



HUNT FOR THE WILDERPEOPLE

NEW ZEALAND 101 MIN

TAIKA WAITITI

A big-hearted picture full of small, understated moments of magic, the New Zealand-based comedy-drama *Hunt for the Wilderpeople* is an off-kilter charmer. Directed by Taika Waititi (co-director of the uproarious vampire mockumentary *What We Do in the Shadows*), this downplays the broad laughs of its predecessor, instead focusing on the emotional thrust of a mismatched buddy movie.

Not that any of the central characters would admit to anything as fluffy as an emotional journey. Ricky (Julian Dennison) is a troubled orphan, raised on hip-hop and rejection. Placed with the latest in a series of foster families, this time on a farm far away from the city where he styles himself a gangster, Ricky is reluctant. But his foster aunt Bella (Rima Te Wiata) breaks down his defences with down-to-earth love and affectionate

mockery. However, when a tragedy threatens to steal back the life that Ricky has come to love, the boy finds himself on the run in the bush with Bella's grizzled husband Hec (Sam Neill) and a dog called Tupac. Gradually, the two rejected loners who only had Bella in common find a kinship, united against the authorities that hunt them down.

Waititi has a weakness for sweeping helicopter shots that take in what Ricky describes as the "majestical" New Zealand countryside. More effective are the 360-degree pans, which are a neat alternative to the standard passing-of-time montage sequence. But the film's main asset is an unaffected naturalism, both in the film-making, and in the unpolished characters that we root for.

Wendy Ide, *The Guardian*

WRITER: Taika Waititi (based on the novel by Barry Crump)

CINEMATOGRAPHY: Lachlan Milne **MUSIC:** Lukasz Buda, Samuel Scott, Conrad Wedde

CAST Hec Sam Neill | Ricky Julian Dennison | Bella Rima Te Wiata | Paula Rachel House

VOTING FOR *The Propaganda Game* A30 | B36 | C13 | D2 | E0 | Rating 79% | Attendance 87

Our next screening | **Mustang** | Tuesday 21 March 2017. 8.00pm

'... grabs you with its own sense of haunting melancholy ...'