“Striking, strident, dark, challenging, provocative.”
Lynn Pringle, Theatreview
K’ Rd’s vital and significant past is tackled by one of New Zealand’s most sought after and prolific dance companies. Foremost in our mind is the legend of Hape and a romantic notion on how Karangahape Road got its name. The legend tells us of the crippled Hape who rode a great Taniwha (sting ray) to Aotearoa (New Zealand) after being left behind by his brothers. When his brothers finally arrived, Hape was seen calling a Karanga to them from the ridge above the harbour now known as Karangahape Road. For us, this act of unconditional welcome is the story that lingers most along the K’ Rd ridge. Through history it has been a gathering place where people have replenished their body and soul, a welcome place for everyone to stand.

K’ Rd Strip is Okareka’s response to an Auckland landmark that has anchored its roots deeply into the veins of New Zealand history, both culturally and counter-culturally. The result is a work that is unlike anything Okareka have created before - pole dancing, drag queens, haka, contemporary dance and dramatic scenes entwined with live vocals of an all-New Zealand music score from the likes of Gin Wigmore, Mi Sex, Annie Crummer and Th’Dudes.

Gay communities of Auckland, New Zealand and across the world have made K’ Rd their township, much akin to the Maori community in the 19th century. It is this diversity in culture and gender which has captured the attention of Okareka Artistic Directors Taiaroa Royal and Taane Mete. It is both these key ideas that influence their creative process and empowers Okareka’s creative team enabling them to have produced a show that transcends genres as K’ Rd transcends communities.

In the early 20th century, Karangahape Road was the preferred shopping district because the westerly wind blew away the stench of horse manure, unlike the quagmire of lower Queen Street and its port. K’ Rd became a prime shopping district with many top of the line retail outlets and specialty stores, such as doll’s hospital, confectionary shop, trendy tea houses, restaurants, jazzy night spots and many churches including a vibrant Samoan community. This vibrant shopping district remained until 1965 when it was snuffed out causing the displacement of 50,000 people for a motorway development which cut Newton gully in half. Many businesses relocated, and by the 1970s the low rent meant Auckland’s red light district had moved in and K’ Rd’s reputation as the seedy part of town took hold.

The homosexual law reform in 1986 meant gay night clubs no longer had to hide behind closed doors. From the early ‘90s such businesses flung open their doors, liberated from years of hiding in back rooms, and they choose K’ Rd to do this. Legends was the first gay club whose sidewalk windows and front door provided a view straight onto the dance floor. Perhaps this was the spirit of Hape at work? He had once stood proudly with forgiving welcome and now it was the Gay community’s turn to proudly call their Karanga from Auckland’s winding ridge of human endeavor.

Over the last 20 years, with the advent of inner city apartments, residents have been attracted back to the Karangahape Road which has revitalized the shopping centre. Alongside the few remaining shops and venues catering to the sex trade, K’ Rd currently boasts an eclectic collection of shops, cafés and art galleries. At night, its restaurants, bars and nightclubs make K’ Rd a major part of Auckland’s social scene. Karangahape Road has become a centre for much of Auckland’s bohemian scene, with many venues for alternative music and fringe art as well as the LGBT community.
K’ Rd Strip is a reflection of tales and myths intertwined with real experiences. Told through the eyes of our all-queer cast, this new work celebrates the lives and the memories of those who have enriched the spirit of our most infamous road.

Devising a new work is a wild and risky road fraught with excitement and danger, yet this makes for exciting theatre. Blessed with a talented cast and creative team, we have explored many aspects of K’ Rd and have been continually excited by the rich subject matter. To this end, we have chosen to reflect the spirit of K’ Rd from the perspective of six gay men who have dived into this project with immense commitment and good will. Told in no particular order, we combine their personal stories, their friend’s experiences and legends of history to conjure up a stream of consciousness. We hope our words, music, and dance form and artistic language captures the past and present spirit of Karangahape Road.

In an essence, K’ Rd Strip is about each of us finding our home, our community, our place of extremes. K’ Rd is a place where we’ve both laughed our heads off and cried our hearts out, where we’ve been flattered and rejected, excited and scared, loved and lost. A place where we proudly stand in the sun and shamefully lurk in the shadows. K’ Rd is a bitter-sweet, multifaceted vice; a place where life is art and the art of living swings in patterns of thrills and spills. We sincerely hope that you too will identify with your own Turangawaewae; your own place to stand.

Creative Directors - Taane Mete, Simon Coleman and Jason Te Mete
2013 MATARIKI UNDER THE STARS TOUR OF K’RD STRIP - A PLACE TO STAND:

AUCKLAND: 11 – 15 June, Q Theatre
MANGERE: 19 – 22 June, Mangere Arts Centre
DUNEDIN: 28 and 29 June, The Regent Theatre
HAMILTON: 2 and 3 July, The Gallagher Playhouse
WELLINGTON: 10 – 13 July, Downstage Theatre

“The acapella version of Split Enz’s Dirty Creature is worth the price of the show alone.”
Raewyn Whyte, NZ Herald

“The physicality of the dance is inspirational. The power of the singing is remarkable. The stories and lives are vivid and compelling.”
Jay Bennie, Theatreview
“Hilarious, heartbreaking, informative, entertaining and spiritually profound.”
Cat Ruka, Metro Magazine

Photo by Stephen Langdon for Metro Magazine
TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

VENUE REQUIREMENTS
- Suits Proscenium arch or Black-box theatre
- Stage Size (minimum) 9m wide, 8m deep plus wings (1.5m minimum depth) and upstage crossover
- Black floor
- Grid Height (preferred) 6m
- Must have isolatable fire alarm system suitable for use of haze in show

STAGING
- Stage must be sprung wooden floor suitable for dance with black finish
- No dance floor required
- Black Theatre Masking (8 x legs, upstage smother/tabs, no front tabs required)
- Dance pole of sufficient height to reach grid (Must be secure enough to be danced on)
- Rigging to fix dance pole to

SOUND
To be supplied by the venue/presenter:
- 4 x foldback wedges (to be placed across front of stage)
- Sufficient FOH stereo distribution for the venue (Subs, Mid/highs, centre fills, delays, crossovers and processing)
- Full 31 band graphic equalisation across both foldback and FOH systems
- Digital audio console (preferred Yamaha or Soundcraft) with on board effects processors, compression and EQ’s.
- 6 x Countryman E6 Headset microphones + 2 x spares in case of failure in show
- 6 x Shure RF belt pack transmitters + receivers (Preferred U4D or better) + 2 x spares
- Active RF antenna system for Shure receivers to be monitored at ops. (Paddles)
- 4 x foldback wedges (to be placed across front of stage)

LIGHTING (PLANS WILL BE SUPPLIED)
To be supplied by the venue/presenter:
- 1 – 2 Hazers required (DMX controlled, variable output, water based fluid)
- 3 x overstage LX bars (minimum) 1 hard upstage, other 2 evenly spaced for back lighting
- 1 x FOH LX bar (preferably 2 – 4m from front of stage)
- 8 x Lighting trees (Booms) with crossbars at 670mm & 1600mm
- 1 x programmable LX console (preferably Strand Palette VL or ETC Ion/Eos)
- 72 dimmer channels (minimum)
- Fixtures – All fixtures on hook clamps unless otherwise specified
  - 15 x Fresnels 1000w – 1200w (OW)
  - 10 x PC 1000w – 1200w (1 x cut of CJ162, 1 x cut of CJ201, 8 x OW)
  - 18 x Selecon Pacific 23/50 1000w (2 x cuts of CJ 201, 8 x cuts of CJ111, 8 x OW)
  - 7 x Selecon Pacific 14/35 1000w (5 x A size gobo frames, 2 x cuts of CJ201, 5 x OW)
  - 5 x Par64 CP62 on floor stands/turtles (OW)
  - 5 x Par64 CP61 (1 x cut of CJ122, 1 x cut of CJ164, 1 x cut of CJ131, 1 x cut of CJ120, 1 x cut of CJ126)
  - 6 x Par16 "birdies" MR16 FMW lamps on floor stands/ turtles (or screwed into floor)
- This is the base rig and may be altered to suit the venue

OTHER
- Minimum two dressing rooms with seating, adequate make-up lighting, mirrors, toilets, basins, showers, heating for 6 Performers
- Dance studio for 3 hours each day prior to show
PACK IN:
Minimum 2 days with open on evening of second day.
Local Crew Required:
• 1 assistant Stage Manager for set-up, rehearsals and performances
• 4 x technicians for LX Rig approx. 4 hours
• 3 x Technicians for LX Focus approx. 5 hours
• 1 x Technician for Sound Set-up approx. 4 hours

PACK OUT
On the closing night - approx. 3 hours
Local Crew Required:
• 4 technicians to assist with pack out and lighting and sound de-rig

COMPANY
• Touring party of 11 on the road. 6x performers, 1x Rehearsal Director, 1x Stage Manager, 1x Production Manager/Sound Operator, 1x Lighting Designer/Operator, 1x Company Manager

TRAVEL AND ACCOMODATION
• All airport transfers
• Accommodation Single room hotel or motel for 10 people
• Per Diems (NZ$75) for 10 people including travel days
• Costumes, make-up cases and luggage travel with performers and may incur excess baggage fees

COST OF SHOW
• Please contact the General Manager for costing information
• We are currently accepting expressions of interest for 2014 through to 2018
“Yet again Okareka defines a place to stand for themselves as a company and in the process enriches the cultural landscape of Aotearoa.”

Lynne Pringle, 16 July 2013

“K Rd Strip opens arms and stories to the audience and draws us onto this ridge that sits above Auckland city and has many secrets and stories to tell. An entertaining series of episodic vignettes and personal narratives form a cabaret style evening of smiles and curiosity.”

Deirdre Tarrant, 11 July 2013

“All six male performers are ridiculously talented and charismatic, moving through the numbers and changing characters throughout while nailing the darker dramatic beats as well as the comedic ones”

Sam Brooks, 14 June 2013

“K’Rd Strip was a show brimming with energy and life; witty dialogue, flamboyant costuming (or lack thereof) and fast paced performances meant there was not a moment that was anything less than entertaining.”

India Essuah

“Raw, crude, joyful, outrageous, funny and sad are words that describe Auckland’s iconic Karangahape Rd perfectly. They are also a perfect fit for Okareka Dance Company’s thoroughly entertaining and thought-provoking show, which has “the strip” as its pulsating heart.

We all need a place to stand. Okareka Dance Company has surely found its – as one of New Zealand’s most exciting and risk-taking contemporary dance companies. “

Ann Hunt, Dominion Post

“Clad in black leather skirts, they build worlds with twists of bared bodies, percussive stamping and evocative vocals, switching between characters, masculine, feminine, camp, macho. The darkness and the brutality of lives lived at the edges is exposed before devolving again into humour, glamour and froth.”

Jesse Quaid, 13 June 2013
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