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## AOTEAROA, ARE YOU READY TO RUMBA? INTRODUCING *DANCING WITH THE STARS* NEW ZEALAND'S ALL-STAR CAST

Discovery can today reveal the nine celebrity contestants competing for the coveted Mirrorball Trophy in the highly anticipated new season of *Dancing with the Stars NZ*. The star-studded cast of celebrities are set to bring glitter, glamour and glorious dancing to **Three** and **ThreeNow** audiences when the hit-show premieres in April.

After months of speculation, the celebrities sashaying onto our screens to win over Kiwi viewers are reality TV star **Alex Vaz**, award-winning broadcaster **Brodie Kane**, former professional boxer **David Letele**, and comedian and The Edge Breakfast co-host **Eli Matthewson**. They'll be joined by two-time Olympic medallist **Eric Murray**, author and mental health advocate **Jazz Thornton**, accomplished broadcaster and journalist **Kerre Woodham**, stand-up comedian **Rhys Mathewson**, and actor and TV presenter **Sonia Gray**.

Taking home trophies is nothing new for celebrated Olympian **Eric Murray**. One half of New Zealand's "Golden Pair" alongside Hamish Bond, the world champion rower is a two-time Olympic medallist loved by Kiwis for his sense of humour and down-to-earth style. Can Eric glide across the dancefloor as effortlessly as he moves through water to take home a win once more? Eric will be dancing with former *Dancing with the Stars NZ* champion **Loryn Reynolds**, as she attempts to repeat her winning formula and coach Eric to victory.

Broadcaster **Brodie Kane** is used to the media spotlight, having hosted The Hits Breakfast show, been a sports presenter on *Breakfast*, a roving reporter on *Seven Sharp*, and a reporter on *Fair Go*. She now hosts two popular podcasts, *The Girls Uninterrupted* and *Kiwi Yarns*. Her time in the NZ Army and work with Surf Life Saving NZ means she's fit for the part, but will it be enough to tango to the finale and secure the Mirrorball Trophy? Brodie will be partnered with professional Latin dancer and teacher **Enrique Jones**.

Comedian, TV presenter, and co-host of The Edge Breakfast, **Eli Matthewson** will partner with ballroom veteran **Jonny Williams**. As a two-time Billy T Award nominee, double winner of Auckland Fringe's Best Comedy Award, and winner of NZ's top comedy honour The Fred Award, Eli is a staple on the local comedy scene - but he'll need more than jokes to sashay his way to a win.

Activist, author and award-winning filmmaker **Jazz Thornton** is not afraid of putting in the hard yards. A tireless advocate for those battling mental health, the suicide prevention organisation that Jazz co-founded saw her earn commendation from none-other than Queen Elizabeth II. Partnered with professional dancer **Brad Coleman**, will this Young New Zealander of the Year's grit and determination see Jazz cha-cha-ing for change all the way to the end?

**Alex Vaz** is no stranger to reality TV, having appeared on both *Heartbreak Island* and *The Bachelorette NZ*. This time, instead of vying for someone's heart, the South African-born tech engineer is hoping to take home the winning title. Alex will be paired with professional dancer **Brittany Coleman**, who's been at home on the dancefloor since she was a young girl. Health and fitness guru Alex may be used to heating things up on screen, but can this smooth mover burn up the dance floor?

Beloved broadcaster **Kerre Woodham** is a woman of many talents – an accomplished journalist, radio presenter, author and columnist. A familiar face from shows such as *Fair Go*, *Nightline*, *Heartland* and *Intrepid Journeys*, we know this talkback host can talk the talk, but can she get into the groove? Kerre will be paired with Nelsonian dancer **Jared Neame** who brings over 15 years of dancing experience to the table.

Recognised by many as 'Brown Buttabean', **David Letele** is a retired professional boxer. These days, David's known for his motivational speaking and tireless work in the community to combat obesity among Māori and Pacific people around New Zealand, and provide education to enable them to choose a healthy and active lifestyle. David is set to dance with award-winning belle of the ballroom **Kristie Williams**, can-can this duo waltz their way to success?

**Sonia Gray** has been gracing New Zealand television screens for over two decades, most notably as Lotto presenter for 15 years. Fans will also recognise her from iconic Kiwi productions including *Xena: Warrior Princess*, *Shortland Street*, *Sione's Wedding* and *Love Birds*, and in 2021 she starred in the Netflix film *The Royal Treatment*. Sonia will be joined by two-time *Dancing with the Stars NZ* winner **Aaron Gilmore**. Will this pair have what it takes to impress the judges and public?

Stand-up comedian **Rhys Mathewson** has performed all over the world and won pretty much every award New Zealand comedy has to offer. A regular on *7 Days*, *Seven Sharp* and *Have You Been Paying Attention?*, Rhys will be dancing with Latin and ballroom champion **Phoebe Robb**. Does this funnyman have the fancy footwork to dominate on the dancefloor?

Following a false start in 2020 and again in 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions, the brand new season of *Dancing with the Stars NZ* will deliver a much-needed dose of sparkle across Aotearoa. Audiences will delight in following nine celebrity contestants as they make their grand entrance into the famous ballroom to compete for the title.

Guiding viewers through all the twists, turns and tears of the live televised dance floor competition will be long-time and much loved dancing host **Sharyn Casey**, alongside TV and radio personality **Clint Randell**. The judging panel for ***Dancing with the Stars NZ*** will be announced in the coming weeks.

***Dancing With The Stars NZ*** has raised more than one million dollars in the past two seasons on **Three** (2018 & 2019), with celebrities aligning with their chosen charity and the public contributing money via text voting or individual contributions.

This season's show will be filmed under strict health and safety protocols in line with current government COVID-19 regulations.

***Dancing with the Stars*** is a BBC Studios format produced by Discovery. The smash-hit BBC format is licensed to 60 countries, with over 350 series aired around the world to date.

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