



Miranda Harcourt.

Height 174 cm

MC/Entertainer Biography
JOHNSON&LAIRD

With a CV to rival the national telephone directory in size and variety, it's no surprise that Miranda is one of the country's most best known and most admired theatre, film and television performers. A popular keynote speaker and MC at corporate functions, Miranda is also a skilled communications coach, inspiring staff from IBM, Telecom and Shell, among others, with her relaxed but professional approach.

Her acting career started early: she was just two years old when she played Katherine Mansfield in a documentary about the author's life. While other teenagers stocked shelves to earn pocket money, Miranda's steady stream of radio plays with Radio New Zealand kept her in makeup and hairspray. She became a household name as flame-haired rich girl Gemma Stace in the 1980s TV soap *Gloss*, and says that hairdressers and taxi-drivers are still surprised that she's not a natural red-head.

Itchy feet took her to London where she studied drama therapy and fell in love with teaching, helping run workshops for the disabled and deaf communities. Always up for a challenge, Miranda performed in some of the country's toughest prisons, such as the Wormwood Scrubs maximum security prison and Brixton's psychiatric ward. The experience was formative and on returning home she took the solo show *Verbatim* to prisons in New Zealand and then festivals in the UK, the US, Australia and Hong Kong. She also wowed audiences treading the boards in New Zealand's most successful play, *Flowers from my Mother's Garden*, written by her husband, playwright Stuart McKenzie, and also starring her mother, Kate Harcourt.

Miranda's definitely the inspirational type: as head of acting at national drama school Toi Whakaari for seven years she raised the school's national profile tremendously and won a following of devoted staff and students. In 2002 she won an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit award (ONZM) for her services to theatre and the community, and one of her recent acting protégés, Anna Sophia Robb, won two awards for her role as Leslie in the children's film *Bridge to Terabithia*.

Despite a hectic schedule, the super-organised mum of three young children manages to fit directing, acting coaching and public speaking into her life, and has co-produced a film or two including the award-winning *For Good*.

She's also found time to write and publish two acclaimed children's books, *Miranda's Alphabet* and *Miranda's Numbers*, and be a spokesperson for the Green Party. When not successfully juggling career and family, she indulges her love of all things vintage with a spot of op shopping. One of her best bargains was a \$US40 colonial-style dollhouse bought during a three-month stint working in Pennsylvania, and lovingly furnished by Miranda and her daughter.

To relax she loves nothing more than hanging out with friends and family, going to the theatre (of course) and stretching body and mind with a regular yoga session, while admiring the harbour view from her hilltop Wellington home.

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Testimonials.

Leslie could never have come in full bloom without the freedom and life you showed me. You pulled Leslie out of me and I would never have won the award without your help. Thank you so much! I really hope we can do many more films together.

- Anna Sophia Robb. Bridge to Terabithia 'Winner: Best Actress 2008 Young Artists' Awards. Finalist: Best Actress 2008 Critics' Choice Awards'.

Her energy, tenacity and goal oriented nature was a breath of fresh air. She's a talent and a delight. I hope I get to work with her again soon. She's the stitch in time.

- Lauren Levine (producer - Bridge to Terabithia) Winner: Best Film, Best Ensemble Cast, Best Actress, Best Actor 2008 Young Artists' Awards.

Miranda worked intensely with Melanie Lynskey to help her find the character and win the role of Pauline Parker in Heavenly Creatures. She got great results quickly!

- Fran Walsh and Peter Jackson (Heavenly Creatures).