

MEDIA RELEASE

25 May 2012

A MĀORI BATTALION PLAY WITH NO MĀORIHalf an hour with four Pasifika soldiers in the 28th (Māori) Battalion

Chocolate Stigmata is pleased to announce the theatre debut of scriptwriter D F Mamea, **Goodbye My Feleni**, as part of the *3Up* season that will run from Thursday 14 June to Saturday 16 June 2012, at the Herald Theatre in Auckland. The *3Up* season offers an evening of three half-hour plays by three playwrights, and is a GreyView Production.

Goodbye My Feleni is set in 1942 and takes place at Trentham Army Camp in Wellington. In D "Ngati Walkabout" Company of the 28th (Māori) Battalion, the youthful confidence of three young Pasifika soldiers is shaken by the last minute replacement of their lieutenant. Their new leader may well be a battle-hardened veteran but he is also an unwelcome reminder of the soldiers' mortality.

Playwright David Mamea (Safune/Safotu, Samoa) had assumed Pacific Islanders had fought in the Second World War. "I was listening to the Māori Battalion CD a few years back, and when I heard someone talking in Samoan, introducing two Samoan songs... something seized my heart: that seventy years earlier, and half way around the world, four young Pasifika men sang of their homelands and their fears. I *had* to write something around that."

Jenni Heka (Ngati Niue/Malay) of Hekama Creative agreed to produce **Goodbye My Feleni**. "There's a perception of competition between Maori and Pasifika peoples in all walks of life in New Zealand, as well as between the Pacific Island groupings as well. David's play is a beautiful story of men from different Pacific Islands coming together for a common cause."

Jenni found a believer in director Chris Molloy (Ngati Manawa/Tuhoe), hot off directing the Leilani Unasa play *His Mother's Son*. Actors were quickly cast: Shadon Meredith (Safune/Tua'efu, Samoa), whose credits include the films *The Orator* and *Sione's 2*; Samson Chan-Boon (Vailele/Tafua, Samoa), a young and hungry Pacific Institute of Performing Arts graduate; and Leki Jackson Bourke (Niue/Tonga/Samoa) and Andy Sani (Sinamona/Faatoia, Samoa), who were part of Massive Theatre's critically acclaimed *The Brave*. "Assembling the team was incredibly easy," Jenni admits. David leans forward, superstitiously tapping his forehead with a knuckle: "But not too easy."

Goodbye My Feleni is written by D F Mamea, produced by Jenni Heka, and directed by Chris Molloy. Playing the Pasifika soldiers are Shadon Meredith, Andy Sani, Leki Jackson Bourke, and Samson Chan-Boon.

For further information about **Goodbye My Feleni**:

David Mamea / david@chocolatestigmata.com / 021 668 346

www.goodbye.chocolatestigmata.com / www.facebook.com/chocolatestigmata

For *3Up* and GreyView Productions: Eric Smith / eric_nat@xtra.co.nz / www.greyview.net