

An Original Kiwi Christmas ~~Tail~~ Tale by Aimee Gestro



Piri the Pīwakawaka *Saves Christmas!*

Programme

Live
ON STAGE
FOR THE WHOLE
Whānau



6th - 23rd December 2025

The PumpHouse Theatre
www.pumphouse.co.nz

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Theatre

Devonport-Takapuna
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Meet the Cast

MEG ANDREWS



Meg is an actor, director, and theatre marketer whose work spans stage and screen, from *Educating Rita* and *Macbeth* to *Shortland Street* and *My Life is Murder*. She trained at two Aotearoa drama schools, has performed with Tim Bray Theatre Company, toured nationwide with The Ugly Shakespeare Company, and directed bold works including *Lovepuke*, *The Vagina Monologues*, an all-female *Taming of the Shrew*, and the premiere of 'co.nz' for Matariki through Chocolate & Carnage Theatre. Co-running the company with her partner, she champions Māori, Queer, and Wāhine-led stories and gravitates toward abstract, physical work that challenges norms and digs into the human condition.

REBECCA ANSELL

Rebecca (Bee) graduated from Te Auaha in 2021 with a bachelor degree in performing arts. She grew up performing, playing instruments, singing and dancing so leaving Auckland to study musical theatre in Wellington was an easy decision. Since then she has been in many theatre shows including Tim Bray Theatre Company and The Ugly Shakespeare Company. This Christmas, Bee is excited to share some festive joy with the Tamariki of Auckland!



JOSHUA BRUCE



Joshua has been performing for over a decade, on a vast range of works, from film and tv, puppet shows, all the way to Shakespeare. Born and bred in Auckland, he is currently based in Melbourne, where he has been carving out his acting career. Nevertheless, Josh leapt at the opportunity to return home and be involved in this cozy and whimsical Christmas tale, alongside so many other wonderful and talented people he has worked with before.

Meet the Cast

KAZIM KHAN

Kazim is a Pakistani-Indian artist who is very excited to share the joy of Christmas as Coco and Poppy this year. You may recognize them sharing their joy of pirates (The Great Piratical Rumbustification), adventuring (Five go on an Adventure), and reading (Duffy and Scruffy's Pawsome Adventure) in theatres across the whenua. They cant wait to experience the magic of christmas with you all again!



FLEUR HOOPER-GESTRO



Piri the Pīwakawaka Saves Christmas marks Fleur's debut theatre performance. No stranger to the stage, she has been dancing since the age of two, training in jazz, tap, and contemporary styles, and is now loving her musical theatre classes. Fleur can't wait to bring her energy and enthusiasm to the role — and she's especially excited to be celebrating her 8th birthday during the show's run!

SANTA CLAUS



Santa has spent centuries perfecting the art of joy-giving, wish-granting, and reindeer-powered world travel. When he's not overseeing toy production at the North Pole or checking his famous List (twice), Santa delights in spreading warmth, generosity, and wonder to children and families everywhere.

A seasoned performer he has featured in countless parades, movies, songs, and TV shows.

When he's not supervising thousands of overly enthusiastic elves or negotiating with reindeer, Santa spends his time perfecting his world-famous "Ho Ho Ho!"

Santa is thrilled to join the cast of Piri the Pīwakawaka Saves Christmas this season and invites everyone—young and old—to believe in the magic, embrace the joy, and celebrate the true spirit
MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Cast & Crew

Writer | Director - Aimee Gestro
Stage Manager - Matthew Diesch
Set Designer - Terry Hooper
Technical Designer - Julia Rutherford
Choreographer - Lacey Exeter-Gestro
Technical Operator - Andrew Gordon
Front of House Manager - Rhiannon Hadlow
Costume Creator - Piri & Kereru - Michelle Bos

Piri the Pīwakawaka - Meg Andrews
Kea the Kiwi - Rebecca Ansell
Matua Kereru - Joshua Bruce
Coco the Elf - Fleur Hooper-Gestro // Kazim Khan
Poppy the Elf - Kazim Khan
Santa's Stand-In - Daryl Wrightson // Joshua Bruce

Dancers

Green Team - Amelia Long, Sophia Long, Savannah Long, Lavinia McCorquodale
Red Team - Hazel Williams, Darcy Lyons-Dowdell, Addison Driskel, Riven Moore



A Note from the Creator

When I set out to create Piri the Pīwakawaka Saves Christmas, I wanted to make a show that truly reflects Aotearoa at Kirihimete – not snow and sleighbells, but pōhutukawa in full bloom, long summer evenings, and the beauty of our ngahere filled with manu that feel like home. I wanted our tamariki to look at the stage and see their own world shining back at them.

At its heart, this story is about a couple of characters who are wonderfully imperfect. Piri is curious, excitable, and sometimes a little too zoomy. She makes mistakes, she gets distracted – but she always tries her best. Kea is scared and apprehensive, but a wonderful friend to Piri. I wanted to show that it's okay to feel different, or to find it hard to sit still. Those parts of us don't make us less – they are what make us truly unique.

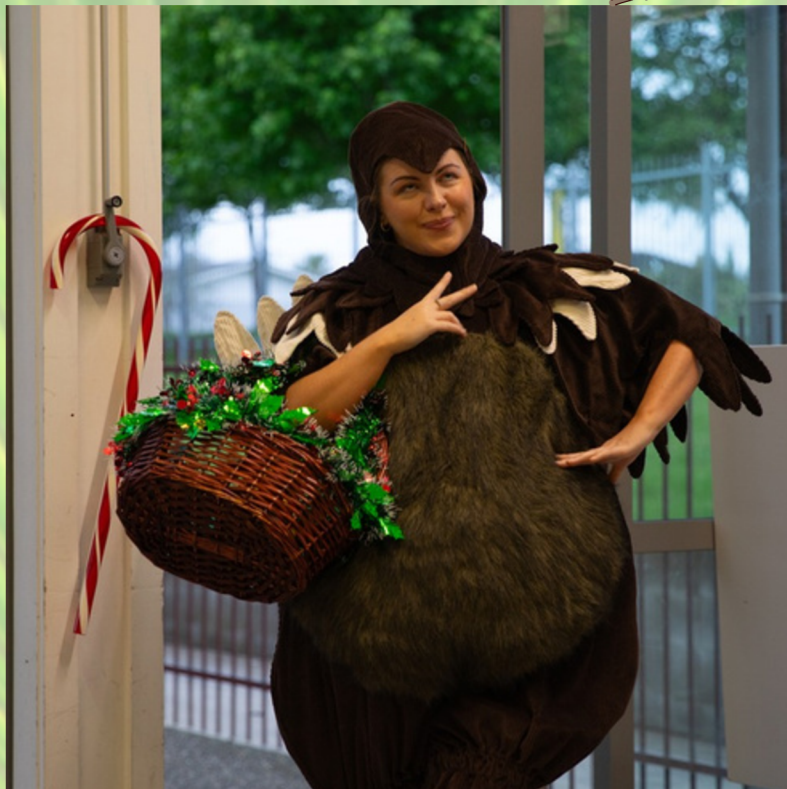
A key kaupapa of this show is celebrating neurodiversity. I hope every tamaiti in the audience can recognise that the things which set them apart are the very things that help them sparkle. This story is about finding the mārama within you – your own inner light – and shining however you shine.

Piri the Pīwakawaka Saves Christmas is playful, uplifting, and full of heart. It celebrates manaakitanga, courage, friendship, and the joy of helping others. If our whānau in the audience walk away smiling, feeling a little more seen, and knowing that their unique light matters... then we've achieved what we set out to do.

Meri Kirihimete – enjoy the adventure!

Aimee Gestro

Writer | Director



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