

# THE LITTLE THINGS

*Where do you go when it's your 14<sup>th</sup> birthday  
and no one cares?*

## PRESSKIT

I N T E R N A T I O N A L   S A L E S

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**NEW ZEALAND FILM**

## **PRODUCTION NOTES**

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Director	Reina Webster
Producer	Catherine Fitzgerald
Production Company	blueskin films

35mm	Dolby SR	Colour	12mins	1:1.85
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### **LOGLINE**

...Sometimes it's the little things that matter most.

### **ALTERNATIVE LOGLINE**

The stronger the wind, the stronger the trees.

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### **SHORT SYNOPSIS**

When it's your fourteenth birthday and nobody seems to notice, sometimes it's the little things that really matter the most.

### **LONG SYNOPSIS**

When George Apirana arrives home to her state house apartment block on her fourteenth birthday looking forward to having a dinner date with her mother, she ends up getting rejected in favour of her mother's new male companion.

Unwittingly thrown into the night with no money and no particular place to be. Tama, her six-year-old neighbour tries to muscle in on her journey only to be rejected outright and told pragmatically "that life sucks and he should get used to it".

George travels into the city & using her street-smart instincts tries in vain to create her own fun before resigning to the fact that sometimes life really does suck and she is forced to take heed of her own advice.

Humbled by this realisation and lonely, she invites Tama over to her empty home to eat some cake that her mother left out for her before she took off. After a proud pause, Tama reluctantly joins her – toasting her birthday with a generous bourbon and coke that she sneakily serves him.

Wise beyond his years and overwhelmingly aware of George's sadness, Tama will do anything to cheer her up, so he presents her with a home-made tennis ball creation he has spent all evening trying to master. Stunned by his generosity and kindness George lets her guard down for a fraction of a moment and allows this gesture of pure unabashed love to touch her.

### **AWARDS**

2005 Special Jury Prize, Berlinale Kinderfilmfest  
2005

### **FESTIVALS**

2005 First Run Film Festival, New York, USA

2005 The New Zealand Film Festival, New Zealand  
2005 International Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen, Germany  
2005 Berlin International Film Festival-Kinderfest, Germany  
2005 Kinderfilm Fest, Japan  
2005 Rhode Island International Film Festival, USA  
2005 Buster International Film Festival For Children and Youth, Denmark  
2005 Isfahan International Children's Film Festival, Iran  
2005 International Women's Film Festival, Torino, Italy  
2005 ImagineNATIVE Film and Media Arts Festival, Canada  
2005 Melbourne International Film Festival, Australia  
2005 Los Angeles Film Festival, USA  
2005 Wairoa Maori Film Festival, New Zealand  
2005 Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival, Taiwan

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

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*"The stronger the wind, the stronger the trees"*  
J. Williard Marriott

When I began writing the little things I knew from the outset that I wanted it to be a story that whispered and didn't yell, I also knew that in order for it to work it had to be observational in style and it had to be honest. One of my primary objectives for the film was to make the audience a pro-active part of the narrative process rather than have them passively watch events unfolding. To achieve this, I wanted to frame the narrative with a universal experience, one that wasn't racially, culturally, nor gender specific, but that captured a time that everyone could relate to, irrespective of circumstance. So I chose that moment in a young person's life when they've outgrown thinking about the world as a child but don't quite fit the mindset of an adult yet. Overall my intention was to create a narrative that raised more questions than it answered, to create a space for the audience to think about what is happening to the characters on screen rather than being told how to feel about them and to that end, I feel as though I achieved my goal.

Internationally acclaimed New Zealand casting director Diana Rowan, helped me cast a fine balance of professional and non-professional actors for the movie. Fourteen-year-old high school student Norissa Taia made her debut film appearance playing George with acute stillness & subtlety to powerful affect. Similarly, six-year-old Romain Waerea lent a natural innocence and optimism to the movie with his moving performance as Tama. The cast along with a minimal crew travelled 250 kilometres north of Auckland to the strange and beautiful city of Whangarei whose curious fusion of urban, rural & suburban landscapes seemed to heighten George's sense of dislocation.

As the product of solo parenting myself, I wrote this movie to highlight the unexpected ways in which generosity & love can sometimes come to us in the wake of difficult circumstances. It has been my experience that when you least expect it, from the last person you might imagine, sometimes-extraordinary things happen. For me what happens to George simply is what it is, sometimes life can be a bit hard but I believe there is beauty in the strength we get by negotiating the adversity that gets thrown in our paths and that's why Tama's character really shines. For me, he represents love; the sort of love George needs and wants, the sort of love she wishes her mother had shown her and the sort of love that she's frightened to accept in the wake of the evening's constant series of disappointments. To her credit she does accept it though, even if she knows all too well that it's temporal. There is definitely strength in their unification and therein lies my own message of hope.

The little things was funded by the New Zealand Film Commission and was submitted as my thesis project for my Master of Fine Arts degree at New York University's, Tisch School of the Arts. It is my second short film, the first I have shot in my home country of New Zealand. As an emerging director, I am grateful to the cast and crew for their generosity and support, in particular my producer Catherine Fitzgerald who has been attached to this project since its conception.

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#### DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

REINA WEBSTER is of Maori descent and has tribal affiliations with Ngai Tuhoe, Ngati Tuwharetoa & Nga Puhi. She began her career as a photographic assistant before moving into the fields of Broadcasting, Television Presenting, Publicity, Producing & Directing. She has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English & Film Theory from Auckland University. In the New Year she will become the first New Zealander to graduate with a Master of Fine Arts Degree in Film Directing from New York University's prestigious Graduate Film Program.

Reina has been the recipient of many awards including: a Graduate Fulbright Scholarship, the New Zealand Film Commission's Matiu Mareikura Film Maker Award, an AMP Premiere Young Achiever's Scholarship, a Sara Driver post-production grant and was recently awarded a grant from Warner Brother's to complete her short film "the little things".

Upon returning to New Zealand to live, she has been employed full time as a Television Producer on a two-hour, weekly, live, music program, completed a trainee directing block in television drama at South Pacific Pictures and more recently has producing and directed three behind the scenes documentaries for Sione's Wedding, Maddigan's Quest & Outrageous Fortune, respectively. Reina is currently residing in South Auckland, New Zealand, writing her debut feature length film script, completing her Master of Arts thesis at Auckland University, and is kept busy with her one year-old daughter, Maioro Moteatea Iti.

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#### PRODUCTION COMPANY

[www.blueskinfilms.co.nz](http://www.blueskinfilms.co.nz)

Established in 2002 by producer Catherine Fitzgerald, Blueskin Films Ltd focuses on quality film-making, particularly drama, but also offers script consultancy services for new works for the screen and the theatre.

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#### PRODUCER'S BIOGRAPHY

CATHERINE FITZGERALD's extensive experience as a script consultant and dramaturge, film funding executive, film and broadcasting policy consultant, academic, documentary producer/director and Film Festival manager led her to establish Blueskin Films Ltd in mid 2002.

Since then she has produced, two internationally acclaimed theatrical short dramas, *Turangawaewae* and *Two Cars, One Night* with a further two short dramas recently completed *The Little Tings* and *Kerosene Creek*, a documentary, a digital feature film *Event 16* (in post production) each of which profiles new film directing talent.

As postproduction supervisor (NZ) of *In My Father's Den*, she worked closely with director and screenwriter (Brad McGann) and producer (Trevor Haysom) throughout through to the successful delivery and Australasian release of the film.

She has a slate of feature films in development focusing on award winning theatre and prose writers. She is committed to working with highly talented creatives to produce quality films with broad international appeal.

She continues to serve as the Chair of the NZ Film Festival Trust, which stages the Wellington, Auckland and 13 associated regional festivals alongside the World Cinema Showcase and other cinema events.

She is also a member of the WIFT Wellington Executive Committee and is an Advisor to the NZ Qualifications Authority.

## CAST

George	Norissa Taia
Mo	Mia Mitchell
Tama	Romain Waerea
George's Mum	Waimihi Hotere
George's Mum's Boyfriend	Tony Waerea
Security Guard	Barney Duncan
Record Shop Attendant	Xavier Hornblow
Record Shop Assistant	Kim Tomlin
Record Shopper	Waiere Iti

## CREW

Writer and Director	Reina Webster
Producer	Catherine Fitzgerald
Director of Photography	Rhys Duncan
Sound Design	Richard Flynn
Editor	Owen Ferrier Kerr
Casting Director	Diana Rowan
1st Assistant Director	Larry Parr
2nd Assistant Director	Conrad Blight
Production Manager	Janette Searle
Unit Manager	Holly Smith
Continuity	Di Moffatt
Focus Pullers	Henry West, Oli Raymond
Clapper Loader	Vanessa Wood
Gaffer/Grip	Adrian Greshoff
Lighting Assistant	Medi Ramezani
Grip Assistant	Kabir Singh
Art Director	Emma Muir
Wardrobe and Makeup	Linda Moana
Production Runner	Tarver Graham
Talent Driver	James Blick
Sound Editor	Bruno Barrett-Garnier
Boom Operator & foley	Bradley Chapman
ADR and Foley recorded at Digital Post	
Music Supervisor	Waiere Iti
Original Score	Mark Michel and Chris Chetland (KOG Transmission)

## MUSIC

"gamble interlude"  
performed by P Wadams  
published by Money music  
Courtesy of Kog Transmissions

"When I had you"  
written and performed Niki Ahu  
Remixed by C Chetland, M Michel  
published by control  
Courtesy of Kog Transmissions

"Dave likes art" Trailer courtesy of Fifty Fields Films

Catering	Tango Tasti Food
Accommodation	Whistling Heights
Camera Equipment	Mopix Ltd
35 mm Stock	Kodak Film
Processing	Atlab
Transfer	Oktobor

Special thanks to	<i>Park Road Post</i> Sue Thompson, John Neill, Brian Scadden, Sharon Leamy,
Sound Mix	Mike Hedges
Rostrum Camera	Reiner Schoenbrunn
Negative Matching	Upper Deck Film Services Ltd, Reiner Schoenbrunn
INSURANCE	Aon Risk Services

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EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Angela Littlejohn and Karl Zohrab

Little Jab Pictures

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LOGOS

DOLBY in selected Theatres

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