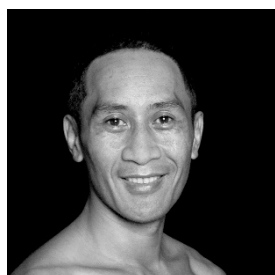


Taiaroa Royal, Artistic Director, Co-Choreographer (Te Arawa, Kai Tahu, Ngāti Raukawa, Uenukukōpako). Taiaroa graduated at the New Zealand School of Dance in 1984, has performed with dance companies Royal NZ Ballet, Black Grace (founding member) and Atamira Dance Company, to name a few. Tai was awarded the Te Tohu Toi Ke—Making A Difference Award for his contribution to Māori Contemporary Dance, the first dancer and the fifth recipient of this award; honoured by the Tempo Dance Festival’s ‘Honouring a Dancer’, where the industry celebrated his long outstanding successful career in New Zealand, and in 2011 accepted the Koowhiti Lifetime Achievement Award for outstanding Māori Dancer and Choreographer. In 2007 Tai formed ŌKĀREKA DANCE COMPANY with Taane Mete, and 2019 became the Company’s sole director. Tai has choreographed and performed for many different arts organisations including Christmas in the Park, NZ Opera - of which he has also been an associate director, and World of Wearable Art. In 2023, Tai was awarded the Toi Kō Iriiri Queer Arts Laureate for his contribution to the LGBTQI+ Arts community of New Zealand. Tai lives at Lake Ōkāreka, Rotorua.



Malia Johnston, Co-Choreographer, is a New Zealand choreographer and dance director who has created works for many of New Zealand's dance companies including Footnote Dance, the New Zealand Dance Company, and events such as the World of Wearable Arts and the Armistice centenary on 11 November 2018. From 2007 to 2014 Johnston was artistic director for the World of Wearable Art Awards show. She directed the World of Wearable Art show which travelled to Hong Kong's International Arts Festival in 2012 and was creative director for the 30th anniversary season in 2018. Johnston is a guest choreographer and tutor at the New Zealand School of Dance and a tutor in dance at Unitec Institute of Technology. She is one of the founders of her own company, Movement Of The Human. Directing and choreographing performances for large public outdoor events is an area Johnston works in, including a performance at Pukeahu National War Memorial Park called *He Wawa Waraki: Roaring Chorus* for the New Zealand Ministry of Culture and Heritage to commemorate the 1918 armistice that marked the end of World War I. In 2021 Johnston directed the opening of The Performance Arcade, *What if the City Was a Theatre?* programme in Wellington which was a collaboration with Johnston's Movement of the Human, kapa haka group Hiwa, Wellington Opera, and singer Sharn Te Pou.



Taane Mete, Co-Choreographer, is a New Zealand dancer, choreographer and yoga teacher. Mete affiliates with the Ngāti Kahungunu and Ngāti Koroki-Kahukura tribes in the North Island of Aotearoa, New Zealand. He graduated with honours from the New Zealand School of Dance in 1988. In 2008 he completed the Leadership New Zealand Programme, Pūmanawa Kaiārahi o Aotearoa. Mete is a dancer, choreographer and yoga teacher, and was a founding member of Black Grace Dance Company. He has danced

with Footnote Dance Company, the Douglas Wright Dance Company, Taiao Dance Company, and Fusion Dance Theatre, and the Atamira Dance Company, among others. Mete formed the Ōkāreka Dance Company in 2007 with Taiaroa Royal, and departed the Company in 2019. Mete featured in Show McCullagh's short film *Hurtle*, and Peter Jackson's King Kong and has appeared as a presenter for the television programme *Takataapui*.



Tui Matira Ranapiri-Ransfield, Cultural Adviser, Te Ariki Tapairu/Kuikui o Ōkāreka Dance Company

“I rere iho ai au i a Papatūānuku, i a Hinehauone, i a Hinetimata...., i a Kuraimonoa, i a Mākuratawhiti, i a Kūotepō, i a Hamoterangi, i a Whakaotirangi, i a Kōriko, i a Muriwhenua, i a Iwirau, i a Muriwai, i a Te Moana Kuia, i a Ihuparapara, i a Iwipūpū, i a Irena Pareraukawakawa Hokimā, i a Tini Paana, i a Hine-nui-te-pō....” I am the epitome quintessence of these goddesses, deities and ancestresses, within my inner being I have inherited their mana wahine, their mana tangata, their mauri mareikura, their wairuatanga! I have lived a life full of abundance and wealth! I am the love-child and first born of my dearest parents. I am the eldest of seven, five girls and two boys. I was raised on good values, good morals, practices and a rich whānau, hapū culture. I am blessed to have been reared by many female exemplars. All who were and are wāhine rangatira and āriki tapairu! Their characters are powerful, staunch, proud, intellectual and cultured. It all began with my conception and birth from my beautiful, influential, empowering Mother, Sweetheart, Pal and Mum, my loving nurturing elegant Nana, my loving kind humble Taua, my generous, lavish, unstinting Auntie and my many sagacious, inspiring Kuia, Hākui, Ruruhi, Taua, Nana, Ruahine, Aunties, cousins, sisters, nieces, mokopuna and friends who have unconditionally mentored and loved me. These learned women taught me compassion, respect, love, discipline, integrity, gentleness and kindness. They cultivated my mother culture in me, hospitality and caring for others, exposure and appreciation for most music, dance and the arts, instrumental in my education pursuits, supportive in my sporting recreational activities, guidance in enlightenment and spirituality knowledge and practice.... they were stupendous role models and excellent people, who fashioned and fed my whole being.... their greatness always awe-inspiring I will forever cherish and treasure....I descend from a long line of illustrious, exceptional, strong, skilled women.



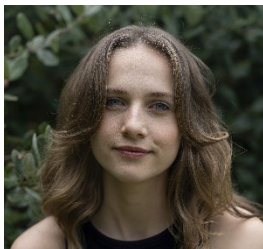
Vanda Karolczak, Production Coordination and Designer. Originally from Montreal, Quebec (Canada). Vanda has been living and working in Aotearoa since 1999. Her design work has spanned over 40 years covering theatre, dance, television, fashion, and music during time spent living in North America, the U.K, as well as New Zealand. She has a strong background in working in the music industry during her time in the UK and Canada touring with such acts as Robert Plant, Erasure, and Alexandre O’Neil and spent 5 years touring with Les Grandes Ballets Canadiens. Since coming to NZ Vanda has primarily been involved in the Indigenous contemporary dance space. She also has also been part of the Creative team for Ōkāreka Dance Company since 2014 and has designed for works such as *Mana Wahine* (Lighting), *Manawa* (Lighting), *Wired* (Lighting), and *Hōkioi me te Vwōhali* (Set and Lighting) which premiered at the *International Arts Festival* in Wellington 2020 and recently made its North American debut in Cincinnati, Ohio (2023). Vanda has also worked extensively with the Atamira Dance Company in various capacities since 2003. Her design work for Atamira includes the award winning *Ngai Tahu 32* (Lighting) and *Taonga* (Lighting and Set), *Tomo* (Lighting, Set, and Costumes), *Mitimiti* (Lighting),

and *Ngā Wai* (Lighting), among others, and the 2022 legacy work *Te Wheke* (Lighting) which completed a 4 week tour in North America in 2023. In the past year she was lighting designer for Auckland Theatre Company's 2023 production of *King Lear*. Vanda still enjoys touring but when home is based in West Auckland; living and continually being inspired by the beautiful West Coast Beaches and Waitakere Ranges.

Dancers (Mana Wahine Tour, 2024)



Jana Castillo, Dancer. Jana Castillo is one of Australia's most respected contemporary dancers, whose achievements to date are impressive alone, without taking the artist's disability into consideration; one that can rob her of movement, speech and cognition. Some of her career-landmarks include Winner of the 2018 Australian Dance Award for *Outstanding Performance by a Female Dancer*, Lead motion-capture actor on feature films *The Hobbit: The Battle of the five Armies* and *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes*, Dancer with Australian Dance Theatre, and Winner of the 2022 Green Room Award for 'Best Performer' (covering all genders).



Emma Cosgrave, Dancer, is a Ngāti Pūkenga dancer, choreographer, and scholar. Most recently, Emma danced with Footnote New Zealand Dance and Atamira Dance Company on various works touring Aotearoa/New Zealand. Emma has also performed alongside Guangdong Modern Company (China). Emma is a graduate of Dance Studies, University of Auckland and has completed her Honours and Masters in Dance.



Jessica Johns, Dancer. Born in Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Jess graduated from the New Zealand School of Dance and Sydney Dance Company. She has performed with companies such as Atamira Dance Company, New Zealand Dance Company, Movement of the Human, Java Dance Theatre and more. Jess is extremely passionate about teaching contemporary dance to tamariki.



Paige Shand Haami, Dancer. After graduating from NZSD in 2014, Paige went on to work with Tawata Productions, Taki Rua Productions, Footnote New Zealand Dance, Atamira Dance Company and Black Grace, touring both nationally and internationally. Paige then joined and is still a part of the legendary Cabaret company 'Le Crazy Horse de Paris', as the Crazy Girl 'Lola Kashmir' in Paris, France. She has performed to people such as Janet Jackson, Zendaya, Usher, Idris Elba, Pink and many more.



Abigail Rogers, Dancer. Born and raised in Christchurch, Abbie (Kāi Tahu, Te Arawa) is a dancer and emerging producer based in Auckland, New Zealand. Since 2019, Abbie has had the privilege of performing and collaborating with Ōkāreka Dance Company (Mana Wahine 2021/2022), Atamira Dance Company, Gabrielle Thomas, Kelly Nash and Sean MacDonald.



Toalei Roycroft, Dancer, (Ngāti Kahungunu, Tūwharetoa, Raukawa, Kauwhata, Hāmoa) is a New Zealand based artist that has been dancing since the age of 7. After graduating with a degree in contemporary dance, they have performed both nationally and internationally, holding the passion of telling stories – especially indigenous - through movement.

Production Team (Mana Wahine Tour, 2024)



Vanessa Reed, Stage Manager, has been working with Vanda Karolczak on numerous touring projects in the Contemporary Dance Community of Aotearoa, New Zealand since 2021 as well as a previous US Tour with the Atamira Dance Company in 2023. She holds the supporting role of Stage Manager as well as being instrumental in setting up the set and props for the show and executing any repairs. She understands and supports the Kaupapa Māori when working with the company and is the main support person for the dancers when in the theatres.



Rebekah Boyce, Audio-Visual, is the protégé of Rowen Pierce, the original audio-visual designer and creator of that section of the visual design. With this project's complicated video mapping needs, Rebekah has been entrusted to recreate Rowan's work and uphold its artistic elements when working in a variety of situations.

Artist Representative for North American Touring

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