

Unitec School of Creative Industries - Weekly Newsletter: 1 March 2021

UPDATE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL



Welcome to the start of Semester One, 2021. Today we had planned to welcome our new and returning students on to Te Noho Kotahitanga Marae. But the announcement by Government last Saturday night that Auckland would move back to level 3 for at least seven days from Sunday, 28 February, means we have reverted to working remotely with teaching going online this week. There's a great Irish saying that covers our start to this teaching year: "It's not always the expected that happens."

It's humbling to see how fast we've been to swing into gear this time - and with such care. Thank you all for your work in adapting our beginning of term to online experiences. We hope to be able to have our on-campus pōwhiri on Monday 15 March. Stay tuned!

Remote working has taught us some valuable lessons which will hold us in good stead for the rest of the year. 2020 reinforced the need to be agile, prepared and know our students well, their situations, and their needs. We need to have 'shadow' plans in place should we need to switch all our teaching and events online again. These things are all front of mind for each and every staff member in our School.

The key thing here is to keep all (but especially new) students connected to what's happening. There is more planning to do as we move through this phase of Lockdown, so please stay responsive. Thanks once again and kia kaha e te whanau. We can do this this (again)! It's not easy, and Mahi Kotahitanga and Ngākau Māhaki are clearly at the centre of what's happening across the School

It is also great to see progress being made on the facilities work at Building 108 which will be the new home for Design and Contemporary Arts and Screen Arts. Building 108 has been hidden under a cloak of scaffolding and plastic for four months now and construction is in full flight. Demolition works are 90% complete. The Infrastructure Operations team recently took members of the Creative Industries team on a walk-through of the building to show them the progress that has been made as well as a rare opportunity to take a walk on the roof. The Infrastructure Operations team is hosting walk throughs for staff over the coming weeks. I will share more news as it comes to hand.

In the meantime, we continue to be guided by Unitec's core values: *Rangatiratanga - Authority and Responsibility, Wakaritenga - Legitimacy, Kaitiakitanga - Guardianship, Mahi Kotahitanga - Co-operation* and *Ngākau Māhaki - Respect*. All the best for the start of a new teaching and learning year and stay safe and well.

Ngā mihi

Dr Vanessa Byrnes

NEWS

2011 Unitec directing & writing graduate **Sam Brooks** has won the Highly Commended award at this year's Adam NZ Play Award honouring the best in new writing for theatre in Aotearoa, for two new plays he has written: *A Rich Man* and *Future of the Party*. Screen Arts guest tutor Katie Wolfe won Best Play by a Māori Playwright and was runner up overall for the main award. Read more [here](#).



Unitec Maori and Pacific alumni are among the recipients of NZ On Air and Te Māngai Pāho funding of over NZD\$500,000 each, announced last week for a new six-episode anthology series set to explore supernatural stories of Māori, Pasifika, and Filipino cultures. The series will screen during prime-time on TVNZ 2, and support six storytelling teams in amplifying their voices and cultures to a variety of audiences.

Tusitala Media (**Danny Aumua**), will produce *26:29*: A group of millennial vloggers enter an abandoned church in Auckland and uncover the truth of its mysterious past.

Brown Sugar Apple Grunt Productions (**Kiel McNaughton, Kerry Warkia** - pictured right) will helm *Te Āo Mārama*:

a story of a glamorous, ball-breaking, recently deceased wahine, who threatens to haunt her neighbour if he doesn't help her pass over to the afterlife. More [here](#).



2018 Unitec acting alumnus and New Zealand Men's netball captain **Kruze Tangira** has become the first male netball player to be signed with major sports giant PUMA. Read more [here](#).

A number of Unitec dance students and alumni are performing during Auckland Fringe 2021. [Separately, In Tandem](#) (March TBC Old Folks Assoc) is a double-bill contemporary dance show choreographed by **Miriam Eskildsen** and collaborators, featuring dance alumna **Veronica Chengen Lyu, Cecilia Wilcox** and **Jacob Reynolds**.

2020 dance alumna, **Sharvon Mortimer** and **Oli Mathiesen** present their new short contemporary dance work [Night & Mortar](#) (March TBC). Overall winners of Short+Sweet 2019 the duo's new innovative theatrical piece explores the shadows of film noir through comedy, drama and tragedy.



[VIRAL DISRUPTION](#) (25-27 Feb TAPAC) is a choreographic exploration of the far-reaching effects of the coronavirus pandemic and how they have influenced our society, Choreography and performance by **Lulu Qiu** and grad **Nicole Wilkie**.

[Let Them Eat Cake](#) (25-27 Feb Basement Theatre), by grad **Faasu Afoa Purcell**, and featuring grads **Terry Morrison, Amber Jackson, Chantal Diack** supported by Production Design and Management grad, **Paul Bennett** (tech/lighting), examines the contradictory and ever-evolving idea of self and identity.



2003 Unitec acting alumnae **Stacey Leilua** is drawing rave reviews from American critics for her portrayal of Ata Maivia, mother of Hollywood actor and former pro-wrestling legend Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson in the new TV comedy series *Young Rock* which debuted on NBC in late February. "She radiates so much natural warmth that your eyes are drawn to her in every scene," writes Jen Cheney for [Vulture](#). Having recently returned to New Zealand, Leilua was interviewed about her experience on *Young Rock* [here](#), while also appearing last Friday, 26 February on TV3's [The Project](#) with fellow cast members & Unitec alumni, **John Tui** and **Fasitua Amosa**.



EVENTS CALENDAR:

MARCH

15	Semester One – Powhiri Welcome @1pm TNK Wharenuī
4-21	Auckland Arts Festival

Check out more news on our social media channels, [Unitec's Art & Design Facebook page](#) or [Unitec's Performing & Screen Arts Facebook page](#).

For all other social media updates on Unitec's School of Creative Industries visit our [official facebook page](#) and Instagram & Twitter channels [@unitec_creative](#)