

god boy

AUCKLAND THEATRE COMPANY VOLVO

BREAK A LEG

producer

On behalf of us all at ATC is my pleasure to welcome you to the fifth production of the Volvo WILD CHILD Season, THE GOD BOY by lan Cross.

Since its first publication forty years ago, the story of Jimmy Sullivan has claimed a place in New Zealand literary history. Set against an idyllic rural backdrop, redolent with sights and sounds unique to this country, a dark, all-too-human narrative unfolds with its frightening potency intact. The term "New Zealand Gothic" comes to mind. As in the novel, a theatre audience bears mute witness to impending tragedy, helpless to alert the young narrator of his own story's inevitable conclusion. Although the power of organised religion as an agent of social conformity and oppression may have waned in the twenty-first century, equivalent forces are still to be found. Unemployment and alcohol, societal expectation and personal disappointment continue to destroy families, disrupt lives and place children in the path of domestic violence. It remains a sad paradox that the beauty of the land does not always inspire the minds of its people and that the innocent will most often be the first to suffer.

We welcome tonight's cast and crew, particularly Frank Brown, Darien Takle, Michael Keir-Morrissey, Chris Wiley and Natalie Dennis, all of whom make their ATC debuts with this production. After many outstanding turns onstage, we are privileged to welcome Stuart Devenie as Director. As well, we congratulate ATC Production Manager Ross Joblin on his design debut. As ever, we gratefully acknowledge the ongoing support of Creative New Zealand and the Auckland City Council and applaud our Corporate Partners for their vital contribution. Special thanks to Third Stage Ltd for their invaluable support.

We hope you enjoy tonight's performance of an iconic New Zealand tale and invite you to the world premiere of another local story, James Griffin's SERIAL KILLERS, which opens at the Herald Theatre in September.

Best wishes

Simon Prast PRODUCER

VOLVO

"When things are good, why doesn't God just let them stay that way?" Jimmy Sullivan in THE GOD BOY.

"Come up and see me sometime!"
The immortal words of Mae West.
With the literal translation; if you think things are good now, wait, they get even better.

Enjoy the first, with Auckland Theatre Company's tremendous production of the New Zealand's classic, THE GOD BOY.

Experience proof of the second, at Scandinavian Motors, 64 Great North Road, Grey Lynn.

al J

John Snaith Volvo New Zealand Join us at Circa, the winning restaurant of the hotel section of the 1999 Corbans Wine & Food Challenge. There was steep competition from 75 other restaurants, all of which were judged by a panel of 14 wine and food experts. Circa is a great place to meet, relax and enjoy a drink or meal before or after an Auckland Theatre Company show.

Let us tempt you with a selection from our latest menu:

Starters

Sugar roasted pears with fried goats cheese in a light cider dressing
Spiced quail fritters on a lentil salsa with mango essence
Black tiger prawns and Morton Bay Bug dumpling around a leek salad with mulled red wine

Mains

Seared salmon on saffron smashed potato Charred fillet of beef on caramelised onion and blue cheese rosti

with a rich port jus

Pot roast chicken breast on
thyme scented fondant potato
and corn puree

Desserts

Caramelised lemon tart, lemon sorbet and a poppy seed biscuit Summer fruit terrine on a glazed champagne sabayon Chocolate nemisis under a white chocolate marscapone

We look forward to welcoming you.



John Clarke GENERAL MANAGER Rydges Hotel Auckland

STAGE

Third Stage Ltd has been associated with Auckland Theatre Company since the Company's inception in 1993, over the years being responsible for providing the set builds for most of the ATC productions as well as back-up services such as lighting and special effects.

Third Stage Ltd are dedicated to supporting the Arts in New Zealand, the main interest being Live Theatre, Drama, Opera and Dance. We also provide the same services in the corporate world for product launches and award ceremonies.

Third Stage Ltd is proud to have been involved in the growth of Auckland Theatre Company, their consistently high standard of productions and their commitment to the theatre audience of Auckland.

We are therefore pleased to be able to sponsor the set build of this production of THE GOD BOY and we wish it every success.

Rob, Graham, Matthew and Glen at Third Stage Ltd look forward to an ongoing relationship with Auckland Theatre Company in the future.



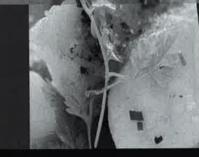


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Pacific rhythms

New York style





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Circa restaurant is the winner of the 1999 Corban's Food and Wine Challenge - Best Hotel Restaurant

Cross

Though the story of THE 800 BOY is tragic, the audience reaction to it inke to near at momen's during a nurformance is laughter (other moments, of course, each for cuite different responses). But the laughter in the story, that I many Sullivan talls, means that an audience is sharing a happier dimension of his young Tie and finds in his naivety, his innocence and his unduenchable soi it a reassurance that he could well survive the disasters overwhelming his family.

THE GOD BOY, eased on the novel of the same name, has invisito my writing life that go some distance back in time. First, to 1944, when as a young reporter in Wellington. I covered the Supreme Countries of a soboling trinteen-year-old boy who was found guilty at shooting and it ling his mother. Bleven years later, living in Bosten on a Harvasa University followship, I whole a short story in the third person about a boy receiving a gift on his birthday that eaused his parents to quarter. It simply didn't work shull discarded it. A few weeks later I watched a play on network to existen (in thise pre-tone days, straight tolevision drams was a five presentation). The play was a dramptised version of the short story IM A FOOL by Sherwood Anderson. In it, a young actor played an adolescent boy giving direct to camera an emotional account of what he saw as a diseaser in his life. His performance was so magnetising it caused me to try re-writing my discarded short story as it would be cold by the boy himse. It









When I returned to New Zealand my story had grown into four or five thousand words and was shaping as a novel. I resumed writing it, now with my mind casting back to the boy in the dock on trial for murder. It was my intention that Jimmy Sullivan, in a completely different parents. But Jimmy had other ideas. He virtually pushed me to one side to tell his own story, with a sometimes funny naivety and a confused reaction to the unhappy world of his mother, father and sister. He enlarged upon the religosity I had invested him with (based on memories of my early education by nuns) and raged at God for what was going wrong in his family, even as he took upon himself the burden of guilt for its terrible outcome.

A year or two after the novel was published around the world, I was to see again that actor whose performance prompted me to re-write an unsuccessful short story. In a Wellington cinema I couldn't restrain myself from exclaiming 'that's him' to my wife and pointing to James Dean on the screen (for me, of course, the movie actor never matched his performance as a tormented youth on live television years before). I also was to find out the future of the real-life boy of that 1944 murder trial. After his release from custodial care, he later married and had children. But, like James Dean, in a strange twist of their causal links to THE GOD BOY, he was killed in a car accident

QA

Mother & Son, Darien Takle and Frank Brown in conversation about their roles in THE GOD BOY and how life in the 1950's compares to the present day.

Darien: How does rehearsing compare to school?

Frank: Oh, it's more fun and good to be able to interact with adults. You can be yourself at rehearsals whereas you are limited in being able to express yourself at school.

F: Okay Mum, what's it like to be a 50's Mum? You're an actress, singer, writer, director, artist...

 \mathbf{D} : ...But a terrible housewife! I would never have passed muster in the 50's.

F: 'Passed muster' sounds like a 50's saying!

D: Whoops! So how different are we to Jimmy and his family?

F: We don't go to church. Jimmy is naïve: misinterprets everything. Jimmy is brighter than his parents and has more respect for them. Hair styles are different.

D: In the 50's there was no big fear about children staying out late when it gets dark.

F: I can't even go up to the dairy after dark without you having a fussy fit!

D: People have heaps of clothes now and we are guided by fashion labels. What's the in look, Frank?

F: The Skating Brands, Dickies, T-shirts, Jeans, Low-riding, long hem looks, Caps and Beanies.

D: I always wanted to be a Beatnik.

F: What's a Beatnik?

D: We had to wear our pony tails no higher than an inch above the collar or the headmistress would pull it down painfully!

D: Holidays are different too. I had an idyllic childhood going to a Batch at Lake Tarawera and swimming, building huts and tramping for weeks on end. Also there was no

sun-awareness. We lay on the beach covered in oil and cooked.

F: I've experienced a bit of that, but nowadays kids just hang out in town. The feel for life that Jimmy had at the beach relates to my childhood at our

Sandspit Batch: swimming, playing 'War' in the cliffs with friends

and Dad.

D: What is your friends' reac-

D: What is your friends' reaction to your getting this job?
F: "How much are you

getting paid"!





FRANK BROWN as The God Boy

What is your most marked characteristic?

My laugh – it sounds it sounds like I'm having an asthma attack.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?

Being able to have and do anything I want with some limits (some).

What is your over-riding memory of your childhood?

Being too scared to swing into the lake when I was five.

What do you consider the most overrated virtue?

What's a virtue?

What is your greatest extravagance? Clothes, shoes, skateboarding stuff.

What is your favourite journey? Having a holiday in Bali.

If you were to come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?

Someone with rich parents.

What kind of faith do you prescribe to? Protestant background.

What is your motto?
"Guys can do anything!"



NATALIE DENNIS



What is your most marked characteristic?

My hair is red.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?

A house in the bush, by the sea with a huge family and a dog, a duck, some chickens, a vege garden and no cats.

What is your over-riding memory of your childhood?

Being read to and the smell of books.

What do you consider the most overrated virtue?

Righteousness.

What is your greatest extravagance? SHORTLAND STREET, XEMA, Sleeping in on sundays.

What is your favourite journey? Falling in love.

If you were to come back as a person or thing, what do you

think it would be?

I'd like to come back as Peter Pan.

What kind of faith do you prescribe to?

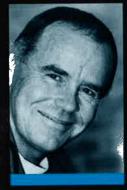
To have faith.

What is your motto?

"Life shrinks or expands in proportion to your courage."

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:





MICHAEL KEIR-MORRISSEY

What is your most marked characteristic? I'm a male.

What is your idea of perfect happiness? Loving my mate.

What is your over-riding memory of your childhood?

My family.

What do you consider the most overrated virtue?

None.

What is your greatest extravagance? Court battles.

What is your favourite journey? Life.

If you were to come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?

Plankton.

What kind of faith do you prescribe to? Hope.

What is your motto?

"Be responsible."



ELIZABETH MCRAE

s Sister Angela & the Fat Lady

(f) ounded for me. There on the cross

He was wounded for me.

Some my transgressions and now I am free
For there on the cross He was wounded for me

At primary school we sang this to the tune of VILLIKINS and HIS DINAH. It was General Booth who asked why the Devil should have the best tunes. I was at a state school and we had religious instruction from a local Salvationist once a week. I started school about a decade before Jimmy Sullivan. To us Protestants, the Mickey Doolan convent school was a complete mystery – school uniforms, penguins for teachers and, according to our parents, it wasn't quite British. The Doolans seemed to have more time for the Pope than for our Royal Family.

My school was a friendly sunny place, a cross between a Health camp and your average Ponsonby coffee bar. It was a new school serving a large state housing area in Khandallah, Wellington. The school was run on "Play Way" lines, i.e. according to the non-selective and relatively non-competitive educational theories of Dr. Clarence Beeby – very controversial at the time. Learning had to be child friendly and in my memory it was.

Beeby said that he wanted to establish the intellectual respectability of muscular skills. For the first time craft, art and music became compulsory subjects at primary school. We lay on mats and listened to Debussy's SUBMERGED CATHEDRAL, Boccherini's MINUET and the stirring strains of THE MOLDAU.

As you get older your childhood tends to take on a burnished hue so I must be careful. However I do become slightly defensive when the late forties and fifties are depicted as bland and boring. I think we were laying the foundations for a sense of national identity. There was full employment, a social security system, and fine arts, poetry, short stories, pottery and domestic architecture were burgeoning.

I would like the remarkable Doctor Beeby to have the final word:

"I don't want life after death, thank you very much. I don't want immortality. I could never be as lucky in another life as I was in this one."

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Auckland Theatre Company: COLLECTED STORIES, THE CRIPPLE OF INISHMAAN, THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS, SOCIAL CLIMBERS, UNCLE VANYA Mercury Theatre: ONCE A CATHOLIC,

Mercury Theatre: ONCE A CATHOLIC, MIDDLE AGE SPREAD, DIRTY LINEN, MARAT/SADE, UNDER MILKWOOD, THE CRUCIBLE, CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE, DARK OF THE MOON, THE ADMIRABLE CRICHTON

Television: SHORTLAND STREET, HOME MOVIE, COUNTRY G.P., A GOING CONCERN

Film: JUBILEE, SCARECROW, NEVER SAY DIE, AN ANGEL AT MY TABLE, DEATH IN THE FAMILY, RETURN JOURNEY, THE SECRET, GORDON BENNETT, ONE OF THOSE BLIGHTERS, A DOLL'S HOUSE



DARIEN TAKLE

Ability to disappear at dishes time.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?

Lying on the beach, swimming in the sea

What is your most marked

characteristic?

What is your over-riding memory of your childhood?

and reading lots of good books.

Leaping off the jetty into Lake Tarawera.

What do you consider the most overrated virtue?

Growing old gracefully.

What is your greatest extravagance?
Pavalova and having two children
(unrelated events), HOUSE & GARDEN

magazines, N.Z Art.

What is your favourite journey?

15 years as a solo mother / come fulltime actress. (I grew up in a hurry!)

If you were to come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?

Cary Grant or an artist living beside the water

What kind of faith do you prescribe to?

Zen Buddhist lightly sautéed in Bahaii with a dash of everything else thrown in.

What is your motto?

"Keep on Keeping On."

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

Musicals: PiAF (Edith Piaf), EVITA (Evita), LES MISERABLES (Fantine), INTO THE WOODS (The Witch), THE WIZARD OF OZ (Dorothy), GODSPELL Tour England 1977

Film: THE LOST TRIBE (Ruth Scarry)

Television: POSSESSION, XENA (Six years as Cyrene – Xena's Mother)

Solo Shoves: DARIEN TAKLE SINGS BRECHT

CD: 'NO REGRETS' (Available in Women's Bookshop – Ponsonby)

BY IAN CROSS

By arrangement with Playmarket This is the fifth production of the VOLVO 2000 Season of Wild Child THE GOD BOY opened at the Herald Theatre 21 July 2000

> Frank Brown Jimmy Sullivan Natalie Dennis Molly Sullivan Elizabeth McRae Sister Angela & the Fat Lady

Michael Keir-Morrissev Tom Sullivan

Martyn Sanderson Bloody Jack & Father Giligan Darien Takle Flo Sullivan

Chris Wiley Joe Waters

Director Stuart Devenie Designer Ross Joblin Lighting Designer **Bryan Caldwell** Wardrobe Elizabeth Whiting Stage Manager Frith Walker Technical Manager T.O. Robertson

Operator Stephen Morrison Props Suzanne Gratkowski Wardrobe Assistants Joanne Hawke & Denise Hosty

Religious Consultant Father Bruce Bolland

Set Construction Third Stage Ltd.

There will be a 15-minute intermission

AUCKLAND THEATRE COMPANY

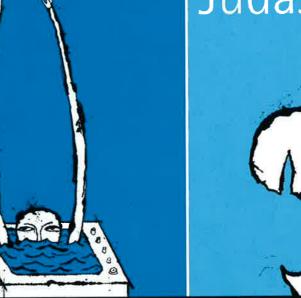
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Original music and sound recording by Jason Smith

Killers Judas Kiss



6 September - 21 October HERALD THRATRE

JAMES GRIFFIN

"Sure he's deaf, dumb and blind but in some actors that's a step in the right direction."

For the writers of the TV hospital soap "Heart of Hearts" the pressures of creative fatigue and network interference are compounded by falling ratings and a temperamental lead actor who cannot act. Having cannibalised each other's lives for story-line inspiration, they vent their frustration by devising a particularly uncomfortable demise for the creatively challenged young thespian. However, when the actor discovers his scripted fate, he loses much more than the plot and confronts his "killers" armed with a "surprise" new ending.

James Griffin turns his prodigious talent to the theatre for the first time with this smart, irreverent and lethally witty comedy of behind-the-small-screen manners and morality. Commissioned by AIC, the world premiere of SERIAL KILLERS promises a telegenic season of mayhem, mirth and quite possibly, murder!

Starring: Stuart Devenic, Oliver Driver, Jennifer Ludlam, Elizabeth Hawthorne and Rime Te Wiata

BOOK NOW AT TICKETEK 307 5000 UPCOMING ATC ATTRACTIONS

5 October - 4 November MAIDMENT THEATRE

DAVID HARE

"The truth about a person is only visible through love. Love is not the illusion. Life is."

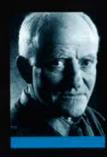
London 1895. Surrounded by friends and supporters, poet, playwright and wit Oscar Wilde awaits arrest for "acts of gross indecency" in his suite at the Cadogan Hotel. Swayed by his transcendent love for Lord Alfred Douglas (Bosie), he dismisses all pleas to seek sanctuary in Europe, choosing instead to face his accusers. Two years later, ravaged by the hard labour of his imprisonment, he is reunited with the young aristocrat in Italy, where the true nature and magnitude of his sacrifice is revealed.

David Hare completes his trilogy of love plays begun with SKYLIGHT and AMY'S VIEW with a sensuous account of one man's forbidden love for another and the awesome price he paid for it. Commemorating the centenary of his death, THE JUDAS KISS is a poetic and impassioned tribute to a legendary wild child:

Starring: Raymond Hawthorne as Oscar Wilde with Craig Parker and Daniel Gillies

WARNING: CONTAINS NUDITY

BOOK NOW ON 308 2383



MARTYN SANDERSON

as Bloody Jack and Father Giligar

Even though I was brought up as a fundamentalist Protestant, Ian Cross's story of a Catholic childhood was one of the first pieces of literature that spoke to me of recognizable, New Zealand, people and situations. Now, looking for a frame of mind in which to approach the play, I tried to recall what "God" meant to me as a child of Jimmy Sullivan's era – half a century ago...

God was the Father of all fathers.

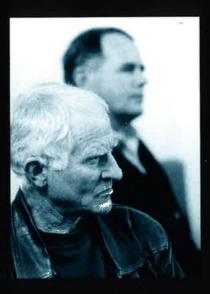
God was the holy Terror. He would let the Devil get you if you were a millionth of an inch less than perfect.

God was everywhere. He could see inside your head at all times, even when you were asleep. There was nowhere to hide.

God was Love. He sent His only son down to earth to be tortured and killed – but it was our fault that He had to.

God was the Judge of all judges. He gave you a choice between doing what you were told or going to Hell after you died, which meant you wouldn't really be dead because you would feel the terrible pain of being burnt alive for ever and ever and ever and there was no escape. (No wonder Jimmy Sullivan nearly pooped himself!).

Nobody in the entire history of the world, except Jesus, could do what



they were told without making a single mistake, so everyone, including your mum and dad and sisters and brothers, and even church ministers and newborn babies, was a sinner. We were all born condemned.

For us Protestants, the only way to avoid being burnt alive forever and ever was to believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This was called having faith.

Catholics, we thought, were different: they could sin as much as they liked and then go to confession and the priest would put in a word for them. But this was really cheating on God, so He'd get them anyway.

I didn't have the guts to accuse God as Jimmy Sullivan does. But I did take an opportunity to study a little theology and unravel some of this stuff. It's still a painful area to revisit.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Founding director of Downstage
Theatre. Has worked as actor, director
and scriptwriter in films, television,
radio and live theatre in New Zealand
and Australia for nearly forty years.
AIC productions: Sorin in THE SEAGULL,
Ninth Juror in TWELVE ANGRY MEN.



CHRIS WILEY

as Joe Water



What is your most marked characteristic?

It was my hair, but I doubt it will be after "short back 'n' sides".

What is your idea of perfect happiness?

College holidays.

What is your over-riding memory of your childhood?

Large birthday parties.

What do you consider the most overrated virtue?

None.

What is your greatest extravagance? Video games.

What is your favourite journey?

Anywhere, as long as it's in the opposite direction from college.

If you were to come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?

Myself again – I hope

What kind of faith do you prescribe to?

What is your motto?

Christian:

"What goes around comes around."

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

ENTERTAINMENT THRU THE CENTURY, CHARLIE CHAPLIN Selwyn Theatre, Royal NZ Ballet (Dracula Extra) OKLAHOMA (Ike Skidmore) Selwyn Theatre, AURORA'S WEDDING (Ivan)

DIRECTOR Stuart Devenie

In 1954, the year in which THE GOD BOY is set, the total workforce comprised 787,700 individuals. Of these, women represented 185,100 or about 25% of paid workers. Official unemployment stood at 0.1%. Total external trade expressed per head of population was second globally only to Canada. With this configuration, our trade was nearly double that of the UK and nearly four times that of the United States. In 1954, the United Kingdom took 67% of our total exports, Australia nearly 2% and Japan 1.3%. Under the Marriage Act, New Zealand in 1954 had 2,765 officiating ministers. Of these, 602 were Roman Catholics and 504 were Church of England. There were three murders in New Zealand that year. In 1950, Pope Pius XII had decreed that acceptance of the bodily assumption into heaven by the Virgin Mary was an article of faith.

In 1954, the pubs closed at 6.00pm. Shops were open from 8.30am till 5.30pm Monday to Thursday and until 9.00pm on Fridays. Over the weekend the corner dairy could legally sell milk and bread but not Sellotape or scrubbing brushes. We played rugby and listened to it on the wireless. We had two legal forms of gambling, horse racing and "Tatts", the Australian National Lottery. The main streets of towns and cities between the hours of 9.00am and 3.00pm were the exclusive providence of women, babies and infants.

All primary school children received regular, free dental care at school. Every day, throughout primary school, all children received a half a pint of fresh, if warm, milk. A number of households had no washing machine and women did the family washing in large wood burning coppers. Women's dresses were colourful. Men wore hats. If a child was an hour late home it was a cause of irritation and not anxiety.

1954 was a time of rigid conformity, some say "drab". The word, "different" was a synonym for "wrong". The mischief children created for their parents now seems hopelessly quaint. The mischief parents create for their child may not have changed that much.

Directing THE GOD BOY has returned much of the typography of my own childhood as I hope it will for many of you. It has been a rare privilege to work with a fine new actor in the "God Boy" himself.

DESIGNER. Ross Joblin

What is your most marked characteristic?

My inability to make decisions.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?

A sunny day on a beach, sitting under a Pohutukawa tree with my wife and children.

What is your over-riding memory of your childhood?

My mother smothering siblings and myself with coconut oil on a beach with no Pohutukawa tree.

What do you consider the most overrated virtue?

Moderation.

What is your greatest extravagance? Wine

What is your favourite journey? To the Pohutukawa tree.

If you were to come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be? Me again,



What kind of faith do you prescribe to?

A mixture of Scottish Presbyterian, Irish Catholicism and the "12 Steps".

What is your motto?
"This too will pass."

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

As Stage or Production Manager, in excess of 100 productions for ATC, Court Theatre, Downstage, Circa, Taki Rua, Canterbury Opera, Fortune Theatre, Centrepoint Theatre, International Festival of the Arts. As Designer, LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN, TRAVELS WITH MY AUNT, SIMPLY DISCONNECTED for Circa Theatre.

LIGHTING Bryan Caldwell

What is your most marked characteristic?

I'm a redhead, it's always pointed out to me.

What is your idea of perfect happiness? Eureka.

Where would you like to live?
3 months Paris, 3 months Rome, 6 months international Space Station.

What do you consider the most overrated virtue?

Godliness.

What is your greatest extravagance? 6 weeks in Marin, California.

What is your favourite journey? To Eureka.

If you were to come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?

Coming back into any other culture would be quite an insight, I could do that for several lifetimes.

Who is your favourite poet and why?

Etzo Kuratama - reads like the thrill of the hunt, with the twisting scent of urban commerce.



What is your favourite poem and why?

PROPAGATING THE FUTURE ALTERNATIVES –
A poem about ghosts haunting a cyber reality and the possibility of leaving traces on the fluid landscape.

What is your motto?
Two feet in the 21st Century.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

Lighting THIS IS IT! Auckland Millennial Celebrations, and the Louis Vuitton Cup Ball in the refurbished Civic Theatre, learning to design in French for Paris Fashion Week, designing the Star Trek Exhibition at the Aotea Centre, I PAGLIACCI for Opera NZ, and of course all the work we do at ATC.

Auckland Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges the invaluable support of the following





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