

# OTAKI BOYS TURNING CONTEMPORARY DANCE ON THEIR HEADS

## Tu Move 2012

By Anna Groves



When I heard that DANZ and the New Zealand School of Dance were running a free three day workshop with four of the best dancer/choreographer/tutors in Aotearoa NZ, and that six of my students fitted the criteria, I was committed to do WHATEVER it took to get them there. So...I did. And it was well worth it.

After filling in the necessary paperwork about risks and hazards - injury and dehydration - and receiving approval from senior management, I went on to approaching whānau. Dance is sometimes not regarded as a very worthwhile talent/skill to have, but when I explained to the boys' Mums that their sons were very talented, they were supportive. One even said 'I will make sure he is out of bed in time, don't worry!' I was relieved I had support from home.

Each day the guys turned up at 7.30am to be driven in the school van to the New Zealand School of Dance. I was a bit concerned when the workshop began with contemporary and that they didn't do any

# move your thinking



Dance Studies  
[www.creative.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.creative.auckland.ac.nz)



hip hop - as that was my hook to get them there - they had done NO contemporary before.

However, they followed through, jumped in and gave it their best. They were a bit unsure on the way home, saying 'that ballet stuff was weird', but after a good dose of junk food and crab at Pukerua Bay they had stopped moaning about their sore legs. I knew that all was well when they arrived full of enthusiasm on the second day - remember this was during their holidays when so many other teens get to sleep in!

Since the workshop the students have completed a one day workshop with Manoa Teaiwa (one of the Tu Move tutors). They have almost finished the set they began at Tu Move, which they will perform in assembly and gain NCEA credits for. I am organising Tanemahuta Gray to teach Māori performing arts in Term 3 and the students have been invited to Tai Royal's two week intensive in January 2013. I intend to get the students to various shows, including *Hairspray*, as they saw the audition during Tu Move and asked me to take them to their first musical show.

Five other students have transferred into my dance class, and the buzz is growing. I am so proud of my students, and the others who travelled to get to the workshop from Auckland and Gisborne.

Tu Move not only supported me in connecting with the students to develop mutual trust and respect, it has also touched their lives in a way that even I can't imagine. I encourage every dance teacher or parent/caregiver to do whatever they can to get their Māori/Pasifika male dance students to Tu Move in 2013 - even if they are not taking dance as a subject at school or their dance interest is more spinning on their heads! ■

*"I enjoyed the dancing because it was my first class doing these styles. I only knew Kiribati dance before the workshop. It was amazing learning new moves and being around professional dancers. It has changed my life."* **Tebuke Teawaki-MacKenzie**

*"Tu Move was a great experience. We got to learn different types of styles of dance including Contemporary, Hip Hop, and Te Rakau. We also got a chance to learn about choreography. I had been focussed mostly on Hip Hop dance with crews around my community, however, now that I've been introduced to these different styles I want to keep learning and I'm hoping to get into a full time dance course next year that includes all styles of dance. Doing dance as a subject at Otaki College and Tu Move has given me many opportunities which I am thankful for - it has inspired me and helped me believe that dance CAN be a profession."* **Jordan Walker**

*"It was all good. It was different, cool learning new dance styles and getting out of our comfort zones."* **Maihi Davis**

*"The fact that we had something to do during the school holidays that we really enjoyed was awesome. I realise now that dance can be my 'profession' and not just a hobby. It was the bomb!"* **Nathan Kaiawe**

*"It was exciting, we had a great time. It was new for us. It was pretty tricky but they were good teachers and helped us learn. I really enjoyed the hip hop."* **Donny Keene**

#### **Paula Steeds-Huston, New Zealand School of Dance writes:**

The dance industry is calling out for more Māori and Pacific Island males and we felt passionate about being an institute that could help provide that. The course introduced these young people with potential to the possibilities of a career in dance and was an opportunity to expose them to contemporary dance. With the amazing and inspiring tutoring of Taane Mete, Tanemahuta Gray, Manoa Teaiwa and Paora Taurima, Tu Move gave an insight and taste of what the world of dance can offer young males. Norm Hewitt shared his love of dance as he is the Patron of the programme.

Success from the 2010 Tu Move programme has seen one of the boys mentored and he is currently studying full time as a first year contemporary major at the NZSD. I would hope to see the progression of the course allow us and other institutes to ultimately provide the industry with talented Māori and Pacific Island performers.

## DANCE BEYOND DIFFERENCE

27-30 JUNE 2012 @ THEATRE AUCKLAND

Run.  
Slip!  
Spring!

15TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

#### CHOREOGRAPHERS

MARC BREW (RUN)  
CAROL BROWN (SLIP)  
CATHERINE CHAPPELL (SPRING)

TOUCHCOMPASS.ORG.NZ

Touch  
Compass.  
Dance  
Co.

