



*The World of Film in Australia - on the Internet*

## RAIN OF THE CHILDREN: DVD

### SYNOPSIS:

**Vincent Ward pieces together the life of Puhi, an 84 year old Tuhoe tribal woman who was related to Maori prophet Rua Kenana, reconstructing the story as dramatized documentary with several contemporary interviews.**

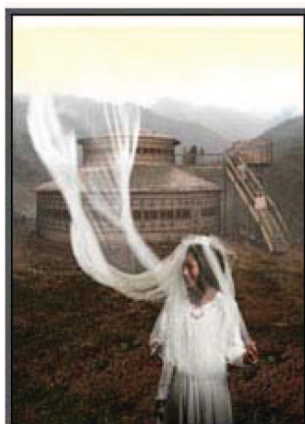
### Review by Andrew L. Urban:

The spontaneous haka by some of the Maori guests in the cinema after the 2008 Brisbane Film Festival screening of Vincent Ward's fascinating and moving documentary, *Rain Of The Children*, is symbolic of the film's power to reach into Maori culture for this special story. Yet it is as much a story of the human condition in general, with its sweeping family saga and its secrets, demons and superstitions.

Vincent Ward made a short doco about this family 30 years ago when he lived with them as a student, and he returns to explore a nagging suspicion that there is more to the story of Puhi's family than he had learnt. In the reconstruction, we meet Puhi, or Nanny, in her 80s, a frail, bent figure, yet she still cares for her schizophrenic son Niki, living in rural isolation. Ward, as the sympathetic, gently probing, curious on-camera investigator, takes us back in time through Puhi's extraordinary and often tragic life.

Ward uses the voices of descendants and locals to reveal much of the surrounding colour and texture of the long history with which Puhi was associated, often at the wrong end of events, losing children almost as quickly as she brought them into the world.

Ward uses his cinematic gifts to the full, contrasting stark monochrome segments with a warm colour palette for the interviews, and sensitive yet powerful re-enactments, using many of the descendants of the people represented. The universal and the intimately human are brought together in the embrace of the spiritual aspects of the story, in which talk of a curse gradually grows more tangible - and credible.



RAIN OF THE CHILDREN: DVD (M)

(NZ, 2008)

CAST: Miriama Rangi, Temuera Morrison, Harmony Wihapi, Melody Wihapi, Mikaira Tawhara, Rena Owen, Hine Boynton, Pine Pine Morehu, Toby Morehu, Vincent Ward (as himself)

NARRATION: Vincent Ward

PRODUCER: Vincent Ward, Margaret Slater, Tainui Stephens

DIRECTOR: Vincent Ward

SCRIPT: Vincent Ward, Alison Carter, Louise Nowra

CINEMATOGRAPHER: Adam Clark, Leon Narbey

EDITOR: Chris Plummer

MUSIC: Jack Body, John Gibson

PRODUCTION DESIGN: Shayne Radford

RUNNING TIME: 98 minutes

PRESENTATION: widescreen

SPECIAL FEATURES: Cast and crew interviews

DVD DISTRIBUTOR: Red-Ant

DVD RELEASE: December 3, 2008

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