



## Tongan film explores lost culture

By Online Editor

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The director might be Niuean and live in Papakura, and the film about Tonga, but the message behind Tony Fuemana's first feature film is one that youth throughout the Pacific Islands will recognise.

"I wanted to go into a topic that hits close to home for many young PI people," he says.

"This is a story about a girl who, like many of us, loses her culture and loses her language, which for some people can mean a loss of identity."

"My Lost Kainga' features Tongan actor Carolanne Makakaufaki and will premiere at the Dream Centre in Manukau on April 8.

Carolanne plays Mia, a young Tongan woman who was born in Tonga but raised in Australia. She loses her culture, identity and language in Australia and becomes lost in her Western identity, Tony says.

While in Tonga, she has the opportunity to search for her culture.

Tony based the story around a girl as its women who live with the most cultural restrictions.

The movie will not only appeal to the large Auckland Tongan community but to people from other Pacific nations who have forgotten where they have come from, he says.

Tony, of Urban Pasifika Music fame, has been renowned for his documentaries but has spent the last two and half years directing, producing, filming and editing his first feature-length film. The project cost up to \$70,000 to create but it was worth every cent now that he's wrapped up production, he says.

The movie was shot in Nukualofa, Tonga and is subtitled as most of it is spoken in Tongan.

Some of the local talent is used as extras. And when he left Tonga after seven weeks of filming, Tony left much of his audio production equipment with a youth organisation in a bid to encourage the industry in the country.

"These are the types of stories we need to preserve and we really need to do what we can to tell those stories and the stories of our parents."

Friday night's premiere will be a celebration, but Tony's thoughts will also be with his two brothers Phillip and Pauly of OMC fame. He and his brothers were seen as pioneers in the world of Pacific music, starting Urban Pasifika Music in the early 90s and launching the careers of some of the best-known Pacific Island artists today.

Pauly's track How Bizarre by his group the Otago Millionaires Club shot to worldwide fame and is still regarded as New Zealand's most successful single. Phillip died in 2005 and Pauly died last year

SOURCE: STUFF NZ/PACNEWS