



**Alliance Française**  
New-Zealand & Cook Islands



## Tribute to Edith Piaf

### Vanuella Watt to headline the Alliance Française Music festival

*Press release*  
*Embassy of France in New Zealand*  
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The Alliance Française in New Zealand, the Delegation of New Caledonia in New Zealand, the Embassy of France and Aircalin are proud to present Caledonian singer **Vanuella Watt**, “the Pacific diva” who will be travelling to New Zealand from June 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>. Vanuella will be the headline act for the **Alliance Française Music Festival**, a celebration of music around Aotearoa.

<b>PALMERSTON NORTH</b>	<b>Friday 20 June - 8pm</b>  <b>Events Central</b> Palmerston North City Library George street entrance Free entry
<b>AUCKLAND</b>	<b>Saturday 21 June – from 7pm</b>  <b>Galatos</b> 17 Galatos Street Tickets available on <a href="http://www.alliance-francaise.co.nz">www.alliance-francaise.co.nz</a>
<b>WELLINGTON</b>	<b>Sunday 22 June – from 3pm</b>  Southern Cross 39 Abel Smith Street, Te Aro Free entry

### Vanuella Watt

Although Vanuella has been touring the Pacific islands over the last years, she will be **performing for the first time in New Zealand**.



The young Caledonian singer referred to as ‘**the Pacific Diva**’ boasts an extensive range of timbres and tones, and fascinates her audience with her warm and natural personality. She embodies the image of the diversity of New Caledonian music through her repertoire built on **both modern and more traditional takes on the "chanson française"**.

Born in Villeneuve-sur-Lot, France, daughter of a Melanesian father – the **famous sculptor**- Emmanuel Watt and a French Italian mother– pianist- Lucie Ménini, Vanuella Watt was immersed from her very earliest days in an artistic environment. Vanuella was just six months old when her parents returned to the Pacific. The family initially settled in **Vanuatu** before moving to **New Caledonia**.

The singer started performing at the age of 10 and her talent continued to grow throughout the years. She travelled across the Pacific, even going as far as **California**, and also spent several years in **France** where she cut her first album: “Revoir mes îles” (Back to my islands) and performed for several years at the Don Camilo.

In 2000, she represented New Caledonia for the first time at the **World Music festival** and has since toured extensively around **Vanuatu, Fiji and Australia**.

Yves Lafoy, Official Representative of **New Caledonia to New Zealand** is delighted to have participated in the funding of Vanuella's visit : "She is a **wonderful ambassador of Caledonian and French culture** around Oceania and it is absolutely natural that the delegation of New Caledonia to New Zealand take part in this project. New Caledonia has a very diverse range of music talents: along traditional music - inspired by a mix of Kanak and French cultures - artists around the island are building their music on the rhythms of kaneka, jazz, soul music and rock, showcasing to the region how colourful our culture is!"

## **Music Day around the world and in New Zealand**

Every 21 June, **World Music Day**, a huge popular and free event open to both amateurs and professionals, invades the streets and the squares of French cities and villages, for one night bringing together all types of music genres aimed at every type of audience.

Created by Jack Lang, French Minister of culture, the "Fête de la Musique" was launched on 21 June, 1982, the day of the **summer solstice** and the shortest night of the year, thus making it ideal for partying until the early morning.

The rallying of **both professional and amateur musicians**, the new attention paid to all types of musical genres, the gratis nature of the concerts and the growing support of the public turned France's "Fête de la Musique" into one of the country's great cultural events in the span of a few short years. Its preferred venue is outdoors: in the streets and in gardens, on squares and on courtyards before museums, etc. It is an occasion for the large musical institutions to come out from within their walls or host other musical genres. The Festival also offers the opportunity to create exchanges between **the city and the suburbs**, to reach out into the **rural communities** and to offer concerts in hospitals and prisons, not to mention that it of course favours the democratisation of access to the arts and culture.

The "Fête de la Musique" began its history as World Music Day in 1985, on the occasion of the European Year of Music. **An international success and societal phenomenon**, the Festival, which now has a presence in **more than 100 countries** on five continents, also plays the role of contributing or transmitting new musical trends: the revival of traditional music, the explosion of world music, the appearance of rap and techno, the return to a musical carnival, etc.

## **Alliance française and Music Day**

The Alliance Française is a **worldwide, non-profit network of associations** dedicated to the promotion of French language and culture. The first Alliance Française was founded in Paris in 1883 and it has been active **in New Zealand for 117 years**.

There are now over **800 Alliance Française organisations** worldwide - including **10 in New Zealand** which all offer social as well as cultural activities with 7 of them (in Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, Hamilton, Nelson, Palmerston North and Wellington) also providing **French language classes**.

The various **Alliances françaises** in New Zealand have, over the years, been celebrating this Music Day but it is the first time that they include an **international household name** in the bill. In **Auckland**, the well-known Kiwi-French act "**The Mamaku Project**", as well as "**Sal Valentine and the Babyshakes**" and a number of local artists (choral singers, DJs, jazz and rock bands) will share the spotlight with the New Caledonian singer. In **Wellington**, Vanuella will play alongside Afrobeat Machine, the Garage Latin, Cumbia Bros and Felix Rose. The Alliances françaises of **Hamilton** and **Christchurch** also organise musical events for this occasion.

## **MEDIA CONTACT**

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