



NELSON ARTS FESTIVAL

23 OCTOBER – 2 NOVEMBER 2025
[NELSONARTSFESTIVAL.NZ](https://nelsonartsfestival.nz)

OUR FESTIVAL WHĀNAU OF PARTNERS

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Like a flock of birds, our community comes together every year to help make Nelson Arts Festival happen. From the joyful Pīwakawaka to the mighty Moa, our partners play a valuable part in supporting our Festival mahi. Ngā mihi maioha!

CORE FUNDER



MAJOR FUNDERS



GRANTS



Community Organisation Grants Scheme (COGS) /
Nelson Creative Communities Scheme / Network Tasman
Trust / Tasman Creative Communities Scheme / Top of the
South Community Foundation

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KERERŪ PARTNERS



OUR VENUE PARTNERS

Theatre Royal | The Suter Gallery |
Te Aratoi o Whakatū | NCMA |
The Boathouse | Deville | The
Summer House | Refinery
ArtSpace | Village Theatre |
Te Noninga Kumu Motueka
Public Library | Pūtangitangi
Greenmeadows Centre | Nelson
Library | Nelson Provincial
Museum | Nelson Airport | Cultural
Conversations | Neudorf Vineyards

TŪI PARTNERS

Paper Plus Nelson |
Pic's Peanut Butter |
Phantom Billstickers |
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PĪWAKAWAKA FESTIVAL SUPPORTERS

Community Art Works | NRDA | NZ Brochures &
Distribution | Proper Crisps | Speedy Signs Nelson |
The New Zealand Society of Authors Top of the South
Branch | Top of the South Filmmakers

INTERESTED
IN JOINING
OUR PARTNERS
WHĀNAU?
SCAN TO FIND
OUT MORE



WELCOME

PIKI MAI, KAKE MAI!

I am excited to welcome another year of Nelson Arts Festival with a fantastic line up of 46 events from 23 October – 2 November 2025.

Nelson Arts Festival is a vibrant part of our Whakatū creative calendar, delivering outstanding theatre, art, dance, music, literature and community events from across Aotearoa, and beyond.

We're proud to be a core funder of the festival, supporting 11 days of spectacular art experiences around Whakatū Nelson. This diverse programme has something for everyone in our community, including the Mask Carnivale on Friday 31 October. I invite you to get involved with family and friends and enjoy our city at its best.

Hon Dr Nick Smith,
Mayor of Nelson | Te Koromatua o Whakatū

NAU MAI!

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Nelson Arts Festival, New Zealand's longest running annual regional arts festival, in its 31st year.

The Government's vision is for New Zealand to be as well known internationally for its arts and creativity, as it is for its primary industries and beautiful landscapes. That begins at home. Festivals like Nelson Arts Festival play an integral role in fostering homegrown talent, developing unique stories, and increasing the regional impact of arts and culture.

This year's dynamic festival programme is an excellent opportunity to get involved, with outstanding art experiences from around the country – and beyond – coming to Nelson. I hope you enjoy.

Hon Paul Goldsmith,
Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage

KA PŌ, KA AO, KA AWATEA. THE DAY BREAKS.

There's something powerfully peaceful about the quiet just before dawn. That moment when the world is still, the light softens and cracks at the sky, and we're able to gently breathe in the optimism of a new day.

In a world brimming with noise, urgency, fear, and division, it feels more vital than ever to seek out stillness and remember what it is to be human, right here, right now.

At Nelson Arts Festival, we welcome in Kōanga. We eagerly anticipate the dawn of Spring and outstretch our arms to come together with our communities, co-creating unmissable moments in our beautiful city.

This year's programme is a collection of bold, beautiful, challenging, and deeply

human works that reflect the complexity of our times. Artists and authors ask provocative questions, share arresting personal truths, and gift us moments of beautiful connection and transformation – sometimes quiet, sometimes radical.

We welcome you to arrive with curiosity and openness. We thank the brilliant creative minds who invite us into their worlds – offering glimpses that may return us to our own lives with new light and fresh perspectives.

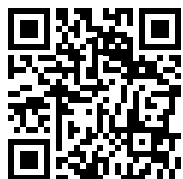
It's time to inhale, step softly into the season with us, and feel the transformational warmth and glow of new connections.

Janelle Bish,
Nelson Arts Festival Artistic Director

BOOKING INFORMATION

BOOK YOUR TICKETS ONLINE

You can book tickets for all our events on our website:
www.nelsonartsfestival.nz/events



Scan to book online, and for more information about our events, venues, accessibility and content warnings.

BOOK YOUR TICKETS IN PERSON

Swing by our friendly Box Offices if you prefer to book in person:

Theatre Royal

78 Rutherford Street |
 12-4PM weekdays
 Phone: 03 548 3840 (Select 1)

Nelson Centre of Musical Arts (NCMA)

48 Nile Street | 10AM-4PM weekdays

WE'RE COMMITTED TO ACCESSIBLE PRICING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

For each event in this brochure you will find a ticket price range, letting you know the range of pricing available.

When you book a ticket for Nelson Arts Festival events, you'll find a range of ticket options to suit different situations. These include:

Card holders rate

Concession prices for community services & student card holders

Early bird tickets

Book your tickets early to receive a discounted price

Group discount

Book six or more tickets to one show to receive a discounted price

Pukapuka Talks multi-show pass

Buy a bundle of tickets to our Pukapuka Talks shows and receive a discounted price

Whānau discount

Book four or more tickets to one of our whānau shows to receive a discounted price

QUESTIONS ABOUT BOOKINGS?

Visit: nelsonartsfestival.nz/information
Email: boxoffice@theatreroyalnelson.co.nz

Our accessible ticketing options are supported by:

NBS | Community
 We believe. We invest.

All event information is accurate at the time of printing. Nelson Arts Festival reserves the right to amend event information.

ACCESSIBILITY

ACCESSIBILITY AT NELSON ARTS FESTIVAL

We're passionate about providing accessibility for our community and a safe space for all.

Every event listing includes information about accessibility, and where needed, an alert symbol to indicate content warnings.

For full details of each performance, visit individual show listings on our website: nelsonartsfestival.nz/events

QUESTIONS ABOUT ACCESSIBILITY?

Visit: nelsonartsfestival.nz/information
Email: access@nelsonartsfestival.nz

VENUE & EVENT ACCESSIBILITY

All our venues are wheelchair accessible and welcome service dogs. We have accessibility symbols on all our event listings to help you navigate the programme.

Our website has extended information on all venue accessibility, including venue access and companion seats.

Our website also has in-depth information about specific show accessibility, including shows that are highly visual, without major language barriers, NZ Sign Language interpreted or audio-based and/or audio-described.

CONTENT & ACCESSIBILITY

- Audio Based
- Audio Described
- Captioned Performance
- Highly Visual
- Low/No Language Barrier
- NZSL Interpreted
- Content Warning
- Hearing Assistive Technology Available

AGE RECOMMENDATIONS

- ALL
- 14+
- 16+
- 18+

SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION



Content & accessibility information



View all events



Mask Carnivale



Schools Programme

Text too small? A large print version of this programme is also available for download on our website.

BY A THREAD

ONE FELL SWOOP CIRCUS

THEATRE ROYAL | SAT 1 NOV, 2PM & 7.30PM +
SUN 2 NOV, 11AM | 50 MIN | \$39 – \$49



Nelson Arts Festival Exclusive

Long spools of white rope run through a pulley and wrap around bodies, connecting movements above the ground in a mesmerising negotiation of cause and effect. From Australian Circus company **One Fell Swoop**, **By A Thread** weaves acrobatics and choreography with moments of hilarity, romance, playfulness, fear and friendship, uncovering threads of connection in relationships. More than bodies in space, it's an exploration of tensions physical, emotional, and relational.

Made with support from NBM

Supported By: **Downing**



"A masterpiece"

Scenestr



"A breath-taking display of physical theatre"

This Is Radelaide

Image: Aaron Walker

CINEMATOGRAPHER

ANTHONIE TONNON

THEATRE ROYAL | THUR 23 OCT
8PM | 90 MIN | \$39 – \$49



An immersive ode to cinema and turn-of-the-millennium dance culture, **Cinematographer** is a new show by *Taite Music Prize*-winning songwriter and performer **Anthonie Tonnnon**. Celebrating the inspiration of cinema on modern Aotearoa, **Cinematographer** combines new music with visual DJing by **Erica Sklenars**, custom videography by **Theo Taylor**, archival footage, and a psychogeographic narrative.

Supported By: **COMMARC**

"Tonnnon's gift is the astute juxtaposition of the personal and the political, where social issues revolve around people up against family, lovers, corporate entities or bureaucracy. But at heart, love is the pivot."

The Listener

Image:
Belinda Merrie &
Daniel Alexander

RATION THE QUEEN'S VEGES

TE POU THEATRE

SUTER THEATRE | SUN 26 OCT
7.30PM | 50 MIN | \$29 - \$35 | 12+ !

In December 2023, the activist group 'Te Waka Hourua' sparked public furore when they painted over the English Treaty of Waitangi Exhibition at Te Papa.

This uplifting one-man play shares the remarkable experience of Te Wehi Ratana's time in Rimutaka Prison.

Part courtroom drama, part prison diary, part absurdist kōrero, people can expect a playful and provocative theatrical experience that questions what we hold to be true.

Made with support from Te Pou Theatre & Creative New Zealand

Supported By:



Image: Julie Zhu



YES YES YES

EBKM

SUTER THEATRE | THUR 23 OCT
6.30PM | 60 + 30 MIN POST
SHOW FORUM | \$15 - \$35 | 14+ !

Jamie and Ari like each other. Karin and Tom do too. They might be at two separate parties, but their stories are identical. Until they really aren't. Part documentary, part confession, part open conversation, this is a theatre show created specifically for young adults exploring the knotty and necessary topics of healthy relationships, desire and consent. Blending audience interaction with captivating solo performance, this work features in-depth interviews with NZ teenagers.

Presented By:

Hikitia!
FOR OUR FUTURE



"Should you and all the young people you know see this show?
Yes. Yes Yes. Yes Yes Yes.
YES YES YES."

Theatreview

Image: Jinki Cambronerio



ANNA CODDINGTON

(LIVE AT NEUDORF VINEYARDS)

LOOP

NEUDORF VINEYARDS | SUN 2 NOV
2PM (DOORS 12PM) | 75 MIN | \$49 - \$55 | ALL

Nelson Arts Festival Exclusive

Anna Coddington is one of Aotearoa's most acclaimed singer-songwriters whose songwriting and vocal ability blend to create her unique sound. Live at Neudorf Vineyards in an exclusive performance for Nelson Arts Festival, Coddington's new album *Te Whakamiha* is a blend of reo Māori and reo rua (bilingual) songs with a sound self-described as 'Māori funk'. This will be an enchanting live performance from an award-winning songwriter who has graced the stages of Aotearoa's most beloved festivals.

Supported By:



SHOSTAKOVICH: UNPACKED

NEW ZEALAND STRING QUARTET & JIAN LIU

NCMA | TUE 28 OCT | 7PM
70 MIN | \$39 - \$49 | ALL 40+ C1

Take a front row seat to witness the raw emotional power of one of the 20th century's most troubled, yet defiant, musical voices. To commemorate the 50th anniversary of his death, the **New Zealand String Quartet** and **Jian Liu** will take you on a journey through the chamber music of *Dmitri Shostakovich*, culminating in a breathtaking performance of his *Viola Sonata*, the very last piece he ever wrote.

Made with support from The Diessl Family, New Zealand School of Music & Creative New Zealand

Supported By:

RMF
LAWYERS

Rout
Miner
Fitchett



HEARTBREAK HOTEL

EBKM

THEATRE ROYAL | TUE 28 OCT
7.30PM | 75 MIN | \$29 – \$39



Nelson Arts Festival Exclusive

This one's for the young hearts, the old hearts, and the broken hearts. Story, science and a synth combine in an exhilarating performance that examines what happens in our bodies when we're bereft. From acclaimed New Zealand company **EBKM**, **Heartbreak Hotel** tracks a woman's broken heart in a wrenching and relatable journey that's studded with classic break-up songs and razor-sharp observations on the physiology of love.

Supported By:



This Is Radelaide

"Hilarious, heartwarming
and moving"

Theatreview

Image: Andy Crown Photography



BODY STORY

XIN JI

THEATRE ROYAL | SAT 25 OCT
7.30PM | 45 MIN | \$29 – \$39



When was the last time your body felt happy? When did it feel the most tense? How many injuries has your body sustained? What does your body remember? In this debut solo work by acclaimed dance artist **Xin Ji**, the story of his body unravels through moments where the emotional and physical collide. Uncertainty, recklessness and euphoria slide into an intimate personal narrative – offering ways to consider our bodies as vehicles for resistance and alchemy.

Initially developed with Auckland Pride

Supported By:



"Body Story showcases Xin Ji's boldness as both a performer and a storyteller. It is a fearless exploration of the human body in all its complexities – fragile, resilient, evolving, and undefined."

Blackguard



Image: Jinki Cambroner

THE BARONESS

HAYLEY SPROULL

NCMA | SAT 1 NOV | 8.30PM
60 MIN | \$39 – \$49



Sky-rocketing towards 40, with a happily untenanted womb and a life of love, leisure and lingus, **Hayley Sproull** feels less barren, and more... **Baroness**. From *Taskmaster*, *7 Days*, ZM's *Fletch Vaughan* and *Hayley*, and more, Hayley Sproull brings her blisteringly funny and outrageous brand new hour of comedy to Whakatū.

Supported By:



Image: Michelle Hyslop



THE VELVET REBELS

RUTENE SPOONER

NCMA | SAT 1 NOV | 6PM
60 MIN | \$29 – \$39



Celebrating The Ratpack Era! Swing and swoon with **Rutene Spooner** – the Māori Crooner, and **Shea Kokaua**, The Kūki Keysman, in Aotearoa's newest Vegas-style jazz tribute. Enjoy timeless croons like *Fly Me to the Moon* and *Luck Be a Lady*, alongside local classics like *Poi E* and *Slice of Heaven*. This cheeky duo channel RatPack swagger, blending jazz with South Pacific soul. Come for the music, stay for the laughs – with **The Velvet Rebels**.

Supported By:



Image: Sasha Stejeko



BATTLE CHORUS

TUATARA COLLECTIVE

NCMA | THUR 30 OCT
7.30PM | 90 MIN | \$29 - \$35

ALL

Battle Chorus is a social sing-along experience that brings people together for an unforgettable night of iconic melodies and sweet harmonies. Under the guidance of Aotearoa musical heavyweights **Jason Te Mete** and **Rutene Spooner**, audiences form two teams, learn popular choruses and then battle it out with some well-known anthems from the greatest artists of all time, spanning *Aretha Franklin*, *The Beach Boys*, *Guns'n'Roses*, *Rihanna* and many more.

Supported By:  **UNIQUELY NELSON**



Image: Jinki Cambronero

HOLDING GROUND

THE NEW ZEALAND DANCE COMPANY

THEATRE ROYAL | THUR 30 OCT
7.30PM | 50 MIN | \$39 - \$49

ALL 

Holding Ground pairs two dynamic dance works exploring the body's response to pressure, imbalance, and change. A new duet by **Moss Te Ururangi Patterson** evokes endurance and wairua. *Intensional Particle* by **Hiroaki Umeda** immerses us in a futuristic terrain. Together, they ask: what does it mean to hold your ground?

Made with support from Asia NZ, CNZ & Wellesley Studios

Supported By:



Image: S20

IT'S GETTING HOT-ENE, SO TELL ME ALL YOUR JOKES

HOANI HOTENE

THE BOATHOUSE | SAT 25 OCT
8.30PM | 55 MIN | \$29 - 35

16+

The world's heating up, going wild, and **Hoani Hotene** is trying to get through it all with what...? Jokes, yep. Asking the big questions like 'how do you become a better person?' and 'why does everyone pick on gingers?' See one of Aotearoa's best up-and-coming comedians talk about 'What Now?' at his kura kaupapa, trying to grow up at 30, and honestly a bunch of other good stuff.

2025 Billy T Award-Winner

Supported By:



SEASONAL AGREEMENT

JOHN VEA

REFINERY ARTSPACE | 23 OCT - 15 NOV GALLERY OPENING HOURS
OPENING EVENT THURS 23 OCT 5PM | ARTIST TALK SAT 25 OCT 12PM

FREE

ALL 

Every year, Te Taihū South Island becomes a temporary home to migrant workers from across Moana Oceania. Seasonal workers are part of our everyday landscapes but remain mostly hidden or unrecognised. Christchurch-based artist **John Vea** (Tonga, Aotearoa) uses his characteristic sense of humour to point to the bureaucratic challenges and barriers migrants must navigate to make a living, and a home, in Aotearoa.

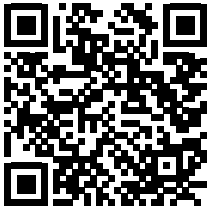
Supported By:



	TUE 21 PRE-FEST	WED 22 PRE-FEST	THU 23 OPENING NIGHT	FRI 24	SAT 25 LONG WEEKEND	SUN 26 LONG WEEKEND	MON 27 LONG WEEKEND	TUE 28	WED 29	THU 30	FRI 31	SAT 1 CLOSING WEEKEND	SUN 2 CLOSING WEEKEND
PUKAPUKA TALKS At NCMA unless specified	SCREENWRITING WITH MICHAEL BENNETT 6pm, doors at 5.30pm (210min) Pūtangitangi Greenmeadows Centre, Stoke	PACKING A PUNCH 6pm (60min) Village Theatre, Tākaka	CRIME IN CONTEXT 6pm (60min) Te Noninga Kumu Motueka Public Library	#METOO DOWNUNDER 1pm (60min) PUKAPUKA TALKS GALA: ANY LAST WORDS? 7.30pm (90min)	ARA: A MĀORI GUIDEBOOK OF THE MIND 10am (75min) INSIDE THE MEDIA 1pm (60min) HINE TOA 3.30pm (75min) MANA 7.30pm (75min)	CHIDGEY ON FIRE 10am (60min) DELIRIOUS 1pm (60min) SECRET ART POWERS 3.30pm (60min)	NOURISH WITH CHELSEA WINTER 2pm (105min) The Summer House THE STORY OF TIAHUIA 5.30pm (75min) Suter Theatre	THE ART OF REVIEWING WITH CLAIRE MABEY 10am (120min) Nelson Library	WRITING PEOPLE & PLACES 1pm (120min) Nelson Library			LIVES LESS ORDINARY 10.30am (60min) Suter Theatre	
IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD			TUNE UP 5.30pm-8.30pm Kirby Lane		HOANI HOTENE IT'S GETTING HOT-ENE, SO TELL ME ALL YOUR JOKES 8.30pm (55min) The Boathouse			WHERE CONVERSATIONS SPEAK AND MUSIC FLOWS 7pm (75min) Cultural Conversations	DAWN RAGAS 6am (60min) Cultural Conversations		MASK CARNIVALE 5pm-9.30pm Whakatū City Centre		ANNA CODDINGTON 2pm, doors at 12pm Neudorf Vineyards
NCMA								SHOSTAKOVICH: UNPACKED 7pm (70min)	TAKADIMI 7.30pm (90min)	BATTLE CHORUS 7.30pm (90min)		THE VELVET REBELS 6pm (60min) THE BARONESS 8.30pm (60min)	
SUTER THEATRE			YES YES YES 6.30pm (60min + Q&A)			RATION THE QUEEN'S VEGES 7.30pm (50min)	ALL THE THINGS I WISH I COULD BE 11am (50min)						
THEATRE ROYAL			CINEMATOGRAPHER 8pm (75min)		BODY STORY 7.30pm (45min)	WHO WHAT WHERE NOW Between 10am-1pm (45min session slots)		HEARTBREAK HOTEL 7.30pm (75min)		HOLDING GROUND 7.30pm (50min)		BY A THREAD 2pm & 7.30pm (50min)	BY A THREAD 11am (50min)
DEVILLE MUSIC HUB Doors 8pm Support Act 8.30pm Main Act 9.30pm										TOM LARK Doors open 8pm Deville		POLLYHILL & SAMARA ALOFA Doors open 8pm Deville	
REFINERY ARTSPACE			JOHN VEA – SEASONAL AGREEMENT REFINERY ARTSPACE Thu 23 Oct: 5 – 8pm (Opening) Sat 25 Oct: 12pm (Artist Talk) Fri 24 & Tue 28 – Fri 31 Oct: 10am – 5pm Sat 25 – Mon 27 Oct, Sat 1 – Sun 2 Nov: 10am – 4pm Open until 15 Nov, regular hours post-festival: Mon – Fri 10am – 5pm, Sat 10am – 2pm										
THROUGHOUT FESTIVAL	TOI KORU – SANDY ADSETT THE NELSON PROVINCIAL MUSEUM Gallery opening hours Mon to Fri 10am – 5pm, Sat – Sun 10am – 4pm												
	A CLEAR DAY – KARL MAUGHAN THE SUTER ART GALLERY Gallery opening hours Mon to Sun 9:30am – 4:30pm												

SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

For our schools programme
head to our website:
www.nelsonartsfestival.nz
or scan the QR code.



BOOK YOUR TICKETS ONLINE

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www.nelsonartsfestival.nz/events



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more information
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accessibility and
content warnings.

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Theatre Royal
78 Rutherford Street | 12-4PM
weekdays
Phone: 03 548 3840 (Select 1)

**Nelson Centre of Musical Arts
(NCMA)**
48 Nile Street | 10AM-4PM weekdays

WHO WHAT WHERE NOW

BINGE CULTURE

THEATRE ROYAL | SUN 26 OCT
SESSIONS BETWEEN 10AM – 1PM
45 MIN | \$10 – \$15



Nelson Arts Festival Exclusive

What are those rumblings and grumbings underneath the theatre? Where is that mysterious 'ribbiting' coming from? And is that monkey wearing a tie? Uncover the trail of magic and mystery on a quest to find a precious taonga. **Who What Where Now** is an adventure experience combining puzzle and play, guided by mobile app. Perfect for ages 4-10 with adult supervision, most fun in groups of 2-6 people.

Made with support from CNZ

Supported By:



ALL THE THINGS I WISH I COULD BE

TOM KNOWLES AND JEFF PARSNIPS

SUTER THEATRE | MON 27 OCT
11AM | 50 MIN | \$15 – \$25



Blast off with **Jeff** and **Tom** in this wild musical adventure about two lovable dads who dream of becoming everything from All Blacks to ballerinas, from mad monkeys to silly monsters. Bursting with original songs performed live, this 'very Kiwi' comedy is packed with heart, hilarity, and high-energy fun for the whole whānau. A joyful celebration of imagination, friendship, and the endless possibilities of who we can be.

Supported By: **cooper∞savage**
chartered accountants

"..provoking the audience
into fits of laughter"
Theatreview



MASK CARNIVALE

WHAKATŪ CBD | FRI 31 OCT
5 – 9.30PM | FREE



Whakatū Nelson's beloved masked parade returns in 2025 – transformed, and as vibrant as ever. This year's theme, **TRANSFORMATION**, invites everyone to show up and shine. Celebrate our community's rich diversity through bold masks, joyful movement and shared creativity.

All are welcome – take part in an evening of live performances, delicious food, music, and magical moments with colour and connection.

Presented By: **NelsonMail**



TUNE UP

KIRBY LANE | THUR 23 OCT
5.30 – 8.30PM | 3 HRS | FREE



Kick off Nelson Arts Festival with a boogie: **Tune Up** transforms Kirby Lane into an outdoor music hub with an awesome line up of rangatahi musicians – all programmed by our amazing young folx at Nelson Youth Council, with tautoko from **RockQuest**. Grab a bite from the food carts, and immerse yourself in the future of Aotearoa music right here in Whakatū!

Supported By:



SCHOOLS
PROGRAMME



Image: Steve Hussey

DEVILLE MUSIC HUB

DOORS OPEN 8PM | 8.30PM SUPPORTING ACT
9.30PM MAIN ACT | 18+ UNLESS WITH GUARDIAN

Supported By:
 **VenueTech**

TOM LARK BANISHED MUSIC

DEVILLE | THUR 30 OCT
\$26 – \$29



Nelson Arts Festival Exclusive

Sunburnt psychedelic folk fit for sensitive cowboys to meander and philosophise to. A musical project by **Shannon Fowler**, **Tom Lark** returned to ears and airwaves in 2023 – after a seven year hiatus – with his debut full-length album *Brave Star*. 2025's album *Moonlight Hotel* sees Tom Lark back with another watertight collection of folk pop hits with a country bent.

Finalist for the 2024 Taite Music Prize and Te Kaipuroro Taketake Toa | Best Folk Artist at the 2024 Aotearoa Music Awards

Image: Lukas Thielmann

POLLYHILL & SAMARA ALOFA BANISHED MUSIC

DEVILLE | SAT 1 NOV
\$26 – \$29



After a two-year orbit, Tāmaki Makaurau based **PollyHill** and **Samara Alofa** offer their long awaited sonic collaboration *AQUARIES* back into the collective ether, with reimagined remixes by local legends *Mokotron*, *Caru*, *Amamelia*, and more, and a new live show taking the timeless sound into fresh atmospheres.

Image: Nicola Sandford

TAKADIMI RHYTHM MUSICALS

"a master of complex
rhythmic structures"
Jazz Local

NCMA | WED 29 OCT
7.30PM | 90 MIN | \$29 – \$39



Nelson Arts Festival Exclusive

Experience the vibrant fusion of traditional Indian classical music and modern jazz with **Takadimi**, a dynamic and innovative band led by master tabla player **Manjit Singh**. Blending rich rhythms, soulful melodies, and improvisation, Takadimi creates a captivating musical journey that transcends cultural boundaries. Perfect for the Nelson Arts Festival, their performance offers a unique blend of tradition and contemporary artistry.

Supported By:



WHERE CONVERSATIONS SPEAK & MUSIC FLOWS

CULTURAL CONVERSATIONS
TUE 28 OCT | 7PM – 8.15PM
75 MIN | KOHA



An intimate gathering where four musicians from different cultural traditions meet for the first time to create improvised music together. Join this live exploration of sound, connection and creativity, perfect for those curious about improvisation and cultural exchange. Please consider a donation of \$5-20 to Cultural Conversations in support of the artists.

DAWN RAGAS

CULTURAL CONVERSATIONS
WED 29 OCT 6AM – 7AM
60 MIN | KOHA



Before the world wakes, come sit in stillness. Sitar, voice and tabla will carry you gently into the day with Indian morning ragas – music born to greet the dawn. These sounds don't rush. They rise like light. A warm, quiet space, dimly lit, safe, and friendly. Just one hour. Just enough. Bring your whole self. Please consider a donation of \$5-20 to Cultural Conversations in support of their artists.

Presented By: 

PUKAPUKA TALKS

Presented By:
GO Media

Join 31 beloved authors, exciting new voices, and expert commentators for kōrero, storytelling, and thought leadership on the subjects that matter.

All books will be on sale through our festival bookstore partner, Paper Plus Nelson, both in store and at our festival venues – get your copies signed by the authors after their session!

PACKING A PUNCH

VILLAGE THEATRE, TĀKAKA | WED 22 OCT | 6PM | 60 MIN | \$25

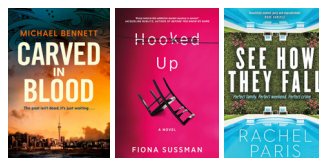
Michelle Duff's *Surplus Women* explores power and patriarchy. **Airana Ngarewa's** *Pātea Boys* delivers stories grounded in masculinity, place, and what it takes to survive. Together, they explore short story writing as a form built for impact and discuss why they're drawn to writing about people and places often left out of the national narrative. Chaired by Sunday Star-Times Short Story Award winner **Fiona Sussman**.



CRIME IN CONTEXT

TE NONINGA KUMU MOTUEKA PUBLIC LIBRARY
THUR 23 OCT | 6PM | 60 MIN | \$25

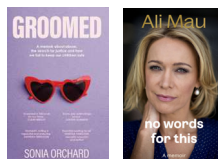
What draws us to crime, psychological thriller, and suspense stories and what do they reveal about the deepest parts of ourselves? Step inside the minds of three masterful storytellers – **Michael Bennett**, **Fiona Sussman** and **Rachel Paris** – as they explore the social, psychological, cultural, and political contexts driving their page-turning stories. Chaired by **Sylvan Thomson**.



#METOO DOWNUNDER




NCMA | FRI 24 OCT | 1PM | 60 MIN | \$25

Ali Mau (author of *No Words for This*) and **Sonia Orchard** (author of *Groomed*) examine what happens when the people you trust most betray you and shine the light on what needs to change for justice to prevail. Unflinching, insightful, and ultimately hopeful, join us to celebrate the power of collective action in shaping how we can better listen to survivors, achieve cultural shifts, and create safer communities. Chaired by **Dr Nikki Evans**.



Presented By:
Hikitia! FOR OUR FUTURE 

PUKAPUKA TALKS GALA NIGHT ANY LAST WORDS?

NCMA | FRI 24 OCT | 7.30PM | 90 MIN | \$35 – \$39   

A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME STORYTELLING EXPERIENCE

Join former cage fighter-turned-writer **Airana Ngarewa**; award-winning journalist, broadcaster and survivor advocate **Ali Mau**; esteemed author **Elizabeth Knox ONZM**; renowned mental health advocate **Dr Hinemoa Elder MNZM**; Poetry Slam champion and filmmaker **Matariki Bennett**; academic and award-winning memoirist **Ngāhuia te Awekōtuku**; and artist and activist **Tāme Iti**, as they respond to the provocation, 'Any Last Words?', in this star-studded Pukapuka Talks Gala. MCed by **Johny O'Donnell**.



Supported By: **Fresh FM**

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www.nelsonartsfestival.nz/events

ARA: A MĀORI GUIDEBOOK OF THE MIND

NCMA | SAT 25 OCT | 10AM | 75 MIN | \$25

Dr **Hinemoa Elder**'s new book, *Ara: A Māori Guidebook of the Mind*, is a quest through the caves of hinengaro and a resource for anyone seeking comfort and ease amid the chaos of life. In the pukapuka, she leads us through 23 rua (caves)/chapters, offering a pathway to gather insights, face challenges, and help us navigate the complexities of our minds. Chaired by **Annie Fay**.



INSIDE THE MEDIA

NCMA | SAT 25 OCT | 1PM | 60 MIN | \$25

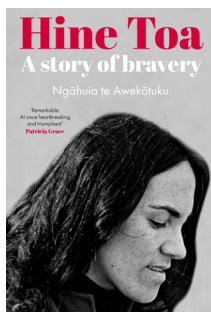
What is it really like to work in the news media? Join **Ali Mau** and **Michelle Duff**, two of Aotearoa's most highly regarded journalists, who worked together as part of Stuff's #MeToo team, as they speak candidly about the shifting landscape of journalism in an age of misinformation, outrage, and fragile business models. Chaired by fellow journalist **Naomi Arnold**.



HINE TOA

NCMA | SAT 25 OCT | 3.30PM | 75 MIN | \$25

Discover how a restless working-class girl from the pā became a founding member of Ngā Tamatoa, the Women's and Gay Liberation movements, and an essential voice in protests across Aotearoa. Winner of the 2025 Ockham New Zealand Book Award for General Non-fiction, **Ngāhuia te Awekōtuku's** memoir *Hine Toa: A Story of Bravery*, is a remarkable 'coming of age' memoir by a trailblazing voice in women's, queer and Māori liberation movements. Chaired by **Donna McLeod**.



MANA

NCMA | SAT 25 OCT | 7:30PM | 75 MIN | \$25

Iconic Māori activist, artist, and performer **Tāme Iti** shares his extraordinary life, defined by resistance, resilience, and rangatiratanga. From land marches to performance art, police raids to prison cells, his voice has challenged New Zealand to reckon with its colonial legacy. Join Tāme Iti to discuss his memoir, *Mana*, with fellow champion of te reo Māori revitalisation, **Nuki Tākao**.



CHIDGEY ON FIRE

NCMA | SUN 26 OCT | 10AM | 60 MIN | \$25

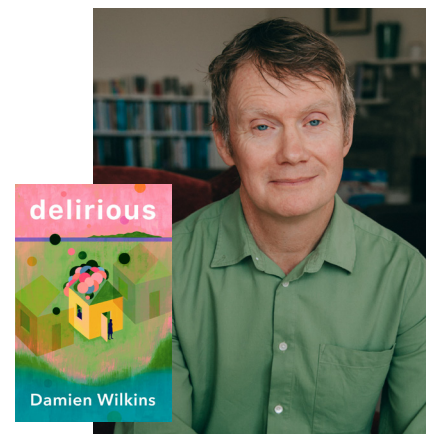
Set in a sinisterly skewed version of England, **Catherine Chidgey's** astonishing new novel, *The Book of Guilt*, is a story told through the eyes of Vincent (one of three identical triplets) and the lonely but observant single child, Nancy. **Claire Mabey**, who will lead the kōrero, describes it as both a page-turner and deeply serious work. They'll also discuss Chidgey's last novel, *Pet*, and what it's been like publishing three novels in as many years.



DELIRIOUS

NCMA | SUN 26 OCT | 1PM | 60 MIN | \$25

Damien Wilkins won the prestigious Jann Medlicott Acorn Prize for Fiction for *Delirious*, a captivating tale about families and ageing, which follows ex-cop Mary and her husband Pete, a retired librarian, as they navigate life's big transitions. In the lead up to the Ockham New Zealand Book Awards, the novel was universally tipped to win the biggest literary prize in Aotearoa. Come along to find out why. Chaired by **Elizabeth Knox**.



SECRET ART POWERS

NCMA | SUN 26 OCT | 3.30PM | 60 MIN | \$25

Possibly the first book to emerge from 'live, disrupted TED-style talks', **Jo Randerson's** *Secret Art Powers* is a guide to using creative thinking to achieve radical change. In this kōrero with World of WearableArt CEO and creativity advocate **Meg Williams**, the multifaceted writer, director and performer will explore six creative mindsets that they believe can help us navigate through complex, changing times.



NOURISH ALL 100% WITH CHELSEA WINTER

THE SUMMER HOUSE | MON 27 OCT
2PM | 105 MIN | \$69 – \$75

Chelsea Winter's new cookbook *Nourish* heralds a joyful return to what established her recipes as household favourites – now reimagined with balance and a deeper intention to truly nourish. Since winning MasterChef New Zealand in 2012, she has become the champion of fuss-free recipes that result in food that's delicious, satisfying and perfect to share with family and friends. Join Chelsea as she discusses, with **Nicola Galloway**, her new book for the first time.

A complimentary glass of bubbles, tea, coffee, some tasty bites and a return shuttle bus ride to The Summer House are included in your ticket price. Open bar available on the day.

Supported By:
 Chia Sisters



THE STORY OF TIAHUIA ALL 100%

SUTER THEATRE | MON 27 OCT | 5.30PM | 75 MIN | \$25

Tiahuia: A Karanga to My Mother is artistic director and choreographer **Merenia Gray's** tribute to her mother Tiahuia Te Puea Hērangi, the whāngai daughter of Princess Te Puea. The show will open with **Mary-Lyn Chambers'** short film, *Karanga*, which beautifully captures the dance Gray also choreographed in her mother's memory and will be followed by a deep and insightful kōrero about Tiahuia's life, facilitated by **Donna McLeod**.



LIVES LESS ORDINARY ALL 100%

SUTER THEATRE | SAT 1 NOV | 10.30AM | 60 MIN | \$25

Naomi Arnold set off to walk from Bluff to Cape Reinga and **Rebecca Hayter** swapped city life for country living and a career immersed in yachting for the land. Hear from these two award-winning journalists and authors, who embarked on two very different journeys, united by a yearning to reconnect with the landscape of Aotearoa and themselves. Chaired by **Samantha Gee**.



WORKSHOPS

SCREENWRITING WITH MICHAEL BENNETT 16+

PŪTANGITANGI GREENMEADOWS CENTRE | TUE 21 OCT | 5.30PM FOR A 6PM START | 210 MIN | \$35

Join **Michael Bennett** for a fun, fast-paced tour through the writing toolbox of an acclaimed screenwriter, using short films, music videos, and excerpts from great movies to explore some of the most important fundamentals of storytelling for the screen. Suitable for experienced writers in search of a boot-camp refresher, for new screenwriters, and for artists coming to screenwriting from other disciplines.

Presented in collaboration with Top of the South Filmmakers



THE ART OF REVIEWING WITH CLAIRE MABEY 16+

NELSON LIBRARY | TUE 28 OCT
10AM | 120 MIN | \$35

How do reviews work? What makes a great one – a piece of literature in itself? Join **Claire Mabey** (books editor, *The Spinoff*) for a workshop to analyse book, film, music, and theatre reviews to discover the secrets to crafting useful, entertaining, and thoughtful conversations about art.

Presented in collaboration with NZ Society of Authors Top of the South branch



WRITING PEOPLE & PLACES 16+

NELSON LIBRARY | WED 29 OCT
1PM | 120 MIN | \$35

Journalist and author **Naomi Arnold's** first-ever published magazine story was a *Listener* travel piece on Thailand and she has made writing about people and place her career ever since, with her most recent book, *Northbound*, largely written while she walked Te Araroa. In this masterclass, she will provide guidance on how to craft compelling narratives about people and places.

Presented in collaboration with NZ Society of Authors Top of the South branch





COUCH STORIES

TRUE STORIES TOLD LIVE

THEATRE ROYAL | SAT 18 OCT
7PM | 90 MIN | \$23



Couch Stories returns – live, unscripted, and delightfully unpredictable – making its Theatre Royal debut with the theme “Oh, Bugger!” Ten locals take the stage to share true tales of blunders and hiccups. These stories of missteps and mayhem reveal resilience, laughter, and the occasional meltdown. No scripts. No slides. Just real people, real stories... and really unforgettable moments.

TOI KORU

SANDY ADSETT



NELSON PROVINCIAL MUSEUM | THROUGHOUT
FESTIVAL | GALLERY OPENING HOURS

Experience the bold brilliance of *Toi Koru*, a major survey of works by Māori master of colour and kōwhaiwhai, **Dr Sandy Adsett**. Spanning six decades and featuring a striking new series, this must-see exhibition celebrates one of the most significant and respected Māori artists of his generation.

*Sandy Adsett, Poutipi, c.1988. Acrylic on board.
Collection of the artist. Photo: Norm Heke.*

A CLEAR DAY

KARL MAUGHAN



THE SUTER ART GALLERY | THROUGHOUT
FESTIVAL | GALLERY OPENING HOURS

Known for his rich garden paintings, this solo exhibition focuses on **Karl Maughan's** early practice. Drawn from both public and private collections, the works in this exhibition reveal early explorations of the motifs and techniques that have become central to his practice, including his distinctive approach to colour, composition and spatial strategy. Together, they offer a compelling glimpse into the development of one of Aotearoa's most recognised painters.



NGĀ MIHI, THANK YOU!

A huge, heartfelt thank you to everyone that helps to make this festival happen. Thank you to our team of dedicated volunteers, our incredible venues, and to our community and audience who come out and celebrate with us. Thank you to the artists who share their incredible mahi, and to the awesome people who support them!

OUR FESTIVAL TEAM

NELSON FESTIVALS TRUST BOARD:

Ali Boswijk (Chair) | **Luke Acland** |
Johnny O'Donnell (Te Rarawa, Te Aupōuri) |
Sarah Yarrow

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Artistic Director

Rose McGrannachan (she/her/ia)
Head of Operations

Kerry Sunderland (she/her/ia)
Pukapuka Talks Programme Lead

Lil della Porta (she/they/ia)
Marketing and Communications Lead

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VenueTech Technical & Production
Director | Head of Sound

Antony Hodgson (he/him/ia)
Head of Projection | Deputy Technical
& Production Director

Wendy Clease (she/her/ia)
Head of Lighting

Lydia Hannah Thomas (they/she/ia)
Programme Coordinator & Artist Liaison

Maria Anderson (she/her/ia)
Audience Experience Coordinator |
Access Coordinator | Tamariki &
Rangatahi Coordinator

Sam Cole (he/him/ia)
Mask Carnivale Project Manager

Rosie Pidd (she/her/ia)
Mask Carnivale Coordinator

FESTIVAL CREATIVE TEAM

A small but mighty team from around
Aotearoa, including:

Elephant Publicity
Festival PR and Media Relations

Melissa Banks and Steve Hussey
Festival Photography

Innit Creative
Festival Videography

AIRANA NGAREWA • ALAN BROWN • ALI MAU
ALISTAIR DEVERICK • AMY BOREVICH • ANNA CODDINGTON
ANNIE FAY • ANTHONIE TONNON • CASSIA JAMIESON • CATERINA MORENO
CHARISE RUST • CATHERINE CHIDGEY • CHELSEA WINTER • CLAIRE MABEY
DALJEET KAUA • DAMIEN WILKINS • DARCY VAN DILLEN • DONNA MCLEOD
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EMILIE & VICTORIA BRUCE • EMMANUEL REYNAUD • ERICA SKLENARS • FEN IKNER • FIONA SUSSMAN
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HIROAKI UMEDA • HOANI HOTENE • JAMES MCDONALD • JASON TE METE • JAZMIN WHITTALL • JED PARSONS
JO RANDERSON • JOEL BAXENDALE • JOHN VEA • JOL MULHOLLAND • JONATHAN MORGAN • KARIN MCCrackEN
KEIRA HOWAT • LATONYA WIGGINTON • MALCOLM IBELL • MANJIT SINGH • MATARIKI BENNETT • MEG WILLIAMS
MERENIA GRAY • MICHAEL BENNETT • MICHAEL LYELL • MICHELLE DUFF • MIKE HALL • MOSS TE URURANGI PATTERSON
NAOMI ARNOLD • NGĀHIRIWA RAUHIA • NGĀHUIA TE AWEKOTUKU • NICOLA GALLOWAY • NIKKI EVANS • NINA ROBERTSON
REGINALD GAVIN • OLI HOLLAND • PALOMA SCHNEIDEMAN • RACHEL PARIS • RALPH UPTON • REBECCA HAYTER
SHANNON FOWLER • ROSABEL TAN • ROY IRO • RUTENE SPOONER • SAMANTHA GEE • SAMARA AUTAGAVAIA • SYLVAN THOMSON
TUKIWAHO • TALIA PUA • TĀME ITI • TE WEHI RATANA • SONIA ORCHARD • SWAP GOMEZ • TOM KNOWLES • XIN JI • THEO TAYLOR