LIVING THE DREAM

TV funny man Oscar Kightley presents the serious side of comedy.

He gets to talk sports with his mates on TV, play silly buggers with his mates on TV, and is "perpetually immature" with his mates on TV, and is "perpetually immature" with his mates on TV, and is "perpetually immature" with his mates on TV. But he's the guy who's got the grades and the family name, and he's taking the big screen. For someone living every other guy's dream, Oscar Kightley, comedian, actor, writer, sports commentator and TV presenter, can be surprisingly serious.

When he talks passionately about his work, his Samoan heritage or love of New Zealand, there's barely a smile to go on his face. Instead, the cheek comes out creatively. Sometimes it's subtle, in sneaky historical references in 'Bro' Town, New Zealand's first animated sitcom. At other times it's blatant, like the time he cornered Prince Charles "all the opportunities that came with it. Our parents drummed into me, that you have to do something. What drives me is the immigrant dream of making it, doing it, living it, working it. It's a cliche but I really am living and working the immigrant dream and it's awesome," he says with intensity.

And what does his family think of his creative career? "They are a bit bemused, none of them is like me, in the arts. I'm from but my culture isn't what motivates me, what motivates me is me and my parents drummed into me, that you have to do something. What drives me is the immigrant dream of making something, making a life. It's a cliche but I really am living and working the immigrant dream and it's awesome," he says with intensity.

A Pacific focus is what Kightley, who plays one of the garage dwellers, is all about. He makes a point of being a Samoan mum, you are happy if your son goes to work and has to wear a nice shirt," he says. Perhaps his closest creative family reference is his famous cousin Scribe, the hiphop artist whom Kightley affectionately calls Scribble and credits with making a significant contribution to that genre of local music. Kightley, although he's too self-effacing and would refuse to be singled out among his peers, is also due credit. He and his naked friends have added a brand-new dimension to New Zealand drama, comedy and satire — and they are having a good time doing it. After the hard yards in theatre, the rewards must seem "sweet." Are they? He reckons he's probably been able to achieve so much because "I don't have a wife and two kids – not that I'm averse to it," he stresses. "It just hasn't happened. The school motto at St Sylvesters [the Bro' Town boys' school] is Que sera, sera. It's probably not that hot for a school motto, it's not even Latin it's Spanish, but that's cool," he says, finally cracking a smile.