

Te Rākau Theatre and Ōtaki College present

# THE BATTALION

by Helen Pearse-Otene

This collaboration with Ōtaki College features rangatahi and actors from Ōtaki, Porirua, Pōneke and Te Awakairangi.

## SYNOPSIS

A moving story about friendship, loyalty, madness and redemption – seen through the eyes of Paora Matene, a war veteran, and relayed to his wayward charges Rimini and George.

Sent back to their whānau in the “one cow town” of Tamariri, Rimini and George aren’t interested in any of the locals or their family history – they just want to get back to the city.

It was the same for five young men in 1939. Drawn in by the excitement of war, they run away to the army and join the 28th Māori Battalion. Thus begins their adventure of a lifetime, from their training in England to their first encounter with the enemy in Greece. The two stories collide with the youngsters learning valuable life lessons.

KAIWHAKAARI   PERFORMERS		Tāne Chorus	Wiremu Bousaab Dylan Fa'atui Te Tira Hou Taka Josiah Jenkins Kolio Tyrone Taueki-Monaghan
Paora Matene	Tamati Moriarty		
Sue Lewis	Arihia Hayvice		
Rimi Davies	Oriwa Jury*		
	Mareikura Kāka*		
George Davies	Taleah Falamoe*		
	Caitlin Henderson*		
Eleni Poulloi	Parearohi Edginton		
Anaru Kingi	Te Ata Tu Patelesio		
Wiremu Davies	Kauri Leach		
Charles Murray	Zion Matagi-Kolio		
Joseph Matene (Jo-Boy)	Taurus Tumoana		
Mathias Schwartz	Zechariah Julius-Donnelly		
Wāhine Chorus	Kayla Hayward		
	Steph Crewther		
	Jewel Te Wiki		
	Marea Winterburn		
<i>* actors alternating roles</i>			
		CREATIVE PAEPAE & PRODUCTION	
		Director	Jim Moriarty
		Writer	Helen Pearse-Otene
		Choreographers	Kimberly Skipper Jeremy Davis
		Facilitators	Tamati Moriarty Dylan Fa'atui Ari Hayvice Jewel Te Wiki Cara Louise Waretini
		Dance coaching	Feet with Heat
		Sound	Helen Pearse-Otene
		Lighting	Lisa Maule
		Stage management	Dylan Fa'atui

## DIRECTORS NOTE - Jim Moriarty

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā iwi, tēnā koutou katoa,

This is Te Rākau's 18th year of presenting *The Battalion* in partnership with communities throughout Aotearoa and the world. This production with Ōtaki College and rangatahi from the wider Wellington region stands alongside previous productions in terms of its challenges, it's hard work, it's community support and ultimately the taonga we offer you in viewing this work with us. The rangatahi have learnt through the Te Rākau way of creating theatre and we should all be proud of their cumulative effort. We offer our sincere thanks and gratitude to Andy Fraser the principal and his staff and in particular Joanna Devane and Tamsin Dashfield-Speight. We also thank the parents of the rangatahi who have supported them in going the distance through rehearsals over Term 3 and the school holidays.

My deep appreciation extends also to the Te Rākau team including the writer Helen, key choreographers Jeremy and Kimberly, producer & production Lisa and facilitators Dylan, Ari and Jewel as well as your local heroine Oriwa. I thank Jo and Rodney the choreographers and coaches for the swing dance who have a long association with Te Rākau.

To make the play happen I also acknowledge with thanks Creative New Zealand, the Ministry of Education - Creatives in Schools and the Ministry of Youth Development with additional support from some private sponsors.

The biggest thanks must go to the rangatahi who in these covid times have committed over 250 hours of their out-of-school time to honour the stories in the play, their ancestors and their futures.

### TŪPATO / WARNINGS:

This play contains loud noises, flashing lights, and references to war violence and historic sexual trauma. This production is frequently performed in partnership with secondary schools, and features performers aged from 13 years old. Experienced mental health practitioners of Te Rākau, Jim Moriarty and Helen Pearse-Otene attend each performance and facilitate the kōrero / conversation at the end of the play.

Safe to Talk: 0800 044 334 or text 4334 | Youthline: 0800 376 633 or text 234

### ABOUT TE RĀKAU THEATRE

Te Rākau Hua o Te Wao Tapu was established in 1989 by Jim Moriarty and Jerry Banse with a trust deed inherited from the Māori Theatre Trust and is Aotearoa's longest surviving independent Māori theatre company. It is led by Jim Moriarty and Helen Pearse-Otene who use the unique Te Rākau Theatre Marae model to create theatre productions, run workshops and build capacity and health within groups and the communities they sit within.

