



Theatre New Zealand to Present Bid to Host 2027 World Festival of Amateur Theatre in Monaco



Upon This Southern Shore

*Now draw we near, from sea-girt land so far,
Where southern stars do wheel 'neath kōwhai's gold,
To bid thee hear a humble theatre's star,
A tale not new, but ever brave and bold.
Let voices rise from cliff and flax and stone,
Where haka meet the echoes of the stage,
And strangers find in stories not their own
A home, a hope, a fire from age to age.
To Wellington we call, Te Whanganui's crest,
Not for renown, nor crown, nor fleeting fame,
But that the world might gather as a guest,
And fly from edge of earth in passion's name.*

Theatre New Zealand is delighted to confirm that its President, **Paul Percy**, will travel to **Monaco in August 2025** to present New Zealand's official proposal to host the **AITA/IATA World Festival of Amateur Theatre** and **General Assembly** in **Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand**, in 2027.

This historic bid represents the **first time the World Festival would be held in the Southern Hemisphere** and extends a bold invitation to the global theatre community to gather in **Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Wellington**, a city celebrated for its creative vibrancy, cultural depth, and warm hospitality.

Mr Percy will be joined in Monaco by the acclaimed **Dargaville Little Theatre team**, whose production has been selected for performance during the festival week. Their inclusion reflects the strength, originality, and heart of New Zealand's community theatre, affirming the value of local stories and voices on the world stage.

The 2027 proposal has been shaped through months of strategic planning and broad consultation. It is proudly supported by **Tourism New Zealand, Events Wellington, Wellington City Council**, and a coalition of passionate **community theatre groups from across Aotearoa**.



Dargaville Little Theatre to perform 'Out of Mind' in Monaco this August

Highlights of the proposal include:

- A **six-day festival programme** featuring global theatre performances, workshops, forums, cultural exchange events, and community engagement initiatives across Wellington.
- A **three-day international conference**, bringing together delegates, artists, and leaders from the global amateur theatre community.
- A deep commitment to **bicultural values and Te Tiriti o Waitangi**, with programming that includes **Māori and Pasifika theatre, youth and senior theatre, theatre with disabilities**, and community-devised works.
- **Strategic international partnerships** with organisations including **Opendoek (Belgium), AITA/IATA, the Victorian Drama League (Melbourne)**, and the **American Association of Community Theatre (AACT)**, building lasting pathways for collaboration, exchange, and legacy development.
- A central festival theme: **"Te Auaha Roa – Standing on the Edge, Not to Fall, but to Fly"**, a poetic call to embrace creative risk, global connection, and transformative storytelling.

The proposal will be formally presented to the **AITA/IATA General Assembly** in August. If successful, **Wellington will become the cultural heart of global community theatre in 2027**, hosting a dynamic, inclusive, and world-class celebration of amateur theatre in all its forms.

Paul Percy commented:

"This is more than a festival—it's a global homecoming for those who make theatre for love, for voice, for change. It's a chance for the world to experience the unique stories, landscapes, and manaakitanga of Aotearoa."