



# KEHUA

A SHORT FILM



## PRESS KIT

Written and Directed by Wiremu Grace

### INTERNATIONAL SALES

Juliette Veber, NZ Film, PO Box 11 546, Wellington, N Z  
Tel: 64 4 382 7686 Fax: 64 4 384 9719

**NEW ZEALAND FILM**

## PRODUCTION NOTES

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35mm / 12'42" / Colour / 2009 / NEW ZEALAND / English

Writer	Wiremu Grace
Director	Wiremu Grace
Producer	Libby Hakaraia
Director of Photography	Adam Clark
Production Company	Kehua Films Ltd
Date of Completion	February 2009

Sales	Juliette Veber NZ Film juliette@nzfilm.co.nz tel: +644 382 7686
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## ONELINER

On returning to his Maori home for the first time, a young boy discovers he has a gift for seeing Maori spirits - but he must gather all his strength to understand their messages.

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## SHORT SYNOPSIS

### ***KEHUA***

For a young Maori boy it's the first time he has ever been to a marae, a communal gathering place for Maori. Raised in Australia by a mother who did little to explain the beliefs of her Māori culture, the boy discovers his initial fears of his culture are more than warranted.

The boy's anxiety is further increased by his mother's self-absorption in the break up of her marriage and her hurried return home.

But it seems that there are stronger powers at play. This young boy has a gift, a gift of 'seeing' and the strength to understand. He has found his rightful place.

The word Kehua invokes the Maori view of spirits or those who have passed over. Maori do not view Kehua as necessarily bad but rather as messengers or guardians.

*He Tohu Rangatira*  
(A sign of a chiefly person)

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## **FESTIVALS/AWARDS**

2009 59th Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin – Generation, Germany  
2009 Wairoa Maori Film Festival, New Zealand  
2009 New Zealand International Film Festival, New Zealand  
2009 Montreal First Peoples' Film Festival, Canada  
2009 Dreamspeakers' Film Festival, Canada  
2009 Vladivostok International Film Festival, Russia  
2009 ImagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival, Canada  
2009 Hawaii International Film Festival, USA  
2009 Chicago International Children's Film Festival, USA  
2010 Reframe Peterborough International Film Festival, Canada  
2010 Viewfinders International Film Festival for Youth, Canada  
2010 Oi! Dunedin Mataraki Screenings, New Zealand  
2010 Wairoa Maori Film Festival, New Zealand

## **Maori culture and reference to Australia**

Australia now boasts a Maori population estimated to be between 115,000 and 125,000.

A NZ Government study - "Maori in Australia" - was undertaken last year and canvassed the reasons Maori went to Australia and how they were doing. It said Maori believed they were pushed out of New Zealand by perceived prejudice and negative experiences arising from social dysfunction, while they are pulled to Australia by whanau already living there, better weather and higher wages.

The report said many believed it was easier to get ahead in Australia because it was "relatively free" of negative stereotyping of Maori, of obligations to whanau, and of limiting expectations which stopped Maori striving for success.

Those surveyed said the downsides for Maori living in Australia were being cut off from their culture, Maori not having broad kin structures, and a lack of government understanding of cultural requirements.

This is the reality for the 9 year old boy, Caleb in KEHUA.

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## **WRITERS NOTES**

An aeroplane comes into land on a grey day in Wellington NZ. During a taxi journey we meet Caleb, a young boy and his mother, Sarah. They've arrived from Australia, Caleb having been hauled back to NZ following the disintegration of his parents' marriage. Soon Caleb finds himself in a Maori urban setting.

People, faces, clothes, tattoos, kawakawa, language and taonga are all unfamiliar, let alone the carvings that stare hauntingly back at him.

Sarah has taken Caleb to the marae having been forced to attend a relations tangihanga or Maori funeral. This was not what she had planned, or would have attended if she had the choice. Caleb is also out of choices.

As the welcome unfolds and the call goes out, Caleb's fears increase. His senses go into overload taking in carvings, trembling hands, wailing voices, building to a point where Caleb can stand it no longer and runs from the safety of his mother.

Sarah seems unfamiliar with her surroundings, nervous about going onto the marae, but after Caleb pulls from her hand, she is left feeling more upset than she already is.

Meeting the whanau, the extended family of Koro, Aroha and other relations should be a welcoming experience for Caleb. But the tension for Caleb has continued to increase and when his aunty explains that the water '..washes away the spirits..' Caleb takes the opportunity and dives into the bucket with both hands.

That night in the wharenuī – ancestral house, Caleb is visited by a Kehua, a spirit that delivers the words 'He tohu Rangatira'. The spirit, having risen from George, has a message to pass on, and Caleb, although an unwilling receptor, is charged with delivering that message to his uncle. The next day Caleb throws water in George's face, water to cleanse but to also wake George up to his future.

Caleb reaches out for his culture for the first time, he is over the fear, he has found an inner understanding and is once more secure with the love of his mother. Sarah has found love for herself and for her son, with the support of her family she is able to let go of a past that was tearing her apart.

George is delivered the line 'He tohu Rangatira' The sign of a leader, or chief. This is also a new beginning for him and his responsibilities as an important member of the extended family.

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## **PRODUCTION COMPANY – KEHUA FILMS LTD**

KEHUA FILMS LIMITED was set up by producer Libby Hakaraia and Wiremu Grace in 2007 to produce Kehua.

The film received a 30,000 dollar grant from Creative New Zealand.

In March 2008 over 28 crew, 6 main cast and some 100 extras gave their time to create KEHUA. Shot over 4 days at Maraeroa Marae, in Porirua about 20 minutes north of Wellington, KEHUA.

With those on the crew ranging from the highly experienced to NZ Film School students, and shot on 16mm KEHUA is the little film that could!

The film is currently finished to offline and is yet to receive grading and completed sound mix.

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## **PRODUCER BIOGRAPHY**

**Libby Hakaraia** is of **Ngati Raukawa, Ngati Toa Rangatira** and **Te Ati Awa** descent. She has a background in radio and television journalism and current affairs before beginning work in television documentaries 10 years ago.

Libby has directed or produced 14 prime time documentaries in New Zealand including two award winning documentaries. In recent years Libby has directed and produced a number of different series for television including 26 episodes on finding ones Maori roots (Tatai Hono) for Maori Television.

This is Libby's second short film. Her first producer credit was for *Hawaikii 2006* which screened at Berlin Generation and 6 other international festivals. Libby is currently working on her own short film which she has written and will direct as well as a feature film script.

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## **DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHY**

Wiremu Grace - Ngati Toa Ngati Porou

Wiremu wrote 'Turangawaewae' a short film that traveled to the Cannes film festival and to other festivals around the world. He also won the best short film script at the Maori literature awards in 2002 and completed his first short film 'Kehua' as director and writer in 2008. He is currently directing a Maori language DVD resource for school leavers.

Wiremu's Directing credits include;

- Documentary 2004 - 'Foreshore bro' Foreshore and Seabed documentary
- Co-director 2006 - 'Ka Mau te wehi' Maori language series / Ministry of Education
- Director 2007 - 'Waka Reo' 13 part half hour series / Maori T.V
- Director 2008 - 'Three Immunization Videos' / Ministry of Health
- Director 2008 - 'Kehua' Short Film / Creative New Zealand
- Director 2008 - 'He Ara Rau'

## **CAST**

Sarah - Nicola Kawana

Caleb - Arama Vincent

George - Grant Roa

Aroha - Grace Hoet

Kehua - Api Taylor

Koro - Nelson Solomon

Kaikorero - Ranea Aperahama

Kaikaranga - Kahurangi Pahina

## **CREW**

Director / Writer: Wiremu Grace

Producer: Libby Hakaraia

In association with the Short Film Fund of the New Zealand Film Commission

Director of Photography: Adam Clark

Camera Operator: Hamish McIntyre

Editor: Jeff Hurrell

Co-Producer: Wiremu Grace

Production Manager: Sally Cunningham

Production Assist: Niwa Albrett

Production Assist: Linda Hale

First AD: Adrian Carswell

Second AD: Henry Aitken

Continuity: Maryanne Bourke  
Focus Puller: Charles Edwards  
Clapper/Loader: Matt Tuffin  
Camera Trainee: Joe Michael  
Key Grip: Geoff Tait  
Grip Assist: JJ  
Gaffer: Byron Sparrow  
Lx Assist: Chris Chandler  
Lx Assist: Saxon Ball  
Art Director: Aaron Te One  
Art dept assist: Tom Wilson  
Wardrobe: Emily Smith  
Standby wardrobe: Corrine Simpson  
Make-up/Hair artist: Lisa Hefford  
Sound Recordist: Tony Woollams  
Second Unit Sound Recordist: Aaron Davis  
Second Unit Sound Assist: Ethan Davis  
Casting: Madeleine Casey / Wiremu Grace  
Location assist: Bret Saunders  
Unit / Catering: Waikura Logan / Frances Barnsley  
Sound Design: Steve Upston  
Visual Effects: Tim Capper  
Colourist: Mike Bridgman

Music:

'Engari te titi' Whirimako Black: Muscle Music Productions Ltd

'True' Warren Maxwell / Trinity Roots

'The little things' Warren Maxwell / Trinity Roots

Music Composition: Warren Maxwell

Special thanks to;

Maraeroa Marae Committee, Te Runanga o Ngati Toa Rangatira, Hongoeka Marae,  
Takapuwahia Marae, Whitireia Polytechnic, The Hangi boys, The Hongoeka Weavers  
Madeleine Casey, Grace Warren, Raana Warren, Paihereha Aperahama, Ngapera  
Aperahama,  
Te Rito (baby) Aperahama, Phil Grace, Piri Grace, Kohai Grace, Steve Rangihuna,  
Matariki Styles, Te Kawa Grace, Jo Grace, Patricia Grace, Patariki Grace, Waiariki  
Grace, Tiakitoa Nore-Grace, Lenaia Nore-Grace, Tish Nore, Toa Waaka,

Andy Pohe, Davey McGhie, Alex Newport, Rongoa Richmond, Neilson Duffy,  
Richard Bishara, Kahu Ropata, Te Waimatao Ropata,  
Tuteremoana Ropata, Ngamiru Ropata, Wairere Ropata, Frances Barnsley,  
Briar Barnsley, Jason Ropata, Hikitia Ropata, Nohorua Ropata, Brian Parata,  
Jenny Ngarimu, Moana Parata, Bronwyn Pahina-Davis, Maira Pahina-Davis,  
Hunia Williams, Frank Kalolo, Bill Pohe,  
Cathy Livermore, Pahina Bishara, Marika Brown, Hayley Gray, Tania Gray, James  
Leota, Pukanea Kidwell, Patrick Tapeau, Peter Windsor, Ranguia Thompson,  
Conway Matthews, Kahukura Kemp,  
Adam Wihapi, Raiha Gray, Matewai DeTheirry, Willow Grace-Morton, Vicki Morton,  
Fan Grace, Shirley-Anne Houkamau, Hikarukutai Houkamau, Suzanne Vincent,  
Kayla Salanoa, Rawinia Tamihana, Donna Scandlyn, Kirsty Nicolas, Fances Hudson,  
Brook Smith-Harris, Nikki Walker, Mere Ropata-Box, Lisiane Ropata-Box, Zion Farrell,  
Huitau Elkington, Mornay Loubser, Anna Kaye, Rehua Smallman, Sarah Jane Heany,  
Tonia Hodgins, Cullen Poni, Maria Edwin, Rochelle Burns, Tali Tamese, Marcus Orzeki,  
Terry Akavi, Jackson McKendry, Max Phounsavath, Ryan Nofosaefa

Supporters;

Te Puni Kokiri, Blueskin Films, Manukaroa Anderson, Arotoa Productions, Bluebach  
Productions, Joe Te-Pania, Kura Kaimoana, Julie and Mike Dwyer, Catherine Fitzgerald

Sponsors;

Taa Kawa Brewer, Te Runanga o Ngati Toa Rangatira, Pacific Rim Funeral Care

International sales by NZ Film

In association with the Short Film Fund of the New Zealand Film Commission

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