still people who feel that way, but they are outweighed by the majority of people who see themselves in the narrative and appreciate the book for what it is.

How is it received today in Samoa?

I live in American Samoa. There the book is being taught at the community college and it's taught by people who studied it and people who I am friends with. It's amazing to see students' responses to it. There is the recognition aspect of it and seeing themselves in a form that is western - the novel. They say things like, "That's just like us!" and it's comforting to know that I haven't sung out of tune that way.

How much has changed in Samoa regarding the role of women in society and attitudes to violence since the time when the novel is set?

There are so many more billboards against violence to women now. People are so much more open to discussing sexual

violence. There's an openness there that didn't exist when I wrote the book and certainly not while I was growing up.

Tell us about the first approach to you to adapt the novel for the stage. What were your initial reactions?

Well, I was in Honolulu when I got the note from Dave introducing himself. He had worked with my former classmate Oscar Kightley and my cousin Dave Fane, so I knew he had some exposure to PI life. I said yes almost immediately. I was curious to see a palagi man's interpretation of my work.

Did you have any misgivings about what might happen to your story?

Not really. I believe in artistic expression and I told myself that whatever Dave came up with would be HIS interpretation of the book. There were no restrictions. I didn't want to set limitations. Otherwise it would have been boring.

Have you been involved in any way in the development process? If so, how?

Dave and I met in Otago once. We talked things over. It was fantastic to have someone to talk with who knew the book from a different perspective. What I appreciated most about Dave is that he knew the book. He really did do his homework in that sense. His dedication to the book really comes across. I didn't like the first draft...LOVED the second draft! And I crossed things out that I thought weren't funny...and things that I didn't mean to be funny but were over-dramatised. I gave him my comments. But what was most exciting is that the dialogue is lifted one hundred per cent from the book. There's very little that Dave added. The chronology of course was switched around...but the people are talking the way I had written them so I was very happy about that.

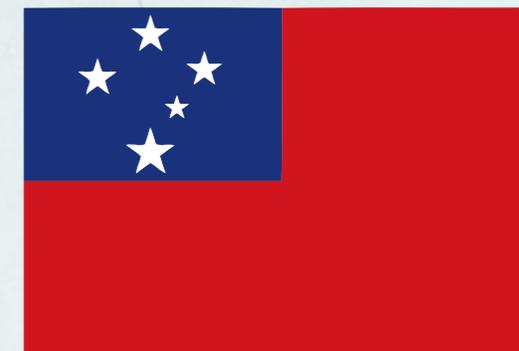
Samoa in the 1970s



In 1962 Samoa was the first Polynesian state to gain independence. Key events in Samoa in the 1970's include:

- Pope John Paul VI visit (1970)
- Fiame Mataafa Mulinuu II - Prime Minister for most of the period between 1962-1970 and 1973-1975
- The first woman speaker of the Fono was Leaupepe Faima'ala. (1970-73)
- Rising competition and differences in views between MPs in the 1970s led to the establishment of the first political party - the Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP) in 1979.
- Tupuola Efi became Prime Minister (1976-1982). The first time the Prime Minister was not one of the four Tama-a-Aiga ('royal' paramount chiefs).
- Increased migration to New Zealand and to the USA mainly for employment opportunities. (In the 1950s Samoans had 'free' access to New Zealand)
- Increase in overseas aid from Australia, Japan, European Union and United Nation agencies as a result of overtures from the former Soviet Union and China.
- Establishment of Samoa's first national park, O Le Pupu Pue National Park (1978).

- In the late 1970s to early 80s, the Samoan economy was in a critical state. The inflation rate was close to 30 percent, interest rates were very high, foreign exchange reserves were almost depleted and the Government budgets were producing large deficits.
- Western Samoa joined the British Commonwealth in 1970 and the United Nations in 1976
- As New Zealand's economy deteriorated, rising unemployment led to government moves to ship "overstayers" back to their islands. This resulted in the infamous "dawn raids" of the 1970s when island overstayers were singled out by immigration authorities and islanders were stopped at random in the streets and asked for their passports. Charges of racism fortunately brought a halt to the 5am visits and random street checks. However, immigration authorities pursued their clamp-down on overstayers.



Rearranging The Flowers

How did a palagi male outsider
come to adapt the work of
Samoa's first female novelist?
Dave Armstrong explains



How did you come by the idea of adapting “WHERE WE ONCE BELONGED” to the stage?

I read the book quite a long time ago and thought it would make a great movie. Then Auckland Theatre Company called for applications for commissions for plays and mentioned that adapted novels would also be considered. I thought WHERE WE ONCE BELONGED could make a good play so I applied for a commission and was successful.

What strengths did you see in the novel that would make it successful in the new genre?

Sia's novel has fabulous dialogue and some wonderful characters, especially the three girls, Alofa, Moa and Lili. It had some very funny moments that made me laugh out loud – rare in a novel from this part of the world. I knew a lot of the novel would work brilliantly on stage and that NZ theatre audiences were becoming more and more interested in Pacific stories. The novel also had a good plot and some very interesting and strong things to say about a lot of issues. Now that we have some phenomenally good Pacific actors in New Zealand, I knew that Sia's wonderful story could be well told in the dramatic form.

What problems did you foresee if any?

Firstly Sia's book is over 200 pages long so there simply wasn't the time to tell all the stories in the book. I simply focussed on Alofa's story and told that. There was a lot of narration by Alofa in the book so rather than cut the narration I made the Alofa character in the play the narrator also. There are many characters in the novel, which can get very confusing in a play, so I cut down the number of characters.

Also, the plot in the book jumps around in time a bit. It starts when Alofa is quite old (about 17), goes back in time, then jumps forward. I'm a bit more conservative (as is the theatre audience) so I attempted to make the story more chronological as I thought audiences might find the original order of stories a little confusing on stage.

The play has undergone a series of re-writes and workshops over a number of years. Could you briefly describe its journey?

Firstly, I read the book quite a few times. Then I picked out which chapters to dramatise. I wrote a first draft which was way

too long for the 90-minute play I was commissioned to write, so I cut a few scenes at the first workshop. Since then I've been rewriting and making minor adjustments to the script all the time.

We had a second two-week workshop where we brought the character of Siniva into the story much more and made minor changes to the script – cutting lines, re-ordering scenes and giving lines to different characters. I found myself cutting up long speeches into shorter pieces for different actors to say as longer speeches sometimes drag on stage.

The directors, Dave Fane and Colin McColl, had quite a bit of input, as did the workshop actors. At the end of the workshop we performed the play as a reading for three performances (simple lighting, sets and music, and the actors had the scripts in their hand). It went down really well so Auckland Theatre Company and the NZ International Festival decided to programme it.

How much has the process affected your initial idea of the form and content of the play?

It's definitely had an effect because I've found out what's worked and what hasn't worked as well.

I think the biggest single things the workshop brought out are a) the beauty of Sia's poetry and descriptive prose b) the importance of Siniva in the story. Without the workshops, both these elements may not have been as predominant in the play as they are now.

What do you see as the key ideas in the novel?

There are many ideas in the novel which is what makes it so good: the idea that TV and other Western influences are stuffing up indigenous people; that all cultures should look to their ancient stories and mythologies for inspiration; that it's tough growing up in a Samoan village if you're a cheeky girl; that a lot more goes on in a Samoan village than meets the eyes of palagi tourists (like me!); that human beings are wonderful people who struggle against terrible things to come out better and stronger; and that finding your own identity in a communal or repressive society is difficult but well worth the effort in the end because, like Alofa, you can become a strong individual.

The novel is written in the su'ifefiloi form but you have made major changes to the order of telling that Sia Figiel uses. What prompted your changes?

Sia describes the 'su'ifefiloi' form as like a lei made up of different flowers (stories). I've taken that lei and thrown out a couple of flowers, and rearranged the remaining flowers into a straight line, but hopefully people will still think the flowers look and smell wonderful.

When thinking about the different audiences that would see this play I felt that the chapter in the middle of the book about the creation of Samoa was a good place to start – I suppose a sort of 'introduction' to it all. Then I thought the stuff about the creation of 'modern' Samoa was a good next step as it presents well one of the themes of the play – the conflict between Christianity and Western values on one hand, and traditional Samoan values and mythologies on the other. The next scene is at the Maketi Fou in Apia. Again, this gives the audience a taste of Samoan life before we move to Malaefou and start the journey of Alofa's life. The end of the play is almost identical to the end of the novel

I don't think you are of Samoan heritage. Has this been an issue in any way in your work? How have you managed with finer points of language and custom?

I am a palagi New Zealander of English and Scandinavian heritage. I've had a lot to do with Pacific culture and theatre (I wrote NIU SILA with Oscar Kightley, created The Semisis on SKITZ and was script editor on the first series of BRO'TOWN) but I am definitely an 'outsider'. But I believe this can be both a good and bad thing. On one hand I don't have the intimate cultural and linguistic knowledge that a Samoan writer may have, but on the other I don't have to answer to relatives or the church about the strong material. Of course, not being a Samoan speaker, I'm very sensitive to any mistakes I may have made in translations or cultural stuff so if Samoan actors tell me something sounds or feels wrong then of course, I change it.

I think the best thing of all about this play is that I think it will persuade people who would never have considered reading a novel such as WHERE WE ONCE BELONGED to take a look at it.

Samoan Storytelling

"At its heart WHERE WE ONCE BELONGED – is about storytelling in its purest form; the girls sitting around gossiping, old folk telling the young the history of their families and village – and the mythology of pre-Christian Samoa". *Director - Colin McColl*

The art of storytelling (fagogo) including bedtime stories is an old Samoan skill. It was part of oral literacy and traditional education. This storytelling served very significant purposes which include: the handing down of cultural and moral values, the acquisition of cognitive skills of comprehension, listening and critical thinking, numeracy skills, concepts of height, depth and volume, music skills through the chanting of legends, geography skills like the spatial distribution of places, flora and fauna.

Every so often, the storyteller would stop to ask questions to test the listener's understanding and the listeners were to say "aue" every now and then to show they were paying attention. It was customary after a hard days work for the children to be lulled to sleep by the chanting of the legends.

Traditionally, these stories were passed from generation to generation, and survived solely by memory. In oral tradition, where stories were passed on by being told and re-told again and again, the material of any given story during this process naturally underwent several changes and adaptations.

SU'IFEIFILOI

Su'ifeifiloi describes a form of storytelling that resembles a 'medley' of ideas or stories. Individual components which at the beginning might appear 'disconnected' are woven together to form and enrich one main story. Often this art involves the conveying of events in words, images, and sounds by improvisation or embellishment.

"Sia Figiel describes the su'ifeifiloi form as like a lei made up of different flowers (stories). I've taken that lei and thrown out a couple of flowers, and rearranged the remaining flowers into a straight line, but hopefully people will still think the flowers look and smell wonderful". - Playwright - Dave Armstrong

Meaning in the names of characters

The names of the majority of characters provide an element of humour to those who have access to the Samoan language, and significant clues to the roles and characteristics of these characters.

While the literal translation of the names might give away some clues to their meaning, there are still a number of 'hidden' inferences that only familiarity with language can bring about. For instance the name FAUAKAFE (a character who appears in the novel but not in the play) literally means 'running saliva'. This might describe someone who has a problem controlling his saliva or a person who envies someone else's property.

Some of the names are derived from common phrases that are regularly heard in informal or casual conversation, for example Soia le guguku sole

ALOFA: means love

ALAIASA FIAOLA-CONFUSION (the half-Chinese Kung Fu loving boy from the Market scene): means Rice Refugee-Confusion

FILIGA: fili - to plait hair or plait leaves; filiga - fish plaited up in coconut leaves

LOGO: bell, to tell

MA'ALILI (LILI): getting cold

MOAMOALULU (MOA): moa is chicken; lulu is owl

MRS SAMASONI: refers to Samson, the strong man in the bible

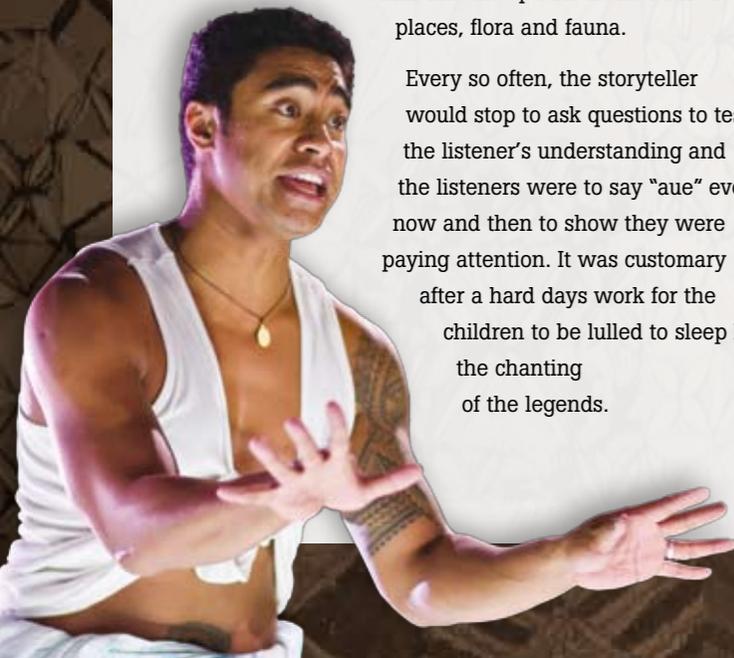
PISA: noise

PUA: frangipani flower

SINIVA (NINIVA): feeling dizzy, confused and unable to think clearly

SOIA-LE-GUGUKU-SOLE-FESILI-I-KEI-LUA-FEKOAT-MA-SE-FAGAKIKILI (the old Catholic lady): means Don't-lie-Fesili-boy-or else-you might get struck down-by-lightning

TAUSI: to look after, the title given to a talking chief's wife.



Cast

ANAPELA POLATAIVAO

After graduating from Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School, Anapela travelled overseas to pursue her acting career. She spent her time in the United Kingdom performing Makerita Urale's FRANGIPANI PERFUME, directed by Rachel House.

In 2004, she travelled to New York with Island Divas to perform at PARADISE NOW?, an exhibition of New Zealand and Pacific Islands contemporary art.

Anapela played the role of the formidable Mrs Lima in TVNZ's THE MARKET. She is also a founding member of Triangle Television's KILA KOKONUT KREW'S KTV - a South Auckland theatre, television and music production house based in Anapela's family back yard.

Anapela made her Auckland Theatre Company debut last year in MY NAME IS GARY GOOPER.



GORETTI CHADWICK

Goretti Chadwick trained at UNITEC'S Performing Arts School in 1995. Acting highlights include Auckland Theatre Company productions of MY NAME IS GARY COOPER, WIT, A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE, THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW and DOUBT.

She has also featured in various Pacific plays, including FRANGIPANI PERFUME. Film and television credits include THE MARKET, ORANGE ROUGHIES and SIONE'S WEDDING.

Goretti is currently the Course Director for BEST Pacific Institute's Screen and Performing Arts Course, based at UNITEC.

JOY VAELE

WHERE WE ONCE BELONGED is Joy Vaele's debut performance for Auckland Theatre Company.

Acting highlights include New Zealand Pacific feature film SIONE'S WEDDING, and theatre: DAWN RAIDS, ROMEO AND TUSI and TATAU-RITES OF PASSAGE.

Since 1995, Joy has toured in all of Pacific Underground's school tours. She was an original cast member in the Wellington and Auckland Town Hall Seasons of FRANGIPANI PERFUME.

Joy is also involved in ANGELS, a new musical comedy about the true-life experiences of four Pacific Island women pursuing musical careers.



PUA MAGASIVA

WHERE WE ONCE BELONGED is Pua Magasiva's debut performance for Auckland Theatre Company.

Pua migrated to New Zealand from Samoa and was given his first acting role at the age of 16 - an Alcohol Advisory Council (ALAC) television commercial, WHERE'S THAT DRINK TAKING YOU?.

In 2000, Pua landed the role of Vinnie on SHORTLAND STREET and made his debut film performance in THE OTHER SIDE OF HEAVEN. It was at this time that he realised how much he enjoyed performing and decided to pursue it full time.

Pua has since taken up roles in theatre, film and television including the hit movie SIONE'S WEDDING. His debut theatre performance was Oscar Kightley's ISLAND GIRLS.



ROBBIE MAGASIVA

Robbie's acting career began in Wellington with recurring roles in the television series COVER STORY and SKITZ.

In 1998 he was awarded the Best Male Newcomer Theatre Award for his role in Victor Rodger's SONS.

2001 was an important year as Robbie starred in his first major film STICKMEN and joined the highly successful theatre comedy team NAKED SAMOANS which continues to tour extensively.

Other theatre experience includes the International Festival of the Arts 2002 season of RANTERSTANTRUM

Robbie returned to television in two series of THE STRIP and in 2006 starred in the hit film SIONE'S WEDDING.

He is currently co-presenter of TVNZ's Pacific Affairs magazine show TAGATA PASIFIKA. Robbie also appeared on the big screen in THE TATTOOIST (2007).

Metro Magazine named Robbie as Best Actor of 2007 for his performance in the Auckland Theatre Company production of MY NAME IS GARY COOPER.



Creative Team

SIA FIGIEL AUTHOR

Born in Western Samoa, Sia Figiel was raised at Matautu-Tai and Vaivase Uta by a village of aunts, uncles, cousins, and her matriarchial grandmother, Manumanu Sapolu Toomalatai.

At 16, she left for further schooling in New Zealand where she was classmates with the playwright/actor Oscar Kightley. She later earned a B.A in History from Whitworth College, Washington State before travelling to Berlin, Germany where she lived for four years.

While in Europe, Sia worked as an English teacher, an au pair and waitress while writing the first stories of *WHERE WE ONCE BELONGED*.

Her epic poem, *O le solo ia Lupe ma le I'a*, written in both Samoan and in English, won the 1994 Polynesian Literary Prize for Poetry, judged by Albert Wendt. Sia returned to the Pacific that year and became a fellow for the Center of Pacific Islands Studies and the Pacific Islands



Development Program at the University of Hawaii where she completed *WHERE WE ONCE BELONGED*.

Since then, she has held writer's residencies at the University of Technology, Sydney, Australia, the Pacific Writing Forum at the University of the South Pacific, Fiji, the Catalan Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Barcelona Spain, Logoipulotu College, Safotulafai Savaii, and was the 2002 Distinguished Visiting Writer for the Department of English at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Sia was also the Arthur Lynn Andrews Visiting Professor of Asia and Pacific Studies at the University of Hawaii at Hilo and she was the first Pacific Islander to be invited to read at the Shakespeare Globe Theatre, London. After brief teaching appointments at Fa'asao-Marist, Samoana, and PICED and she currently works as the Educational Liaison for the Office of Congressman Eni H. Faleomavaega.

Sia lives with her three sons in the smallest village on Tutuila, guarded by the Moon Goddess and Timmy's Dogs.

DAVE ARMSTRONG PLAYWRIGHT

Dave has emerged as one of New Zealand's most prolific popular playwrights.

His hit *NIU SILA* co-written with Oscar Kightley, played a sold out Auckland Theatre Company season at AKO5 and won a Chapman Tripp Award for Best New Play.

Auckland Theatre Company also staged his acclaimed comedy *THE TUTOR* in 2007. He has also written *KING AND COUNTRY*, which has toured throughout New Zealand.

For television, Dave co-created and co-wrote the comedy series *SEVEN PERIODS WITH MR GORMSBY* and wrote for the satirical series *SPIN DOCTORS*.



COLIN MCCOLL DIRECTOR

One of New Zealand's leading theatre directors, Colin co-founded Taki Rua Theatre in 1983 and was Artistic Director of Downstage Theatre in Wellington, 1984-1992. He has led Auckland Theatre Company as Artistic Director since July 2003.

Colin has directed for the Norwegian National Theatre and the Dutch National Theatre, as well as most leading New Zealand and Australian theatre companies.

In November 2007, Colin was honoured for his artistic achievements and excellence at the eighth annual Arts Foundation of New Zealand Laureate Awards.

Previous achievements include Best Director for Auckland Theatre Company's 2001 production of *ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD*.

Colin has also won Best Director at the Chapman Tripp Theatre Awards several times - including for his 2002 production of *WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?*

His many productions for Auckland Theatre Company include *END OF THE RAINBOW*, *THE CRUCIBLE*, *HATCH OR THE PLIGHT OF THE PENGUINS*, *DOUBT*, *DISGRACE*, *THE DUCHESS OF MALFI*, *EQUUS*, *GOLDIE*, *WAITING FOR GODOT*, *SERIAL KILLERS*, *THE SEAGULL*, *UNCLE VANYA*, *DAUGHTERS OF HEAVEN* and *HONOUR*.

Opera directing credits include *QUARTET* (New Zealand International Arts Festival 2004), *LA BOHEME* (Wellington City Opera), *THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO* and *THE PRODIGAL CHILD* for the NBR New Zealand Opera.



DAVID FANE
CO-DIRECTOR

David Fane has performed a wide range of roles on stage and screen since his graduation from Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School 15 years ago.

Recent stage credits include NIU SILA, FRESH OFF THE BOAT, LADIES NIGHT, A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE, SERIAL KILLERS, SONS and A FRIGATE BIRD SINGS (co-writer).

For the past ten years David has also been kept busy as a founding member of the NAKED SAMOANS, who have created and performed four highly successful stage shows.

In addition, David and his fellow Nakeders have recently completed work on the fourth season of the multi-award-winning animated series BRO'TOWN.

Other television work includes OUTRAGEOUS FORTUNE, THE MARKET, JANDALS AWAY and THE STRIP. David has also appeared on the big screen in THE TATTOOIST, EAGLE VS SHARK and SIONE'S WEDDING.

David juggles his acting commitments with his role as breakfast host on hip hop and R&B station FLAVA FM.



MICHEL TUFFERY
SET DESIGNER

"Playing on familiar elements was integral to the overall concept design, which required being intrinsically Samoan yet relatable and universal in form between Aotearoa (New Zealand) and Samoa.

My initial interest focused towards the architectural form of the Samoan Fale which has a functionalism attached to its structure; an environment where all the drama and formality is carried out in a village or aiga (family) context.

In finalising the set design I chose the more familiar Pacific Palm Frond and translated the form metaphorically between line and light by selecting the use of transparent Perspex for construction to abstractly mimic the traditional Fale form.

Visually my treatment of the set design has been as a minimalist installation and I have subtly incorporated symbolic Samoan objects by transforming them into contemporary material and mediums."

Michel Tuffery completed a Diploma in Fine Arts (Honours) at the School of Fine Arts, Otago Polytechnic, 1989 and attended the School of Fine Arts at the University of Manoa, Hawaii, 1990.

Tuffery has held artist residencies throughout New Zealand and Australia at community and institution levels as well as participating in numerous international exhibitions, symposiums and workshops. His artwork



is held in a number of significant private and public collections globally.

Tuffery's artwork explores the positioning of the Pacific way of life in terms of point of origin, migration, cultural beliefs and the hybridisation of cultures infused through the current globalisation trend.

His artworks reference the unique and rich cultural fabric of New Zealand and the far reaching role it plays in the wider Pacific region. Tuffery's interplay of iconography is abstractly based around Polynesian and Melanesian tapa cloth, tatau, navigation and ceremonial symbolism.

Renowned as a printmaker and sculptor Tuffery has developed his art practise towards performance, sound and installation artwork. Regardless of the medium his artwork often incorporates a political comment or observation and focus on aspects of the Pacific not typically portrayed and the different adaptations of Pacific Island people according to whether their experience is urban or island-based.

NIC SMILLIE
COSTUME DESIGNER

"Because the actors have so many characters to play, I've chosen to costume them in a simple way - almost a 'blank canvas' approach. It is entirely left to the actors to evoke each character in the play through their performance, rather than the audience relying on any references provided by the costume.

At first glance the costuming is quite neutral, a sort of poetic representation of the post-colonial Samoan 'Sunday white' attire. On closer inspection however, printed onto the lavalavas, in amongst the hibiscus flowers are other 70's influences of Western culture as mentioned in the play. The idea was to create a fabric that reflects the story, the people and the era - the world of the play and the world of Alofa."

Nic Smillie has a Bachelor of Design in Textiles and has worked in television, film and theatre as a costume designer for the past ten years. For television, she designed costumes for the series INSIDERS GUIDE TO LOVE, for which she won the Air New Zealand Screen Award for Contribution to Design, and INSIDERS GUIDE TO HAPPINESS.

Costumes for film include FISH SKIN SUIT (tele-feature), TURANGAWAEWAE and STICKMEN.

Nic has also costumed various projects at Downstage and Circa Theatres in Wellington including KING AND COUNTRY, TOP GIRLS, CABARET, SWEENEY TODD and DRAWER OF KNIVES.



TONY RABBIT
LIGHTING DESIGNER

Tony Rabbit has designed sets and/or lighting for theatre, opera, television and film and even, according to one reporter, the radio.

His work was last seen by Auckland Theatre Company audiences in his lighting designs for The New Zealand Post Season of *END OF THE RAINBOW* (2007), set and lighting designs for *HATCH OR THE PLIGHT OF THE PENGUINS* (2007), lighting for *DISGRACE* (2005) and set and lighting for *THE DUCHESS OF MALFI* (2005).



JOHN GIBSON
SOUND DESIGNER

"For *WHERE WE ONCE BELONGED* Colin and I both wanted the style of the play to be as direct and simple as possible. The sound design was thus facilitated solely through the skills of the performers, sound from a new musical instrument, and the only prop - a jandal."

John composes original music for New Zealand theatre, film, dance and television. He has composed over 60 scores for theatre including *RICORDI* for the International Festival of the Arts.

For dance he has written scores for Shona McCullagh and Ann Dewey. His television work includes the TV2 series *PARTY ANIMALS*.

John most recently worked with Auckland Theatre Company on *THE CRUCIBLE*, *SWEET CHARITY*, *THE BLONDE THE BRUNETTE* AND *THE VENGEFUL REDHEAD* and *DISGRACE*.



What's on in theatres around the country?

AUCKLAND THEATRE COMPANY

FEMALE OF THE SPECIES

By Joanna Murray - Smith

May 1 - May 24

The Maidment Theatre

Starring Elizabeth Hawthorne, *FEMALE OF THE SPECIES* explodes with ideas about gender, generational conflict and the power of the written word.

Fashionably famous feminist author Margot Mason has always been deadlier and cleverer than any male she has ever encountered. So when she's held hostage in her comfortable country home Margot's indignity knows no bounds.

SILO THEATRE, Auckland

THE THREEPENNY OPERA

by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill

May 29 - June 21

Maidment Theatre

A noisy hotchpotch of stock operetta characters, American jazz, John Gay's eighteenth century world of thieves, pimps and whores recast in a mythical Victorian London and all refracted through the decadent prism of Weimar cabaret.

CENTREPOINT THEATRE,

Palmerston North

MAN OF LA MANCHA

By Dale Wasserman

From Mar 29

Cast into the depths of a dungeon, Cervantes is tried by a group of desperadoes. His only defence is the magic of his mind and his most famous creation - Don Quixote.

DOWNSTAGE THEATRE, Wellington

MY BEAUTIFUL DIVORCE

By Geraldine Aran

May 31 - Jun 28

Ginette McDonald stars as an unexpectedly single woman in this hilarious one-woman tour de force. Wittily observant, achingly funny and heart-wrenchingly real this comedy explores what life is like for Angela, a 40 something housewife, recently dumped by her accountant husband for a younger model.

CIRCA THEATRE, Wellington

WHO WANTS TO BE 100?

By Roger Hall

Feb 23 - May 3

WHO WANTS TO BE 100? is crammed with Hall's classic one-liners and combines great comedy with sharp satiric insight about that place everyone dreads - the rest home.

COURT THEATRE, Christchurch

LETTER TO BLANCHY

By McPhail and Gadsby

Mar 29 - May 17

In a fishing trip gone awry, Barry, Ray, Derek and Col, three friends and an acquaintance, find themselves trapped together in a one-roomed hut.

FORTUNE THEATRE, Dunedin

MOONLIGHT & MAGNOLIAS

by Ron Hutchinson

April 1 - April 20

This funny and fascinating behind-the-scenes play comes to vivid life as three icons of the film industry battle over what would become one of greatest movies ever made.



To find out what else is going on in Auckland be sure to pick up the latest copy of citymix

The TIME logo is a red rectangle with the word "TIME" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

Faraway places evoke the bittersweet flavour of a young author's homeland

By Lisa Clausen, Apia

A few blocks back from where Apia meets the sun-warmed sea, the town's main market sprawls like a tropical banquet. Here the sharp tang of the sea and of tuna boats gives way to the fragrance of ginger, bananas and coconuts. People arrive on pink and yellow buses to buy chili peppers and the green breadfruit that ripen among giant leaves. Hungry dogs wander the market's edges, children roam its narrow aisles, and everywhere in the humid air hangs the scent of things plucked from branch and soil.

Born to a Samoan mother and a Polish-American father and raised in a village just outside Apia, Sia Figiel used to visit the Maketi Fou as a child. Years later, walking through the main market in Prague, she found memories of Apia's hectic market rushing back. On a train from Prague to Berlin she began her first book, *WHERE WE ONCE BELONGED* (1996), on a napkin. She wrote more of it in Germany, far enough from home that "the smells, the sounds and everything about Samoa that I knew became so vivid," she says. "It enabled me just to write."

Like the marketplace, Figiel's writing distills the essence of Samoa, a nation that, in her words, floats "in the middle of a vast ocean ... so peaceful, so fearful ... so angry, too,

sometimes." She calls herself a performance poet, and she writes like one. Her brisk prose and vivid poetry are threaded together in Samoa's su'ifiloi storytelling style, which Figiel likens to "a necklace of flowers - each flower is connected to another and another." In *WHERE WE ONCE BELONGED* and *THEY WHO DO NOT GRIEVE* (1999), Alofa and Malu are young girls growing up in villages built on kinship and tradition, absorbing American television and their grandmothers' wisdom. Plants, animals and the sea flavor everyday conversation. Words fly "like poisonous fish" and the "hibiscus branch tongues" of the cane lick a schoolboy's legs. In language both dreamy and sharp, Figiel depicts the forest's vines and secrets, and the sea where goddesses and fish swim.

At the heart of this world is the extended family, the aiga, which both protects and punishes. Little happens without its knowledge or approval and, in *WHERE WE ONCE BELONGED*, Alofa and her friends feel its steady grip. There are endless chores, church duties and rules. Girls who walk around at night and laugh too much are bad. Being alone is frowned upon. "I does not exist," Alofa says matter-of-factly. "I is we' ... always." The aiga's wrath awaits those who disobey. Figiel's frankness

- not just about violence but also about incest, suicide, teenage pregnancy and adultery - tells ugly truths rarely discussed in modern Samoa. "Real love is when children are beaten up bad by their parents," recites Alofa, after she is bashed and has her head shaved as punishment.

The directness with which she unravels dark themes confirms Figiel as a bold arrival in the still-small ranks of contemporary South Pacific writers. But the 33-year-old, who was banned from speaking at a New Zealand girls' school because her writing was "vulgar," says she aims to explore her people's troubles rather than judge them. And despite its influence, neither Alofa nor Malu are victims of their aiga's ills. Figiel's village childhood echoes through her sentences: "A lot of it is in my work, and despite all that we saw - that I saw - all that I write about is done with love," she says. As was her traditional Samoan malu tattoo, which traces her family's history and is "the ultimate expression of love for those bonds, the space between yourself and your community."

It's a link that can't be erased by the seeping influence of the outside world, which sees Malu obey a goddess by lighting a fire with "a trick I remembered reading in National

Figiel's frankness - not just about violence but also about incest, suicide, teenage pregnancy and adultery - tells ugly truths rarely discussed in modern Samoa.

Geographic." Old and new intermingle. Villagers regard the outside world with both suspicion and desire, envying neighbors whose relatives move overseas and send home money. "Those simple words she used - But you have no relatives in Australia! Or Amelika! - stabbed us in the back, in the front, everywhere," says Alofa. But leaving can mean exile. Alofa's grandmother Tausi dies uprooted in her daughter's New Zealand home, while her aunt Siniva is hounded after she returns and rages against the spread of Western lifestyles.

Figiel once felt Siniva's anger. Now she sees outside influences as "enriching. I'm a bit more optimistic these days." And no matter where the young author, who's been published in the U.S., Australia, Europe and New Zealand, travels she carries Samoa in her tattoo.

As her skin is pierced "so that the imprints of birds, centipedes, crabs, worms and other animals are forever a part of me," so too are her readers, left with a sense of Samoa that lingers like the rich aroma of the Maketi Fou in the heavy afternoon heat.

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Steve at Town and Country, Chris Day at Marshall Day

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