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MIKA TRAVELS TO JAPAN FOR TOKYO FRINGE FESTIVAL

Two dancers from the Mika Haka Foundation travelled to Japan in May 2009 to attend the Tokyo Fringe Festival, assisted by Asia:NZ.



The Foundation's broad objective is to bring native cultures together for the benefit of New Zealand communities. It was founded by Mika, an accomplished artist who has worked on stage, film and television for many years. Auckland-based Mika travelled on the trip with Jay Tewake, a young dancer from his foundation.

They were invited to attend the festival by Japanese/Indian artist Shakti (pictured). A celebrated dancer, Shakti is director of the Garage International, one of the most prominent venues in the Edinburgh Festival.



Mika and Shakti performed live shows for the third Tokyo Fringe Festival, as well as the inaugural Kyoto Fringe Festival. Their performances in Tokyo and Kyoto were completely sold out.

The aim of the visit was to initiate collaboration between the Mika Haka Foundation and Shakti on an inter-cultural performance piece to be presented in New Zealand, Japan and India over the next five years.

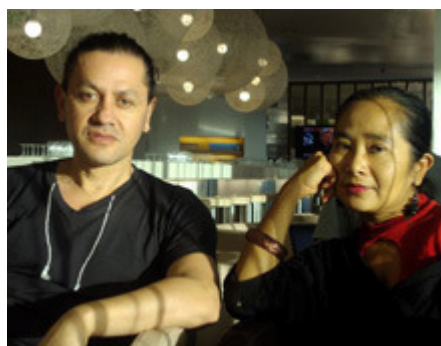
Mika explains that the relationship with Shakti is now very strong and plans are in place for her to visit New Zealand and for the Mika Haka Foundation to return to Tokyo in 2010 Fringe Festival.



“The long-term view is to create a full-scale inter-cultural production for international touring.”

The project enabled Mika to investigate Japanese perspectives on the interaction of innovation and tradition and how this might inform the work of Maori artists. “As a Maori artist, I am influenced by the mingling of tradition and modernity that is so prominent in Japan.”

In between shows, he also arranged a meeting with Sam Cassels (CEO, Saatchi & Saatchi in Tokyo) who is keen to create a cultural exchange later this year between members of the Mika Haka Foundation and local Japanese youth.



No trip to Japan would be complete for Mika without a self-funded shopping excursion to the Issey Miyake flagship store, Pleats Please. “I have been wearing Miyake designs onstage for almost two decades, and have become the label’s most visible ambassador in New Zealand.”