



# SALUTE

Remembering WW1: Four dance works



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# CURRICULUM

In this unit you and your students will:

- Learn about the elements that come together to create a theatrical ballet experience.
- Identify the processes involved in making a theatre production.

## CURRICULUM LINKS IN THIS UNIT

### Values

Students will be encouraged to value:

- **Innovation**, inquiry and curiosity, by thinking critically, creatively and reflectively.
- **Diversity**, as found in our different cultures and heritages.
- **Community and participation** for the common good.

## KEY COMPETENCIES

- **Using language, symbols and text** – Students will recognise how choices of language and symbols in live theatre affect people's understanding and the ways in which they respond.
- **Relating to others** – Students will develop the ability to listen actively and share ideas regarding theatrical ballet performances.
- **Participating and contributing** – students will be actively involved in their cultural community, understanding the importance of creative environments.
- **Thinking** – Students will reflect on their own thinking and learning after the personal experience of attending a live theatre show.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR LEVELS 7 & 8

**Level 7 students will learn how to:**

- **Understand dance in context** – Investigate and evaluate the effects of individual, social, cultural, and technological influences on the development of a variety of dance genres and styles.
- **Develop practical knowledge** – Extend skills in the vocabulary, practices, and technologies of selected dance genres and styles.
- **Communicate and interpret** – Analyse, explain, and discuss aspects of performance and choreography in a range of dance works.

**Level 8 students will learn how to:**

- **Understand dance in context** – Investigate, analyse, and discuss the features, history, issues, and development of dance in New Zealand, including the contribution of selected individuals and groups.
- **Develop practical knowledge** – Extend and refine skills, practices, and use of technologies in a range of dance genres and styles.
- **Communicate and interpret** – Critically analyse, interpret, and evaluate the artistic features and the communication of ideas in a range of dance works.

## NCEA

*Salute*, and the use of this resource, is ideal for NCEA Dance teachers and students who are learning to analyse and appreciate a dance performance.





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# INTRODUCTION

Dance can be a powerful medium to express the impact of major events in life and society. The First World War was one of the most significant events of the 20th century and had a deep and lingering impact on New Zealand society.

In the production *Salute*, the Royal New Zealand Ballet is presenting a programme of four contemporary ballets inspired by stories of New Zealand at war to mark the centenary of World War I.



*Soldier's Mass* is an emotional and beautiful work performed by 12 male dancers.

*Passchendaele* is a new work being choreographed by Neil Ieremia, founder of Black Grace, it is named after the battle in which most New Zealanders who fought in WW1 were killed and wounded. *Dear Horizon* is also a new work and it is being choreographed by former RNZB dancer, Andrew Simmons. *Salute* is a light hearted work about cadets who have not yet experienced the reality of war.

This powerful and emotional mixed bill is a sampler of classical and contemporary dance and music, themed around war, loss and hope, which will resonate with all New Zealanders.





# NEW ZEALAND ARMY BAND

RNZB is delighted to collaborate with the New Zealand Army Band (NZAB) who will perform live music, including a new commission by acclaimed NZ composer Gareth Farr, for three of the four dance works.

It's the first time the RNZB and NZAB have worked together and it's a very good fit. Both national organisations have a long and proud history and both regularly represent NZ on the world stage.

The New Zealand Army Band consists of 29 musicians including 9 Cornets, 1 Flugel Horn, 3 Tenor Horns, 2 Baritones, 2 Euphoniums, 3 Trombones, 2 Eb Bases, 2 BBb Bases, 4 Percussionists and a Director of Music.



## NEW ZEALAND ARMY BAND

The New Zealand Army Band is New Zealand's only professional brass band. It has garnered a reputation as a highly versatile and innovative musical ensemble and has earned international recognition as one of the finest marching bands in the world.

Formed in 1964 as a traditional brass band to perform at state and ceremonial occasions, the New Zealand Army Band has evolved into one of the world's most diverse entertainment organisations, performing in a wide variety of genres and settings.

The incorporation of a rhythm section and vocalists in the 1970s enabled the band to broaden its repertoire beyond traditional and contemporary brass works to include swing, jazz, pop and rock. This has seen the band develop as the primary link between New Zealand's army and the civilian population, as well as becoming a major recruiting tool for the New Zealand Defence Force.

Over the past five decades the New Zealand Army Band has also toured internationally, performing in England, Scotland, Australia, the United States of America, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Singapore, Malaysia, Korea, the United Arab Emirates, Tonga and Vanuatu.

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo has been a particularly popular destination with the band attending in 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2013, as well as participation in the Antipodeans' performances when the Tattoo was staged in New Zealand in 2000 and Australia in 2005 and 2010.

The band is based at Burnham Military Camp in the South Island. When not touring domestically or internationally this is where the band maintain their international reputation with a rigorous regime of music rehearsal.

You can watch one of their performances at the World Band Festival in Lucerne, Switzerland in 2014: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZhXOchAM4M4>





**Director of Music – Captain Graham Hickman**  
**FTCL, ANZIM, AIRMTNZ, RNZIR**



Captain Graham Hickman was raised in Feilding, where he learnt to play cornet with the Feilding Municipal Band. Graham enlisted into the New Zealand Army Band in 1985 and was posted to the 1st Battalion Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment Band in Singapore

from 1986 to 1988. In 1992 he was appointed Senior Instructor of the New Zealand Army Band School of Music and in 1999 he was appointed Bandmaster of the New Zealand Army Band. He held the position for five years before being appointed as the unit's Administration Officer. In 2009 Graham received the Queen's Commission and in 2010 was appointed as the New Zealand Army Band's Director of Music.

As a performer Graham has a rich and diverse musical background. Having won national titles on both cornet and flugel horn he has also performed with groups as varied as the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, the National Band of New Zealand and the Victoria Big Band.

A talented and accomplished conductor, Graham has conducted a wide variety of ensembles including brass bands, orchestras, jazz bands, choirs and concert bands. Highlights include three years as the Musical Director of the National Youth Brass Band of New Zealand and eight years as the Musical Director of the civilian brass band Woolston Brass, including an unprecedented four consecutive Champion Band of New Zealand titles.

Graham is a Fellow of the Trinity College of Music, London and holds diplomas in performance, teaching and management. An Associate of the Institute of Registered Music Teachers Graham has tutored and adjudicated nationally and internationally.



# DEAR HORIZON WORLD PREMIERE



**Choreography:** Andrew Simmons

**Music:** Gareth Farr

**Set and Costume Design:** Tracy Grant Lord

**Lighting Design:** Jason Morphett

Christchurch-born, Dresden-based Andrew Simmons (*Theme and Deviations, Through to You, A Song in the Dark, Of Days*) has created a new work for the Royal New Zealand Ballet, with the inspiration of a new score by Gareth Farr, written for the New Zealand Army Band and cellist Rolf Gjelsten (New Zealand String Quartet).

*“My work takes a great deal of its cues and inspirations from our emotive states. It is my intention to create a piece that explores the relationships of those involved both abroad and at home with our participation in the First World War. To have a new score composed by Gareth Farr, an icon of New Zealand music on the world stage, specifically for the New Zealand Army Band, is hugely significant not only in its relation to this creation but for the centenary commemorations as a whole.”*

## ANDREW SIMMONS



ANDREW SIMMONS

## ANDREW SIMMONS

Andrew was born in Christchurch, and he was a member of the Royal New Zealand Ballet from 2004 – 2008, before moving to Dresden in Germany. During his time with the RNZB Andrew danced roles in a wide range and style of works, with highlights including pieces in the company's contemporary repertoire by Mark Baldwin, Jorma Elo, Michael Pink and Javier De Frutos, along with participating in the company's choreographic workshops.

In 2006, Andrew created his first piece, *Theme and Deviations*, for the company. His second work for the RNZB, *Through to You*, was premiered during the 2009 *Tutus on Tour* programme. It was subsequently revived for *Tutus on Tour 2013* and appeared in the RNZB's programme of short works presented at the Orpheum Theater, Minneapolis, on the company's 2014 US tour.

In 2010 Andrew's largest work for the RNZB, *A Song in the Dark*, was commissioned and joined the company's repertoire after a successful triple bill season. This was followed by equally successful and critically praised performances of the same piece on the company's 2011 tour of the United Kingdom and France, resulting in *A Song in the Dark* receiving a nomination for best classical choreography in the 2011 UK National Dance Awards.

Andrew's most recent work for the RNZB, *Of Days*, was created for the *Made to Move* season of world premieres commissioned to mark the RNZB's 60th anniversary in 2013, and was presented with assistance from the Goethe-Institut. *Of Days* featured in the RNZB's sold-out series of performances at The Joyce, New York, in February 2014.



## MUSIC

**Gareth Farr,** Wellington-born composer, was influenced by percussion and gamelan music early in his career.



GARETH FARR

In 1993, at the age of 25, Farr was appointed Composer-In-Residence by Chamber Music New Zealand, the youngest-ever composer to hold that position. During this time, Gareth also introduced audiences to his on-stage alter ego, the percussion-playing drag queen Lillith Lacroix.

The inclusion of his works in four events at the 1996 New Zealand International Festival of the Arts – the ballet score for Douglas Wright's *Buried Venus*, Lillith's *Dream of Ecstasy* for orchestra, *Kembang Suling* and the Bach-in-Bali piano solo *Sepuluh Jari* – kick-started his career as a dedicated freelance composer. Since then, his music has been heard at, or especially commissioned for, high-profile events including the 50th anniversary of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra (*From the Depths Sound the Great Sea Gongs*), the opening of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (*Te Papa* for orchestra with soprano, tenor and karanga, a Māori chant) and the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney (*Hikoi*, a concerto for percussionist Evelyn Glennie and the NZSO).

Gareth Farr's music is particularly influenced by his extensive study of percussion, both Western and non-Western. Rhythmic elements of his compositions can be linked to the complex and exciting rhythms of Rarotongan log drum ensembles, Balinese gamelan and other percussion music of the Pacific Rim.

In addition to his music for concert chamber, Farr continues to write music for dance, theatre and television.

Gareth shares his view about his new composition:

*"One of my favourite things to do, in recent years, is to collaborate. There's this wonderful process of writing a small bit of music which inspires the other artist - and that their inspiration in return inspires me to write the next bit of music - and so on. What you end up is more than the sum of its parts. Working with Andrew Simmons is exactly like this. Already we've had collaborative moments where he has asked for changes - quite apologetically - and I have been so thankful in my response, as they were parts of the piece which I wasn't satisfied with, but I just couldn't figure out what exactly was wrong with it..."*

*"When we started the process, I sent him the first two minutes of the music that I was writing - and the exciting part there was that I could ask him - "Where should we go from this point?" The piece subsequently developed as a joining of two minds - one who is primarily concerned with musical content, form and structure, and the other - with theatre and dance. The result is a piece that I know I couldn't have created on my own - a piece that is the result of the coming together of two kiwi minds. I'm thrilled with it."*





ANDREW AND GARETH

The RNZB are fortunate to have secured Rolf Gjelsten, cellist from the New Zealand String Quartet, to perform the solo part for his brand new work.

You can listen to an extract of this talented musician here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxdq\\_6H\\_sdU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxdq_6H_sdU)



ROLF GJELSTEN





*Dear Horizon* is created for six female and six male dancers, and features set and costumes by distinguished New Zealand designer Tracy Grant Lord.



TRACY GRANT LORD

## TRACY GRANT LORD

Tracy Grant Lord is a leading stage designer of ballet, opera and theatre working with the major performance companies throughout Australasia. She has designed many productions for the Royal New Zealand Ballet including both the acclaimed *Cinderella* and *Romeo and Juliet* which received an Olivier Award Nomination for Best New Dance Production in the UK (2005). Other career highlights include two Helpmann Award Nominations for the Sydney Theatre Company's production of *In the Next Room* (2011) and the Melbourne Theatre Company's production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* (2012). Recent projects include the costume design for Queensland Ballet's *Cinderella* (2013), Opera Australia's new production of *Rigoletto* (2014) and the set and costume design for both *Lucia di Lammermoor* for Auckland Opera Studio (2014) and *Private Lives* for Melbourne Theatre Company (2014). Tracy is currently working on the Royal New Zealand Ballet's new production of Liam Scarlett's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Guys and Dolls* for Auckland Theatre Company. This year also sees revivals of her set and

costume designs in productions of *Cinderella* for Scottish Ballet and *Sleeping Beauty* for Singapore Dance Theatre.

### Stage

All four works use a black dance floor with black legs and black borders. For this piece a black smother is also used across the back of the stage.

The main scenic element onstage is a large canopy suspended over the dancers. It is reminiscent of a protecting cover or camouflage or even a sky. It is painted to look as if it is burnt or scorched or smoke damaged as though it has been through a battle. Attached to the netting of this canopy are pieces of painted gauze in the shape of hand written letters that grow into crosses and descend down the length of the canopy into the section that falls to the floor upstage behind a series of three-dimensional crosses. There are also poppies of various sizes along with their pods that hang from the canopy. The floor crosses depict barricades that might be found on a battlefield. By using a sense of perspective with the canopy narrowing and the size of the barricades increasing an illusion of depth is created on stage. The idea that delicate objects such as flowers and personal letters could be exposed to the horror of war but still exist in their damaged state, as if they were embers or fragments in the air, evokes a memory of loss.

### Costumes

The organic texture and drape of woven fabrics has been used for the costumes, to create an almost utilitarian style that is intended to be both human and beautiful. The effect of these fabrics, in both their movement and their ability to sculpt the shapes of the bodies, is to show a harmony or a beauty that is unaffected by decoration. They appear to be hand woven and knitted, soft yet still very protective, to show the strength of people in war. The neutrality of the palette is highlighted by a blue underneath the women's skirts which



carries with it a sense of eternity and spirit of life. The costumes have elements of both classical and contemporary styles to suggest to the audience that they could consider both the present and future inside a piece that commemorates the past.

The two groups of dancers, six females and six males have very distinct but complementary costumes.

Women – brown/grey mixed open weave fabric in a princess line style with a very full hemline. They also wear flesh-coloured pointe shoes.

Men – Pants: slightly high waisted trousers in a tan/black design fabric with a button front. Tops: pale gold linen cotton mixed t-shirt with brown socks and shoes to match the trousers.



## JASON MORPHETT

Jason Morphett's professional career started in the West End, London's theatre land, during his college years. He soon graduated from follow spot operator to charge hand electrician to programmer and onto Chief Electrician. Moving out of the West End he started touring, first nationally then internationally, and hasn't

really stopped since. In that time he has run the lighting departments for Birmingham Royal Ballet, London City Ballet, Royal New Zealand Ballet and NBR Opera New Zealand amongst others. During his tenures with these companies he would design the in house



JASON MORPHETT

productions and deal with all the relighting of the company's repertoire on tour.

Over the years he has toured all over the world with shows as diverse as *The Chemical Brothers* in New York, *Holiday on Ice*



throughout Europe, *CA Awards Show* at the Pyramids in Egypt, Birmingham Royal Ballet in New York and *Royal Galas* at the Ritz Hotel in London in the presence of Her Majesty the Queen.

He is currently dividing his time between running the lighting departments of New Zealand Opera, NZ International Arts Festival and his own design company Three Seven Design Ltd as well as teaching Lighting Design at the Toi Whakaari New Zealand Drama School. Previously for RNZB he has designed *Coppelia*, *Verge*, *Concerto*, *Esquisses*, and *Si Superias*.

### Lighting

The lighting is based around creating atmosphere and a world that echoes the emotions that drive the choreography. Through the use of side light and colour we create an environment that echoes the emotional qualities intended by the choreographer. Muted pastels and opposing

colours from each side are used on a practical level to allow the audience to see the dancers, and on an aesthetic level, to support and enhance the world. Tracy's set and costumes are defining and Andrew's choreography lives within.

The colour palette of the costumes is neutral, allowing for flesh tones to be lit in a porcelain, slightly cool, vulnerable range, so that there is an effect of a clinical world and possibly even a world of nostalgia. The ability to cast shadows through the canopy onto the dancers also suggests vulnerability as they move in and out of areas of different levels of light. The darkness of the canopy and floor crosses allow them to be seen as silhouettes but also their shapes are very open and delicate which means at times they will appear to be very light in presence. A scenic device often used on stage to evoke atmosphere is a type of haze that is created in the air of the stage to 'catch' the beams of light. This will be employed to enhance the textures that already exist within the design.



# SOLDIER'S MASS

**Choreograph and design:** Jiří Kylián

**Music:** Bohuslav Martinů: *Polní Mše* (1939)

The first performance of *Soldier's Mass* was on 13th June 1980 at the Circustheater, Scheveningen in the Netherlands.

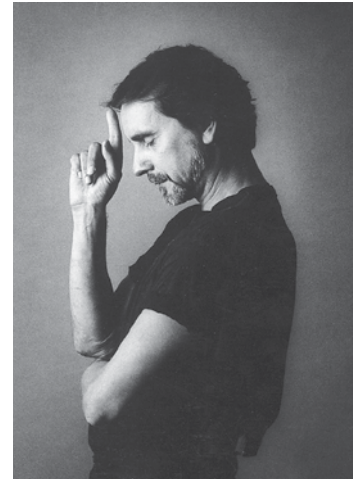
This Martinů composition for Baritone, male choir and orchestra was composed on the eve of the Second World War for the choir in the city of The Hague, the home of the Nederlands Dans Theater. He wrote it as a call for resistance to the Nazi war machine which, so soon after, stormed treacherously across the Dutch borders to institute a reign of terror which was to last for more than five years. In this requiem dance it is the young dancers who represent those soldiers who died so that others had the right to live. Though youth and the survival of hope are central to this work, there is sadness in the reminiscence of those children's games, which are the first playfully romantic dreams of glory. And there is hope in the realisation of the true strength of the human spirit sharing in extreme adversity. *Soldatenmis*, or *Field Mass* is a salute to those soldiers who died too young and whose true memorial should be a world of peace.

## JIŘÍ KYLIÁN

Dancer and choreographer Jiří Kylián was born in 1947 in Prague – Czechoslovakia, to his father Vaclav who was a banker and to his mother Maketa who in her young age was a child dancer prodigy. Needless to say, in the post-war Czechoslovakia, it was highly unusual and hardly acceptable for a young boy to choose dance as his profession. But in the early days, dance was not his first priority, his first love was circus. After his grandmother took him to see the famous “Circus Busch”, he decided to become an acrobat, and spent a considerable time learning this profession. When the school for acrobats had to close, his mother took him to see his first ballet performance. The experience was overwhelming, and had a decisive influence on his future. At the age of nine, he became a student at the School of the National Ballet Prague. There he made his first attempts to create small choreographies for his fellow students.

In 1962, he was accepted as a student to the Prague Conservatory. Although this era was totally controlled by the omnipresent communist party, many of the teachers were excellent, as their education was firmly rooted in the very liberal and fiercely democratic pre-war Czechoslovakia.

You can read more about “Jiří Kylián here: <http://www.jirikylian.com/existence/>





## CHOREOGRAPHIC PROCESS

Jiří Kylián was determined to create a work for male dancers only. One reason was that he saw male dancers as being underprivileged in the dance world. But he had other reasons too.

There are many similarities between soldiers and dancers:

- Dancers and soldiers alike have to be in a perfect physical condition;
- They have to be disciplined;
- They have to be able to rely on each other whenever exposed to a particular situation,
- They have stage fright, and they have to show their true character;
- They fight for something they believe in, and very often for something they don't believe in at all;
- They are vulnerable.

On the other hand there are some quite fundamental differences. Dancers:

- Are not (always) in danger of dying in the course of a performance;
- Their strife is not likely to change the course of history;
- They do not have to fight to death for the people who forced them to fight, and the soldiers who desert the battlefield are usually shot dead on the spot... the dancers not.

You can view a brief clip here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3l9lAZtyjNk>



## MUSIC

Bohuslav Martinů was a prolific Czech composer in the early 20th Century. He wrote 14 ballet scores, and a large body of orchestral, chamber, vocal and instrumental works. He experimented with different musical styles including jazz, folk melodies and nursery rhymes.

The score by Bohuslav Martinů for a male choir, brass instruments, piano and percussion was written in 1939 – at the outset of World War II. His music, set to the text by Jiří Mucha, leaves no doubt of what their message was about: both immigrants, they wanted to give their total support to the just cause of the Czech Army in its fight against the German occupation.



You can find out more about Martinů here: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bohuslav\\_Martin%C5%AF](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bohuslav_Martin%C5%AF)

## PRODUCTION

### Costumes

All 12 male dancers are wearing khaki trousers and beige shirts. The leggings, socks and shoes are also khaki to match with the trousers.

### Stage

The black smother or cyc (cyclorama) is replaced with a painted black cloth with a fluoro strip to represent the horizon. In order to hide the ultra violet lights required to light the black cloth, a scenic element called a ground row is added to hide the bottom of the painted cloth.

### Lighting

Jason's lighting for this piece is a combination of top and backlight washes defining areas on the stage with side light picking out the dancers. The cyc is lit with colour washes from the top and the bottom in different colours and uses an ultra violet light to pick out the strip that delineates the sky from the earth.





# SALUTE NEW ZEALAND PREMIERE

**Choreography:** Johan Kobborg

**Music:** Hans Christian Lumbye

**Design:** Natalia Stewart

**Lighting Design:** Jason Morphet

Renowned dancer, choreographer and director, **Johan Kobborg's** *Salute* is a light hearted work about cadets who have not yet experienced the reality of war. The music for this piece has been specially arranged for the New Zealand Army Band by Riwai Hina, David Fiu, Joseph Thomas and Tom Bakes.



## JOHAN KOBORG

Johan Kobborg has enjoyed an exceptional career as a principal dancer with the Royal Danish Ballet, The Royal Ballet and as a guest with major companies around the world. Recently he has also distinguished himself as a choreographer with leading companies including The Royal Ballet, the Royal Danish

Ballet, the Bolshoi Ballet and the Royal New Zealand Ballet. In December 2013, Johan was appointed Artistic Director of the Romanian National Ballet.

During his performing career Johan Kobborg has danced leading roles in all the full-length classics. He has also performed works by most of the world's leading choreographers including Balanchine and Ashton.

Particular highlights of his career as a producer and choreographer include creating award-winning productions of *La Sylphide* for both The Royal Ballet and the Bolshoi Ballet, and *Giselle*, co-created with Ethan Stiefel for the RNZB in 2012. Among other projects, Johan Kobborg recently created a new production of *Romeo and Juliet* for the Novosibirsk Ballet Company.

## MUSIC

Hans Christian Lumbye was a popular Danish composer of the 19th century. He played trumpet in a military band when he was young and later joined the Horse Guards of Copenhagen. These military links influenced his music, which often makes use of non-musical sources such as a train chugging out of a station, or grinding to a halt.



You can find out more about Lumbye here [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans\\_Christian\\_Lumbye](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Christian_Lumbye)

## PRODUCTION

### Staging

As often happens in a contemporary piece, the stage is bare. In *Salute*, the dancers perform in front of a white cyclorama. A cyclorama is a large curtain or wall, often concave, positioned at the back of the stage area. The word cyclorama is often shorten to "cyc". As the name implies, it often encircles or partially encloses the stage to form a background. The floor is black allowing for the colour of the costumes and the lighting to do all the work.

### Lighting

The lighting for this piece is based on creating a space for the choreography to take place in and bring out the dancers and the movements. A simple staging allows the full concentration on the dancers without distractions from the setting. A stage wash from above and the sides with a simple regal blue cyc is all that's needed for Johan's work to shine.

### Costumes

The costumes are designed by Natalia Stewart. Natalia Stewart began her career as a ballet dancer, training at the Bolshoi Academy in Moscow before studying theatre design and fashion. She has increasingly specialised in ballet and opera. Natalia designed costumes for the gala which

formed part of The Royal Ballet's programme in Cuba in 2008 (*Don Quixote* and *Le Corsaire pas de deux*) and worked with Johan Kobborg on his new ballets *Salute* (North Carolina School of the Arts, 2010) and *Alumni* (Royal Danish Ballet, 2011). She designed the costumes for the RNZB's acclaimed production of *Giselle* (2012).

### Men

All seven men have a military look.

- **Tops** – Grey waisted military jacket with silver braid trim and red cuff and collar. The general wears the same uniform but his jacket has gold braid trim instead.
- **Pants and footwear** – white tights with a red stripe on the side and wearing black calf-height dance boots.

### Woman

Five female dancers plus one female dancer dressed as a male.

The women wear red bodices, with a trim and skirts in a very pale blue and white tulle. Some wear pink ballet tights and pink pointe shoes, as well as red and blue bows in their hair to complement the costume.





# PASSCHENDAELE WORLD PREMIERE

**Choreography and design:** Neil Ieremia

**Music:** Dwayne Bloomfield

**Lighting Design:** Jason Morphett

Passchendaele is a small village in Belgium. But for New Zealanders, it symbolises the horror and waste of lives in World War I. This is where 18,000 soldiers were injured and 5,000 lost their lives in 1917 – more than at any other disaster since 1840. The name Passchendaele now conjures up images of death, mud and helpless soldiers mowed down by German machine-guns and artillery.



**The village of Passchendaele before and after the war**

Passchendaele has been specially commissioned by the RNZB for this programme. Neil Ieremia knew that creating a dance to mark Passchendaele was a massive challenge: *“It’s a subject drenched in dignity and sacrifice and so close to our nation’s core. From the haunting journey through the music,*

*to the refined expression in the dancers’ bodies, encapsulating the very human impact of war – this creative process has already left an indelible mark on my spirit. I feel I have grasped a very, very small insight into something that should never be forgotten,”* says Neil Ieremia.



## NEIL IEREMIA

Neil Ieremia, founder of Black Grace, is creating a new work for the RNZB named after the battle in which more New Zealanders were killed and wounded than any other; Passchendaele.

Neil Ieremia is one of New Zealand’s most accomplished choreographers and creative entrepreneurs. Born in Wellington and of Samoan heritage, Neil wanted to provide a different perspective and a fresh voice to contemporary dance. He founded his own company, Black Grace, in 1995, with ten male dancers of Pacific, Maori 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, The Netherlands, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, New Caledonia, South Korea, Scotland, Switzerland and the United States of America.



**NEIL IEREMIA**

Neil has a reputation for many 'firsts', including sell-out performances at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival (USA debut 2004 and 2005), a four-week season on New York City's 42nd Street, performances at the renowned Cervantino Festival in Mexico, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and the 2010 Cultural Olympiad in Vancouver.

Among his other achievements, 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. 2010 saw the Mayor of Honolulu officially proclaim 6 February 2010 as "Black Grace Day". Most recently Black Grace received a Herald Angel Award at the 2014 Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

## MUSIC

Dwayne Bloomfield was born and raised in Timaru. He started learning the euphonium aged ten, which eventually led him to join the New Zealand Army Band in September 1987.

Highlights of his career include the 1988 Bicentennial Tattoo in Australia, trips to Greece and Crete, Washington DC, Vanuatu, Edinburgh, Gallipoli, Italy and Switzerland. Recent highlights include the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace, performing for the Queen at her Diamond Jubilee Pageant and the 2013 Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo. Dwayne worked with the New Zealand Army Band for 26 years. He is also internationally known as a composer. An interest in New Zealand's military history inspired him to compose three works for military band: *Behold the Narrows from the Hill* inspired by the battle of Chunuk Bair at Gallipoli; *Passchendaele October 12th 1917*; and recently *Lone Pine* for the National Australian Band.

Dwayne wrote: '*Passchendaele* is to be descriptive, almost like the soundtrack to a movie.'

It was first performed on Anzac Day 2009 in Christchurch.

Through poor military planning by British generals a rushed and ill-prepared plan of attack began on 12 October 1917. By the end of the day there would be 845 New Zealand soldiers killed and over 3,000 casualties. It was a massacre.

While we can never experience what it must have been like to live through Passchendaele that day, through his music Dwayne Bloomfield has tried his utmost to create for the audience the closest likeness he can. Some of this may not be pleasant to listen to; if it was, it wouldn't be portraying this horrific event.



It opens by taking you to the trenches, just moments before going over the top. The growing anxiety and nerves of the soldiers are felt as they face certain death. The pitiful artillery barrage is heard in the trombone and percussion sections. Due to the boggy ground conditions many guns were unable to be brought forward and those which were could not be stabilised and soon rounds were landing amongst our own troops.

The music changes to depict the soldiers' anguish that the barrage had not been effective against the barb wire entanglements and pill boxes, and they wait for the command to move forward, knowing the Germans are quickly moving out of bunkers and preparing their defences. The solo cornet captures their last desperate memories of mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, wives and



children, before a tense moment of dreaded silence as they await the sound down the lines of a whistle to signal the advance.

Dwayne Bloomfield captures the increasing machine-gun fire. Imagine being a soldier in this hopeless and devastating situation.

The flugel horn then captures the terrible aftermath of the battle while the trombones imitate moans and groans coming from the wounded. Many would lay unattended and exposed to the weather for three days in no man's land, dying a painful and lonely death.

The music then captures the grief, mourning and sense of loss of the survivors, many overcome with shock and sorrow at witnessing entire sections massacred in a split second, or their best friend killed by a sniper round. These images would haunt them for the rest of their lives.

The euphoniums and baritones return to the flugel solo reflecting the last letters written by the dead that begin their slow journey to their destinations. The band then builds as a final salute to the soldiers' heroic efforts and the sacrifices they made. They shall not be forgotten.

The piece concludes with the most dreaded sound that a relative of a soldier serving overseas during the war could hear: a knock at the door from a telegram delivery boy, better known then as the 'Angels of Death'. The catastrophe at Passchendaele affected more New Zealand families and shattered more lives in a single day than any other event in our nation's history.

## PRODUCTION

### Staging

*Passchendaele* is a brand new piece, so the staging information may change during the rehearsal period. Currently the floor is black with a white cyc hanging at the back. A film projection of original artwork by New Zealand painter Geoff Tune will be projected. Again a black dance floor will be used here.

### Lighting

The lighting for this piece is also a design by Jason Morphett. *Passchendaele* being a world premiere means that the choreographer can change his concepts at any stage during the creation of the piece. Rather than lighting the cyc in a particular colour like in *Salute*, in this work the cyc is being used as a projection screen for a series of Geoff Tune's artworks. Here Jason creates a deceptively simple concept that allows us to define space and connect the stage to the projected images on the cyc. A series of trench shaped specials that appear to be randomly placed across the dance space interact with side light to close in and contain the dancers, whilst intelligent light fittings, ones that can be remotely controlled, are used to close down, move or explode the defined spaces to support the choreography. Through colour in the side lights we connect back to the images on the cyc as well as using the colour choices the artist has used as an emotive palette for the work.



### Costumes

The 18 dancers are split by gender into two groups. Each group displays different shades of grey in three different styles.

**Girls** – wearing flesh bra and a grey mesh apron complemented by grey tights which finish beyond the knees and flesh-coloured, flat ballet shoes.

**Boys** – wearing grey loose-fitting breeches gathered at the knee or calf called 'knickerbockers' with three various designs of shirts; the first design has a collar and opening down front, the second pattern is plain with shoulder patches and the last design has a triangle pattern on the front and on the sleeves.





# ACTIVITIES

## 1 – MAKING A DUO/TRIO/ GROUP PIECE

The first part of this activity is done individually. Ask the students to spread out and use all the available space. You can do this in silence or have some music playing in the background.

Call out some words that have a connection with war or Anzacs, for example, battle, brother, family, fear, passion, duty, home. Choose 8 – 10 words. You can add a fun word in if you feel the atmosphere is becoming too heavy, e.g. cookie.

Each time a word is called out, everyone finds a shape/pose for that word. The students must remember their shape for each word, as every time a word is repeated they must get into the shape they have chosen for that word. Spend quite a bit of time on this so the students become comfortable with their shapes and can move quickly between them.

Ask them to choose four or five shapes that they like best and put them together in any order; make sure that they go straight from one shape to another. This should take a couple of minutes. When everyone has chosen their shapes and put them together, clap a rhythm so the group can perform their shape phrase all at the same time, changing shape on each clap. You can vary the speed for fun.

Once everyone is comfortable with their phrase, get them to modify it by adding to it. For example, they can add different levels; directions; make one of their shapes turn or jump; play around with the speed; and try some different dynamics/energy. This may take 5 – 10 minutes. You can either get everyone to perform their phrases altogether, freezing once they have finished, or you can get them to perform a few people at a time, again freezing once they have finished.

Put the class into pairs and get them to put their solo phrases together to make a duo (if there is an odd number make a group of three). They can put their phrases together in any way they want, for example, they can do the two solos one after the other in unison; they can mirror each other; they can travel towards and away from each other; they can mix their solos up. This may take 10 – 15 minutes. When they have made their duos, you can either get a couple of pairs to perform together, freezing once they have finished, or they can perform one pair at a time.

To develop this further, you can put two pairs together to make a group of four, and they can create a short group piece using material from their duos. They may need to add some extra things in to make it work, and they'll have to think differently about their spacing/formations now they're a group rather than a pair.

Another development is to split the pairs up and put the class together into small groups (three or four), and make a short trio or group piece, still using the material they created with their original partner. This way you may see that some of the trios/small group pieces have similarities, as there will be students with the same phrase in different groups.

To extend this topic over a few lessons you can create a whole class dance using the material that the students have made. You can put everything together including the individual shape phrases, the duos, the groups of four, and the trios/small groups. You can get the students to teach each other their choreography, which they can perform in larger groups or as a whole group in unison.

If you have a piece of music that you would like to use, keep this playing quietly in the background while the students are creating their dances.

## 2 – CREATING PATHWAYS

This activity can be done with some of the material from Activity 1, a piece of choreography or sequence that you have created, or you can get the students to create a new phrase.

Put the class into pairs and using the choreography/sequence, get them to use the word 'Salute' as their pathway on the floor. There are many ways this can be done, for example, the students can do the pathways in unison; they can mirror each other; they can make half a letter each; they can make the letters different sizes; they can make two of the same letter in different places; they can make different letters at the same time.

Some movements from the sequence may have to be modified to fit into the pathway, and the complete Salute pathway will probably be longer than the movement sequence so the students will have to keep repeating it until they have spelt Salute.

If you don't have an existing sequence to use or you don't want to use the material from Activity 1 you can get the students to create a phrase by setting them some tasks. Individually, ask them to do a jump, a turn, a balance, and something on the ground. When they have chosen those four things ask them to link them together, in any order, using loco-motor steps, for example, skipping, running, walking, galloping. Put them into pairs and ask them to combine their phrases. They do not have to do all eight "steps" but should have at least four, plus the linking loco-motor movements. This will be the phrase that they will do while making their Salute pathway.

## 3 – MODIFYING A PHRASE

This activity can be done with some of the material from Activity 1, Activity 2, or a piece of choreography or sequence that you have created. This is quite a difficult activity as it requires the students to spend some time thinking about what a word means and how to use that meaning in their dancing – literally or abstractly.

Split the class into a mixture of pairs, threes, and/or small groups, and give each group a different word – the word can be given in secret! Each group has to somehow incorporate their word into the phrase they are working with.

The word might give the group a feeling or emotion to portray while dancing the phrase; it might lend itself to a specific formation; it might help the group to create some new material to add to the phrase; it might make the group modify the phrase, for example, changing the order of the movements, adding repetition, canon, or mirroring.

This activity can be done with the Salute pathway phrases. They can either go in the same pairs, you can add a third person to a pair, put two pairs together, or you can completely mix everyone up so that most of the groups contain people that haven't worked together yet on any Salute material.





## 4 – INTRODUCING CONTACT IMPROVISATION (TWO ACTIVITIES)

**1** The first part of this activity is done individually. Ask the students to spread out and use all the available space. You can do this in silence or have some music playing in the background.

Get the students to walk around the space, in any direction without bumping into each other. As they are walking explain that when you call out 'freeze' you want them to stop in a certain shape, for example, a wide shape, a low shape, or a twisted shape.

When they have done this a few times, ask them to make a shape with the closest person, or people (no more than three) when you call out 'freeze'. When you have done this a few times, let the students create their own shapes instead of you calling them out, then add some counts to the exercise – walk for 16 counts, hold a shape with the closest person/people for eight counts.

Then add in an extra shape – walk for 16 counts, hold a shape for eight counts, change shape and hold for eight counts. Once they become comfortable with this ask them to make physical contact with the person they make a shape with. Any part of the body can make contact: they might go back to back, or an elbow to a leg, or a hand to a shoulder. The first time you ask them to make contact, just do one shape, walk for 16 counts, hold the shape with contact for eight counts.

Then build up to two shapes with contact, holding each for eight counts, then you can build up to as many shapes as you want, holding for different counts, for example, ask them to make four shapes holding for four counts each, then walking again.

Once the students have become comfortable with this type of activity (it may take a few lessons to get to this stage, so this might be an activity that you do as a warm-up or for just part of a class), you can progress by asking the students to keep their shapes moving, rather than just holding poses with a partner. As they keep moving, their point of contact with their partner will keep changing.

You can add different ways of moving in between partners, not just walking. At first you can give them the ways to move, then let them choose. It may be easier for the students if you give them set counts to be moving between partners and set counts to move with their partner.

You can make all of the above tasks just improvisation exercises, or you can get the pairs to remember and choose their favourite moments, formalize them so they can be repeated, for example, giving counts to the movements, and used with other activities to create/be part of a dance.



**2** Put the class into groups of four and ask them to stand in a circle or semi-circle. One member of the group goes into the centre and makes a shape. Then the remaining members, one at a time, join in and make complementary or contrasting shapes, making sure they have physical contact with one other member of their group. Get the group to unravel their shape by leaving in the same order that they entered, for example, the person who entered first leaves first etc. or get them to leave in reverse order.

You can ask them to find interesting ways of moving in and out of their group shape rather than just walking. Repeat this activity until everyone has had a go at entering first and making the initial shape.

To progress this, once the group has made a shape together, you can ask them to try and find a different point of physical contact with someone from the group without leaving the shape – first ask them to try and maintain their first point of contact until they have made their second, then get them to lose the first point of contact before they make their second. This can be repeated several times.

In the same groups, one student enters and makes a shape. When the next student enters they “knock” a body part of the first student which will make that student move and change their shape. The second student makes their own shape after they have “knocked” the first student (they may or may not be able to maintain physical contact with that student), the next student enters and can knock either of the two who are in shapes, and then the last student enters. Then all of the students exit the space. Again, this can be repeated so that everyone gets a turn at being the first to enter the space.

Another way to do this exercise is to make the first person who entered the only one that gets “knocked”, then without moving from the end shape, person two gets knocked by each of the other group members, and so on until everyone has been “knocked”.

You can make all of the above exercises just improvisations or you can get the groups to remember and choose their favourite shapes and “knocks” and get them to formalize their improvisations so they can be repeated, for example, giving counts to the movements.

Anything created from the two contact improvisation activities can be added to some existing dance sequences to make a complete dance, or they can be a starting point for some new choreography.

