

Te Rūnanga o Koukourarata



Peter Burger

Piriimia Burger

Tānemahuta Gray

Nathan Gray

Merenia Gray

Talented Cousins

What do award winning short films "Fishskin Suit" and "Tūrangawaewae" have in common with a television advert that has everyone rushing to look at a Toyota Rav4, which results in a building coming crashing down, bus tipping over, and a man falling down a manhole?

Again, just as unusual, how does a young man with a whakapapa to Koukourarata become a Samoan Matai – Chief? The answer is rather simple. It is because of the talent and fertile imagination of director Peter Burger.

Four theatres at once premiered Peter's debut full length feature movie "The Tattooist" in Auckland on 30 August. Based on a story around the use (or more correctly, misuse) of the Samoan pe'a (ta moko). Peter's handling of so sensitive a subject, resulted in his participation in a ceremony that honoured him with the Matai title of Tuifa'asisina. His upbringing helped him see into the culture of our fellow Polynesians in such a manner that during production they did not feel threatened or abused. No doubt, this will only be the first of a long list of feature movies by our only Matai.

Younger sister, Piriimia Burger, is currently working on a new television series for tamariki. Piriimia co-presents 'Miharo' which will screen every weekday in the new year, on Māori Television. Whānau will be familiar with her work as a presenter on both Bill Hohepa's fishing series and cooking show 'Pā Tucker'. As a presenter, writer and researcher, Piriimia is well on the way to becoming an acknowledged producer in her own right. She was recently profiled in the Kaupapa Kāi Tahu radio series, 'Voices of Ngāi Tahu' and regularly contributes to Te Karaka, reviewing television programmes.

All in Christchurch who had the privilege to attend "Māui", were thrilled at the stage creation of

Tānemahuta Gray, with contemporary choreography by his older sister Merenia Gray. They told the story of Māui in such a way that this most conservative of cities, not only enjoyed the visual experience, but were reminded of the unique relationship that has helped to create our nation. The story of Māui is one of the most widely known throughout the Pacific, but no doubt with the drive and vision of Tānemahuta, he will take it to the world.

The knowledge gained in such shows as West Side Story and Villa Villa/De La Guarda, allowed Tane to bring his expertise back to New Zealand. The professional way that he produced the story lost none of the trickery or plots that play such an important part of the adventures of Maui-Tikitiki-ā-Taranga.

Nathan Hoturoa Gray, twin brother of Tānemahuta, tells his story of walking the entire length of the Great Wall of China in his highly successful book "First Pass Under Heaven". Despite (or because of) pushing the physical and emotional limits that a kaupapa of this magnitude demanded, Nathan has given us a tale of strength and determination in the best traditions of his tūpuna of old.

To embark on an adventure with such a vastly different group of individuals is a guide to how the journey would progress. This 4000 kilometre hīkoi, would not only affect personal relationships, but also draw on inner strength and a single mindedness of purpose that was only completed with the publishing of his story.

In a period when much of what we value is being challenged, this is just one group of young Ngāi Tahu adults with whom we can be justifiably proud. The self-assurance in having the language and values of a bi-cultural upbringing will only help them on their long and fascinating journey.