



Media release

****STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 10AM SATURDAY 5 NOVEMBER, 2016****

CELLFISH

T.O.A PRODUCTIONS

CO-PRODUCED BY AUCKLAND ARTS FESTIVAL IN ASSOCIATION WITH SILO THEATRE

DATES / LOCATIONS: 8-14 March (Q Theatre) | 16-17 March (Te Oro)

WRITERS: Rob Mocaraka, Miriama McDowell and Jason Te Kare

DIRECTOR: Jason Te Kare

CAST: Miriama McDowell and Mark Ruka

Eight counts of unlawful entry using imagination, five counts of reckless use of Māori mythology, four counts possession and cultivation of Shakespeare, and one count dangerous operation of a voice class...

Cellfish is a brilliant new play written by a trio of triple-threat New Zealand theatre makers.

Rob Mocaraka (*Shot, Bro, Have Car Will Travel, Tama Tu*), Miriama McDowell (*Mahana, The Prophet, The Dark Horse, Paniora, No. 2*) and Jason Te Kare (*The Prophet, Glimmer, Waiora*) have co-written this delicious dark comedy which explores the lives and layers of a unit of hardened inmates in a men's prison.

Some are looking to improve their parole chances, others want to kill some time and one just wants to kill. Funny and insightful, this gripping new work takes us behind the walls of a New Zealand Correctional Facility and into the minds of its residents, who come face-to-face with a whole new nightmare: Shakespeare classes with Miss Lucy!

Two actors, Miriama McDowell and Mark Ruka (*The Prophet, Mahana, The Patriarch, The Rehearsal, Matariki, No. 2*) play multiple roles in a play where laughter and danger share the same cell.

Cellfish is the debut work from the recently created T.O.A Productions. It explores the complex issues around incarceration and the effect prison has on its inmates. The writing team engaged with former inmates and gang members as part of their research and development.

Director and co-writer Jason Te Kare says, "I find the prison world fascinating to explore dramatically. Inmate hierarchy when it's disrupted is incredibly Shakespearean, especially if you consider how that disruption happens and what the consequences are."

Co-writer and actor Miriama McDowell's film and television credits include *Mahana, The Dark Horse, No. 2, Hope and Wire* and *This Is Not My Life*. She is a member of Massive Theatre Company and made her theatre directing debut for Taki Rua Productions with Briar Grace-Smith's *Ngā Pou Wahine*. McDowell has recently returned from studying with Philippe Gaulier in Paris.



Co-writer Rob Mocaraka is also part of the creative team of the award-winning theatre piece *Strange Resting Places* which toured to American Sāmoa, Australia, London, Edinburgh, Singapore and almost every arts festival in NZ between 2007 and 2014. He's won best Newcomer at the Chapman Tripp Theatre Awards for his role in *Have Car Will Travel* by Mitch Tawhi-Thomas and his film credits include *Tama Tū* directed by Taika Waititi.

Director and co-writer, Jason Te Kare has over twenty years' experience in the theatre. He has worked with Massive Theatre Company, Taki Rua Productions, ATC's 2nd Unit and Tawata Productions. After starting his career as a young actor, in *Waiora*, Te Kare was drama producer for Radio NZ for nine years. He has Chapman Tripp Theatre Awards for Best Newcomer (*Flatout Brown*), and Best New Director and Director of the Year (*I, George Nēpia*).

Mark Ruka has over 15 years' experience as a director, producer, writer and actor across theatre, film and television.

Cellfish will play at two locations – Q Theatre's Loft from 8-14 March and Glen Innes' Te Oro from 16-17 March.

PERFORMANCE DETAILS

TICKETS	Q Theatre: GA \$45 GA Concession/Group \$39 Te Oro: GA \$25 GA Concession/Group \$20
WHERE & WHEN	Q Theatre (Loft): Wed 8 Mar 7.30pm, Thur 9 Mar 6.30pm, Fri 10 Mar – Sat 11 Mar 7.30pm, Sun 12 Mar 2.00pm & 7.00pm, Mon 13 Mar – Tue 14 Mar 8.00pm Te Oro: Thurs 16 & Fri 17 March 7.00pm
BOOKINGS	Q Theatre: qtheatre.co.nz 09 309 9771 or ticketmaster.co.nz 09 951 2501 Te Oro: teoro.org.nz 09 890 8560
DURATION	1hr 30 mins no interval
IMPORTANT INFO	Suitable for ages 16+ Contains strong language and adult themes
FOLLOW	@aklfestival #aklfest Festival trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cxrRTpSEIfk&feature=youtu.be
ABOUT THE AAF	Taking place annually in March, the Auckland Arts Festival is a globally recognised event that celebrates people and culture, and showcases the unrivalled location, cultural diversity and vibrant energy of New Zealand's largest city. Over 1.6 million people have attended the Festivals to date. Auckland Arts Festival is governed by the Auckland Festival Trust. Trustees are John Judge (Chair), Rick Carlyon, Evan Davies, Sarah Judkins, Tarun Kanji, Margaret Kāwharu MNZM, Jim Moser, Ben Taufua and Fred Ward. The Trust receives core funding from Auckland Council through the Auckland Regional Amenities Funding Act, and Creative New Zealand through the Toi Tōtara Haemata programme. Significant support for AAF 2017 is received from Foundation North, Pub Charity, NZ Community Trust and The Lion Foundation.
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