



**DANCE**  
**VICTORIA**  
THE WORLD'S BEST DANCE

111 – 2750 Quadra Street  
Victoria BC Canada V8T 4E8

[DanceVictoria.com](http://DanceVictoria.com)

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 5, 2024

## Ōkāreka Dance Company: a Contemporary Māori Performance Celebrating the Power of Women

**Wednesday, March 27, 7:30 PM**  
**McPherson Playhouse**

VICTORIA, BC. — In the spirit of Women’s History Month, Dance Victoria presents the Aotearoa/ New Zealand-based Ōkāreka Dance Company on March 27 at the McPherson Playhouse. The contemporary Māori dance ensemble will perform its landmark, all-female work *Mana Wahine [Powerful Women]*, a commanding multi-media tapestry of dance, song, music, and bold projections that celebrates female endurance and strength.

For a decade, *Mana Wahine [Powerful Women]* has moved audiences around the world with its mesmerising choreography and captivating storytelling inspired by the true story of Te Aokapurangi. A young Māori woman from Rotorua, she was captured in battle by a tribe from the Far North. She would return home many years later to single-handedly save her people from slaughter.

When Ōkāreka co-Artistic Director Taiaroa Royal learned that Te Aokapurangi was one of his ancestors, he was deeply moved and explained, “It struck a chord within me. I just wanted to make a work about the essence of women and how beautiful they are and the integrity they have, the hard work, the strength, the *mana*.”

Royal partnered with choreographers Taane Mete and Malia Johnston to create a one-of-a-kind multi-media collage of powerful imagery that transcends space and time. Māori Cultural Advisor to the piece, Tui Matira Ranapiri-Ransfield, infuses the work with her knowledge of traditional song, dance, and weaponry. Finally, this co-creative process is bolstered by the all-female cast of dancers who bring their own unique presence to the work by weaving in stories of their own matrilineal ancestry. The result is a dreamlike production with which audiences will identify regardless of culture or creed.

As part of Dance Victoria’s Community Engagement programs, co-Artistic Director Taiaroa Royal will lead a free Māori contemporary masterclass at Dance Victoria Studios. Dance Victoria’s presentation of Ōkāreka Dance Company is made possible with generous support from Season Sponsor Derma Spa, Lead Presentation Sponsor RITUAL Nordic Spa, TD Bank Group through the



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TD Ready Commitment, and public support from the Government of Canada, Canada Council for the Arts, Government of BC, BC Arts Council, and the CRD Arts Development office.

*“Ōkāreka Dance Company has hit the jackpot with this exploration of the strength, the spirit, the wiles and primal beauty of woman, specifically Māori woman. Five extreme dancers, three choreographers at the top of their game, a totally in-tune composer, exquisite lighting and audio-visual design and a wealth of cultural wisdom come together in one of the best contemporary dance performances we have seen in years.” —NEW ZEALAND HERALD*

### **About Ōkāreka Dance Company**

Ōkāreka was established to fuse contemporary dance with indigenous Māori themes and other genres to create authentic, diverse works. Led by senior performer Taiaroa Royal, Ōkāreka has become one of New Zealand’s most sought-after and prolific dance companies. Ōkāreka holds its provenance close to its heart. Through choreography, set design, and costume, the company strives to tell bold, spiritual stories that are of and from New Zealand. Through careful collaboration, the company seeks to extend its creativity and its influence by engaging experienced artists from around the globe to create evocative, beautiful dance works that tell a story. Ōkāreka is a company guided by Māori beliefs. These beliefs are brought to its work and its audiences.

**Ōkāreka Dance Company**  
**McPherson Playhouse**  
Wednesday, March 27, 7:30 PM

### **How To Buy Tickets**

**Phone:** The Royal and McPherson Box Office at **250-386-6121** or toll-free at **1-888-717-6121**, Monday to Friday, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm (Royal Theatre closed 1:00 to 1:30 pm)

**Online:** [DanceVictoria.com](http://DanceVictoria.com)

Visit the [Royal and McPherson Theatres website](#) for current Box Office details.

### *Single Ticket Prices (Non-Subscriber Pricing)*

A	\$52.50
B	\$46.25

[Pay Your Age](#) (ages 12 to 29) and [Night Moves](#) (ages 30 to 45) tickets are also available.



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### **About Dance Victoria**

Dance Victoria brings the *World's Best Dance* to the Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse and supports the development of new dance for the international stage from its studios in Quadra Village. Dance Victoria is a non-profit charitable society. [DanceVictoria.com](http://DanceVictoria.com)

### **Media Materials**

Email [anne-sophie@dancevictoria.com](mailto:anne-sophie@dancevictoria.com) to request high-resolution images and other media materials.

### **Media Contact**

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