



THE TROPHY



PRESS KIT

A SHORT FILM BY JUSTINE SIMEI-BARTON

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

THE TROPHY

DIRECTOR Justine Simei-Barton
WRITERS Justine Simei-Barton & Paul Simei-Barton
PRODUCERS Justine Simei-Barton & Paul Simei-Barton
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Allen Guilford

35mm / 11 minutes / Colour / Dolby 5.1 / 1.185

Year of Production: 2008
Country of Production New Zealand
Language English
PRODUCTION COMPANY Tala Pasifika Productions Limited
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Auckland
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LOGLINE

Traditional values clash with youthful ambition.

ONE LINER

A young girl's commitment to a science project investigating worm farming wins her a trophy, but creates tension within her traditional Samoan family.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

A young New Zealand Samoan girl's commitment to a science project investigating worm farming creates misunderstandings that lead to an explosive conflict with her parent's religious and cultural beliefs. Although the girl is given a severe beating she continues to secretly work on her project, winning an important science prize. Her parents proudly boast to their church minister about their daughter's achievement, offering him her trophy as a donation to the church.

FESTIVAL SCREENINGS

2008 58th Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin – Generation K-plus, Germany
2008 Film and Video Showcase of the First Peoples' Festival, Canada
2008 22nd International Festival of Films for Children and Young Adults, Iran
2008 13th Athens International Film Festival, Greece
2008 Chicago International Children's Film Festival, USA
2008 Carrousel International du film de Rimouski, Canada
2008 Interfilm Berlin, Germany
2008 Manukau Film Festival, New Zealand
2008 Show Me Shorts, New Zealand
2009 International Women's Film Festival in Seoul, Korea
2009 Sprockets International Film Festival for Children, Canada
2009 Magma Short Film Festival, New Zealand

LONG SYNOPSIS

Day to day life is a struggle for KASA (12) – her Samoan immigrant family lives in a run-down state house and she attends school in one of New Zealand's poorest neighborhoods. With both parents putting in long hours in low paying jobs the children are often left to fend for themselves but they are still expected to live up to high expectations. They also have to endure a misguided but well-intentioned regime of strict physical discipline. There is not always enough money for school lunches and as the eldest child KASA is responsible for looking after her siblings.

KASA finds refuge from her harsh environment through her fascination with the natural sciences. She becomes engrossed by a school science project that investigates worm farming and carelessly leaves a container of worms under her bed. The worms escape, creating uproar in her strictly disciplined home. KASA is given a severe belting by her father but with her sister's help she continues working on the project and secretly prepares a display that wins first prize at the regional Science Fair.

When KASA brings home the Science award her parents proudly present her trophy to their church minister as a donation to the church. KASA's father comes to a sudden realisation that his traditional approach to child-raising is unfair on a daughter who is facing the daily challenge of living within two different cultures.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT – JUSTINE SIMEI-BARTON

The film is a study of the immigrant Samoan community I grew up in and it shows aspects of that community that are seldom given a voice. The community and family life is seen through the eyes of twelve year old KASA who finds she can rise above the harshness of her daily existence by throwing herself into a school science project.

Film and media representations of such communities almost always focus on the most spectacularly dysfunctional aspects of these neighborhoods – the gang

culture, crime, alcohol, drugs and the extremes of domestic violence. *The Trophy* offers an alternative view by looking at the experience and aspirations of an ordinary working class immigrant family.

Through my involvement with a number of film and TV drama projects I have become interested in how the processes of mainstream film making tend to exclude the voices of the community that is being represented on screen.

This project addresses the imbalance by using a film making approach that allows a marginalised community to tell their own stories in their own way.

To achieve this I made sure the film was a genuine collaboration between my production team and the students and wider community around Mangere College - a school that serves one of the poorest areas in New Zealand. The cast were all drawn from this community and the college students worked alongside the experienced professionals in my production team.

I was also concerned to show how KASA's personal drama is embedded within the fabric of a wider community. I have tried to create a balance between engagement with her personal story and heightening awareness of the particular cross-cultural context from which her story has arisen.

I believe the film deals with themes that are particularly relevant at a time when there is growing hostility and misunderstanding between immigrant communities and the countries that host them.



JUSTINE SIMEI-BARTON

Justine Sime-Barton has been a key figure in the emergence of a 'Pacific Voice' in New Zealand drama on both stage and screen. In 1987 she formed New Zealand's first Pacific Island drama company which aimed to bring the vitality of Pacific Island performance traditions into the context of contemporary theatre. The company produced a number of original devised works as well as a major out-door production of *Rome & Juliet* which transposed the drama to a nineteenth century Samoan setting.

In 2000 she made the short film *Brown Sugar* for He Taonga Films. This was part of a broader project in which Justine worked as script development coordinator for a group of young Pacific Island writers whose scripts were produced as the

Tala Pasifika series of short films. This series of six short films screened on NZ television and at numerous indigenous film festivals in the Asia Pacific region.

Over the last ten years her own production company, Tala Pasifika Productions has been involved in producing television drama and in helping young Pacific Islanders to enter the film industry. Her work on the groundbreaking television drama *Matou Uma* earned her a nomination as Best Drama Director in the 2001 New Zealand Television awards. This drama was based on the experiences of a group of Pacific Island netball players. This was developed into the seven part drama serial, *Good Hands- Lima Lelei*. The series was nominated in the Best Drama Category of the 2005 NZ Screen Awards.

Justine currently has her first feature film in development. This year she was awarded the New Zealand Arts Council Senior Pacific Artist Award for her contributions to Pacific Island film and drama.

FILMOGRAPHY

<i>Good Hands-Lima Lelei</i>	TV drama serial (Ep1-7) 2003
<i>Coming Home</i>	TV Documentary 2002
<i>Matou Uma</i>	TV Drama 2001
<i>The Overstayer</i>	TV Drama 2001
<i>Brown Sugar</i>	Short Film 2000
<i>Feu'u</i>	TV Documentary

FULL CREDITS

Actors

KASA: Lesieli Vao
FATHER: Canada Alofa

LETI: Pudenciana Tangi Arona
MOTHER: Sau Tuitama

PASTOR: Alvin Fitisemanu

FEATURED EXTRAS

SARAFINA: Sarafina Simei-Afamasaga
FA'AMEO: Fa'ameo Simei-Afamasaga
TUTU: Tutu Simei-Afamasaga
SCIENCE TEACHER: Justin McLean

Production Crew

WRITERS: Paul Simei-Barton & Justine Simei-Barton
PRODUCERS: Paul Simei-Barton & Justine Simei-Barton

DIRECTOR: Justine Simei-Barton

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Allen Guilford

EDITOR: Margot Francis

CAMERA OPERATOR: Leon Narbey
Ginny Loane

CONTINUITY: Louise Tu'u

SOUND DESIGN: Dick Reade

COMPOSER: Mark Dashper

SAMOAN CHANT COMPOSER: Papa'ali'I Pita Taouma

LOCATION MNG / 2ND AD: Richard Stevenson

FIRST ASSIST DIRECTOR: Jarl Devine

KEY GRIP: Geoff Jamieson

FOCUS PULLER: Bryce Swainson

GAFFER: Brendan Shadbolt

CLAPPER LOADER: Duncan Patterson

GRIP ASSTANT: Daimon Wright
SOUND RECORDIST: John Carpenter
LIGHTING ASSTANT: Paul Stevenson
VIDEO SPLIT OPERATOR: Aramis Goodwin
BOOM OPERATOR: Matt Daniel
WARDROBE: Sau Tuitama
PROPS STANDBY: Maree Webster
CATERING: Pule Simei-Afamasaga
Maria Satele

LOCATION RUNNERS: Fa'alata Laulu
David Filoalii
Peter Petero
Amy Bridson
Hannah Tuohy

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POST PRODUCTION FACILITIES: Atlab NZ

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