

# CHANGES 變

NEW ZEALAND / SINGAPORE

FREE PROGRAMME



NEIL IEREMIA

POST-SHOW TALK  
THURSDAY 17 MARCH



SWEE BOON KUIK

CO-PRODUCED BY AUCKLAND ARTS FESTIVAL AND BLACK GRACE

WITH SUPPORT FROM

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# CHANGES 變

NEIL IEREMIA & SWEE BOON KUIK

## SKYCITY THEATRE

WEDNESDAY 16 MARCH / THURSDAY 17 MARCH 7.00PM

FRIDAY 18 MARCH 6.30PM

SATURDAY 19 MARCH 8.00PM

1 HOUR 20 MINS WITH INTERVAL

**CHANGES IS THE WORLD PREMIERE OF TWO SIGNIFICANT NEW  
DANCE WORKS BY VISIONARY CHOREOGRAPHERS  
NEIL IEREMIA (BLACK GRACE, NEW ZEALAND) AND  
SWEE BOON KUIK (T.H.E DANCE COMPANY, SINGAPORE).**

*Nau mai haere mai ki Te Ahurei Toi o Tāmaki Makaurau*

*Welcome to Auckland Arts Festival. We are delighted to host you. The Festival moves across cultures and into places where there are no borders. It shows us human beings coming together through dance, music, performance and art.*

*We are delighted to present Changes 變, a co-production with Black Grace.*

*This evening of dance brings to you two world premieres  
by two wonderful choreographers,  
Neil Ieremia and Swee Boon Kuik.*

*Just over two years ago, Neil and I made a trip to Asia to meet choreographers and to see dance work in the region – to learn more. From this trip, Neil invited Swee Boon to choreograph on his company Black Grace. I was delighted, as I am a fan of Swee Boon's work. This New Zealand first is very special. We together are trying to find ways to communicate across cultural boundaries as well as geographic ones. And sometimes this is difficult. I hope that you our audience enjoy this first exploration and these two new works.*

*A huge thanks you to Swee Boon and to Neil for not being scared to take a risk, to the dancers from Black Grace and T.H.E. Company who collaborated and gave their mahi to both works, to the creative team who added their skill and passion and to the Festival's Producer of this show Dolina Wehipeihana. The Auckland Festival is proud to be working with Black Grace and thank our funders and sponsors who made this journey possible, especially Creative NZ, Sir Roderick and Gillian Lady Deane, Sky City, Asia NZ and Foundation North – it took all of you to make this journey happen.*

# PROGRAMME CREDITS

## CHANGE AND CONSTANCY

變化與恆常

In collaboration with Dancers

### Artistic Director / Choreographer

Swee Boon Kuik

### Music

*Simulacra I* from *Sólaris* by Ben Frost and Daniel Bjarnason

*Wonderful Seagull Song*

*B1* from *Stare-Ep* by Ólafur Arnalds & Nils Frahm

### Costume Concept

Swee Boon Kuik

### Lighting Designer

Paul Lim

### Stage Manager

Alice Fleming

### Dancers

Zihao Zhuo

Mi Wu

Billy Keohavang

Sarah Baron

Callum Sefo

Otis Herring

Maresa D'Amore-Morrison

Ruby Alai'i

Roymata Holmes

## ANOTHER LETTER FROM EARTH

### Artistic Director / Choreographer

Neil Jeremia

### Music

*Cantus in memory of Benjamin Britten*, Arvo Pärt, played by the Staatsorchester Stuttgart, Conductor, Dennis Russell Davis

*Tabula Rasa*, Arvo Pärt, played by the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra, Conductor, Saulus Sondeckisi

### Costume / Props Designer

Neil Jeremia

### Lighting Designer

Paul Lim

### Make Up Designer

Lochlain Stonehouse, M.A.C

### Stage Manager

Alice Fleming

### Dancers

Sean MacDonald

Gabrielle Thomas

Tupua Tigafua

Demi-Jo Manalo

Shane Tofaeono

Mapihi Te Rerehau Kelland

Sarah Baron

Callum Sefo

Otis Herring

Maresa D'Amore-Morrison

Ruby Alai'i

Roymata Holmes

# CHANGE AND CONSTANCY

## 變化與恆常

IN COLLABORATION WITH DANCERS



SWEE BOON KULK

### *Change and Constancy*

#### *變化與恆常*

explores the parallels between Swee Boon's Singaporean/Malaysian society and the different cultures, backgrounds, and nationalities of Black Grace's dancers. Swee Boon's fluid, evocative movements, often underscored by melancholy, are melded with the raw energy and spirit of the Black Grace dancers and Zihao Zhuo, Mi Wu and Billy Keohavong from T.H.E., to deepen an enquiry into society's tolerance of difference and whether we are mature enough to celebrate diversity.

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T.H.E DANCE COMPANY SUPPORTED BY



# ANOTHER LETTER FROM EARTH



NEIL IEREMIA

Death – the bringer of change, liberator from pain and suffering, a keeper of its own time. Distant and close it touches everyone, brutal and peaceful, quick and slow.

Is it a doorway to rest, nirvana, everlasting life or is it simply the end? How do we wait for it, how do we accept it when it comes?

*Another Letter from Earth* follows the journeys of five lives facing death of one sort or another: an older dancer battling his decaying and increasingly dissonant body; a surrendering of innocence through military might; the loss of a child; the passing of a wife; the death of language.

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BLACK GRACE SUPPORTED BY

## BIOGRAPHIES

### ARTISTIC DIRECTOR – BLACK GRACE CHOREOGRAPHER – NEIL IEREMIA

Neil Ieremia is one of New Zealand's most accomplished choreographers, a creative entrepreneur and inspirational leader.

Motivated to provide a different perspective and a fresh voice in the dance scene, Neil founded his own company, Black Grace, in 1995, with ten male dancers of Pacific, Māori and New Zealand heritage. Since then he has changed the face of contemporary dance in New Zealand and turned Black Grace into one of the most recognisable and iconic cultural brands.

Internationally his work has been presented in Australia, Canada, Germany, Holland, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, New Caledonia, South Korea, Scotland, Switzerland and the United States of America.

Neil has received a 2005 Arts Foundation of New Zealand Laureate Award, and the 2009 Paul D. Fleck Fellowship in the Arts from The Banff Centre, Canada. In 2009 Black Grace was presented with a resolution passed by the Guam Legislator in recognition of their work with local communities, and 2010 saw the Mayor of Honolulu officially proclaim

the 6th February 2010 as "Black Grace Day". Black Grace was a recipient of a Herald Angel Award at the 2014 Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Most recently Neil received a City of Porirua 50th Anniversary Award and the 2015 Senior Pacific Artist Award from Creative New Zealand.

### ARTISTIC DIRECTOR – T.H.E DANCE COMPANY CHOREOGRAPHER – SWEE BOON KUIK

Founder and Artistic Director of T.H.E Dance Company and the M1 CONTACT Contemporary Dance Festival, Swee Boon was the first Asian principal male dancer with Spain's Compania Nacional de Danza (CND) from 2002 to 2007, working primarily with Nacho Duato. Swee Boon's exceptional artistry earned a nomination in 2003 for the Benois De La Danse Award. In 2007, he received the Young Artist Award from the National Arts Council of Singapore (NAC).



### PAUL LIM – LIGHTING DESIGNER

Paul is a Melbourne-based lighting designer with

a broad range of experience in theatrical production. His multifaceted knowledge has been used to provide integrated solutions in theatre, festivals and events around the world. Lighting design credits include *The Mooncake* and *The Kūmara*, *Siva* for Black Grace, and the international award winning shows *Nirbhaya* and *Briefs: The Second Coming*.



### SEAN MACDONALD – DANCER

(Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Raukawa)

Sean performed with Black Grace in the Company's inaugural season in 1995, and has worked with the Company on and off ever since. Sean started dancing at the age of 18, training at the Auckland Performing Arts School and the New Zealand School of Dance. He has worked with New Zealand's leading choreographers and dance companies, performing extensively nationally and internationally.



**GABRIELLE  
THOMAS –  
DANCER**

(Te Ahiawa ki  
te Tau Ihu,  
Ngāi Tahu)  
Gabrielle

trained at the New Zealand School of Dance and Unitec before beginning her career with Black Grace in 2006. Since then she has been freelance dancing, working mainly with Atamira Dance Company performing in New Zealand, Asia and the USA. Gabrielle has also choreographed short works, including *Pou Rakau*, which was included in Atamira's 2013 Kaha programme in Hawaii and San Francisco.



**TUPUA  
TIGAFUA –  
DANCER**

Tupua studied dance at Unitec before joining Black Grace from

2007 - 2010. Tupua has since performed with Mau, the New Zealand Dance Company and the White Face Crew, as well as making his own works. He's excited to be back with Black Grace, joining the Company for the 2016 season of *Changes* 變.



**SARAH BARON  
– DANCER**

Sarah is a 2007 graduate of the New Zealand School of

Dance. Sarah joined Black Grace in 2011 for the national tour of *Verses* and since then has performed in the debut seasons of *Vaka* and *Xmas Verses*, and enjoyed touring extensively to Germany, Luxembourg, North America, Edinburgh, South Korea, France and the Netherlands.



**OTIS HERRING  
– DANCER**

Originally from Georgia, USA, Otis earned a BFA from Howard

University in Washington, D.C. before working for several companies in New York City, including Ronald K. Brown/Evidence. In 2013 Otis moved to New Zealand to join Black Grace, and has since performed throughout New Zealand and on international tours to Europe, South Korea and the USA.



**CALLUM SEFO  
– DANCER**

Callum is of Samoan and Scottish heritage and was raised in

Porirua. Callum completed a degree in Performing Arts at Whitireia Polytechnic and in 2013 was invited to join Black Grace for performances throughout North America and New Zealand. Callum has also enjoyed performing with Black Grace in New York City, South Korea, Scotland, France and the Netherlands.



**MARESA  
D'AMORE-  
MORRISON –  
DANCER**

Maresa, native to Boston,

Massachusetts, moved to New York City to earn her BFA in Dance and Anthropology from the Ailey/Fordham BFA Program, and joined the Ailey School faculty in 2008. Maresa has worked with many notable choreographers and companies based in New York City, including Urban Bush Women, Ronald K. Brown/Evidence, A Dance Company, and Adira Amram and The Experience. Maresa first performed with Black Grace at the 2014 Edinburgh Festival Fringe.



**RUBY ALA'I –  
DANCER**

Ruby was introduced to Black Grace through Urban-YOUTH-

Movement, performing in *Who Are You?* in 2010 and 2011. Ruby has attended Auckland University to gain a Bachelor degree in Biomedical Science. Recently returning to dance, Ruby has worked with Black Grace on various projects, including Outer Urban Projects as part of the 2015 Melbourne Arts Festival.



**DEMI-JO  
MANALO –  
DANCER**

From Sydney, Australia, Demi-Jo graduated

with a Diploma in Dance Performance from the New Zealand School of Dance in 2015. During her training she worked with New Zealand and international choreographers. Touring with Black Grace to France and the Netherlands in February 2016 marked her professional debut.



**MAPIHI TE  
REREHAU  
KELLAND –  
CULTURAL  
PERFORMER**

(Ngāti  
Tuwharetoa,

Ngāti Kahungunu)

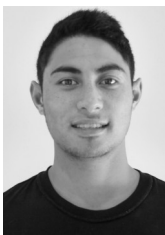
Mapihi was born in Turangi, where she discovered a love of singing and cultural dance. Mapihi studied at Whitireia Polytechnic, graduating with a degree in Applied Arts, majoring in Māori Performing arts, Samoan Siva, Cook Islands Ura and contemporary dance. Mapihi joined Black Grace as a guest cultural performer in 2015, touring to the United States and performing in the debut season of *Siva*.



**ROŲMATA  
HOLMES –  
DANCER**

Roymata is of Cook Island decent and grew up in Australia.

Since graduating from the New Zealand School of Dance, Roymata has worked with international artists Nils Christe, John Butterfield, Mika Haka and Lina Limosani. Roymata first performed with Black Grace at the Murihiku Polyfest Cultural Festival 2015 and performed with the Company in France and the Netherlands.



**SHANE  
TOFAEONO –  
DANCER**

A New Zealand born Samoan, Shane grew up in Te Puke

and discovered his passion for dance at High School. He then pursued this career path by studying towards a Bachelor of Performing and Screen Arts (Contemporary Dance) at Unitec, where he graduated in 2015. Shane joined the Company in 2016, performing in France and the Netherlands.



**ZIHAO ZHUO –  
DANCER**

Zihao graduated from LASALLE College of the Arts Singapore and Hong

Kong Academy for Performing Arts, both under scholarship. A founding member of T.H.E, Zihao has performed in all of the company's major repertoire and tours. In 2012, he received the NAC's Young Artist Award. Come April 2016, Zihao will be appointed Associate Artist with T.H.E.





**MI WU –  
DANCER AND  
T.H.E  
REHEARSAL  
ASSISTANT**

A graduate of  
LASALLE

College of the

Arts Singapore and Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, Mi was a First Soloist with Singapore Dance Theatre for four years. He joined T.H.E Dance Company in August 2011, and has since danced and toured with T.H.E extensively. In 2015, he was appointed rehearsal assistant to the Artistic Director.



**BILLY  
KEOHAVONG  
– APPRENTICE**

Graduating  
from the Ev  
and Bow Full  
Time Training  
Centre and  
New Zealand

School of Dance on scholarship, Billy has performed in M1 CONTACT Festival Singapore, Tempo Dance Festival Auckland, World of Wearable Art Wellington, Mercedes-Bens Fashion Festival Sydney and World Supremacy Battlegrounds, etc. Billy joined T.H.E as an apprentice dancer in February 2016.



One of New Zealand's leading contemporary dance groups. Black Grace was founded by Neil Jeremia in 1995. Mr Jeremia draws from his Samoan and New Zealand roots to create innovative dance works that reach across social, cultural and generational barriers.

The work itself is highly physical, rich in the story telling traditions of the South Pacific and expressed with raw finesse, unique beauty and power.

The Company features some of New Zealand's finest dancers and has toured internationally to Europe, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Australia and New Caledonia. The Company has performed regularly throughout North America earning audience and critical acclaim.

[www.blackgrace.co.nz](http://www.blackgrace.co.nz)

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[www.youtube.com/BlackGraceDanceCo](http://www.youtube.com/BlackGraceDanceCo)

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Founded in 2008, The Human Expression Dance Company (T.H.E) has grown to become one of the most seminal Singaporean and South East Asian contemporary dance companies. Our works attempt to expose different dimensions of the human condition in a contemporary age that moves with blinding speed. Our identity stems from a simple desire to present our artistic beliefs at our very best.

T.H.E has performed at major festivals including the Singapore Arts Festival, Beijing Dance Festival 2012 and 2015, SiDance Festival 2013 and the festival-closing performance at Les Hivernales Festival 2012 in Avignon. Our world tours have brought us to destinations such as France, Italy, Spain, Denmark, Poland, Japan, South Korea, China, Indonesia and the UAE.

[the-dancecompany.com](http://the-dancecompany.com)

[facebook.com/THEDanceCo](http://facebook.com/THEDanceCo)

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**BLACK GRACE**

Neil Ieremia  
Abby Ieremia  
James Wasmer  
Zoë Visvanathan  
Michael Anderson

**CULTURAL ADVISORS**

Mr Siufaitotoa Simanu &  
Mrs Kiona Ieremia

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Mr & Mrs Ieremia and the Ieremia Family; T.H.E Dance Company, Jael Chew, CultureLink, Ching Lee Goh, Carla van Zon, David Inns, Dolina Wehipeihana and the Auckland Festival Trust; Jody Jackson-Becerra; M.A.C Cosmetics; Ataahua Papa; Makerita Urale; Tai Paitai; Tuaine Robati; our donors and patrons who prefer to stay anonymous; and all of our family and friends for your continued love and support, fa'afetai tele lava.

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