

Press Release

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Capital Welcomes back Festival for Children

Wellington is set to host the superstars of performing arts for children at the Capital E National Arts Festival, 7-21 March 2009. The full programme has now been announced and it includes the multi-award winning Patch Theatre Company from Adelaide, who rocked Wellington with *Sharon, Keep Ya Hair On* in 2007, with their Broadway-acclaimed *Pigs, Bears and Billy Goats Gruff*. The National Theatre for Children has brought together renowned New Zealand writer Dave Armstrong and composer Gareth Farr to create *Kia Ora Khalid*, a heart-warming musical journey exploring the refugee and migration stories of several New Zealand children. The work has been in development for two years and is directed by Sara Brodie. Melbourne's Coco's Lunch, 2007 ARIA nominees and world-renowned a capella artists, present *Rat, Trap, Snap!* and from Seattle, lyrical juggler, Thomas Arthur brings *Luminous Edge* to Wellington; a masterful display of performance art through the movement of objects and body in space.

The Capital E National Arts Festival takes place every two years, with many productions sold out completely in 2007 when over 32,000 tickets were purchased by schools and families throughout Wellington. The festival is staged at several central venues including Capital E, The Opera House, Downstage, the Paramount Theatre and Soundings Theatre in Te Papa. Programmes are available from Capital E and online.

Capital E Director Stuart Grant says, "With three world premieres and nine productions brand new to New Zealand, the fourth biennial Festival will inspire young people and open them to the magic of the performing arts. It's going to be a blast for all of Wellington, young and old!"

Other programme highlights include:

- Sydney-based puppetry company Krinkl present *Suitcase*, a touching exploration of poverty and riches, and *Ziggy Swift*, a hip-hopping legend from another dimension. Whether it's performing Matrix-like musical stunts or drawing pictures on the lowered stage floor with grains of rice, this enchanting dual performance will have children's eyes glued to the action.
- Java Dance Company is back with a brand new contemporary dance work commissioned for the festival, *How Big is Blue?* Choreographer Sacha Copeland has previously worked with well-known children's books (*Giraffes Can't Dance*, *Animal Undie Ball*), this time she shows how seemingly mundane daily objects and activities like sand, water, bubbles and play dough, can form the starting point for a magical flurry of the imagination.
- *Petting Zoo* turns Illot Green into a zoo with baby dinosaurs - and when their life size parents come home, things get really interesting! In this Erth production (Sydney), children truly can let their imagination go wild. Children can sit down amongst the hay bales and pet the baby animals - but don't step on the eggs.
- Direct from the 2008 New Zealand International Festival of the Arts, *Strange Resting Places* by Taki Rua Productions is being adapted for younger audiences. Created by Paolo Rotundo and Rob Mokaraka, this powerful work is set against the backdrop of WWII; two men, one Italian, one Maori, find themselves holed up together and realise they need each other to survive.
- Strike Percussion group present the world premiere of *Pulse!* A high energy music and movement extravaganza which will have audiences out of their seats and on their feet.
- The festival will start as it means to go on, with *Blast-Off*, an inclusive, fun for all atmosphere on Jack Ilott Green, from 11am till 3pm on Sunday March 7th. A four hour free performance programme and the building of a large-scale interactive art project for Civic Square to claim the space for children for the duration of the festival.
- *GlobalFest*, another free public celebration in Civic Square, will take place on Race Relations Day, Saturday 21 March, when a huge international cultural celebration of performance, craft, food and fun will wrap up the Festival.

Capital E National Arts Festival 7-21 March, 2009

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