

DANZ MENTORING PROGRAMME

BUILDING A STRONG INDUSTRY AND DEVELOPING CHOREOGRAPHIC SKILLS

As kaitiaki/caretaker of dance in New Zealand, DANZ assumes its roles in advocacy, support and nurturing of the dance industry in many ways. A core service of DANZ is our mentoring programme. Mentoring provides for skill development in any area of professional dance and each mentorship is uniquely designed, depending on the needs of the individual and the project proposal. For instance, alongside choreographic mentorship between an experienced choreographer and emerging artist, a mentorship may be designed for business development, marketing and/or sponsorship or production skills. The mentorship may take place between two individuals or between a mentor and a cluster of people. A recent DANZ mentorship in Auckland occurred between a filmmaker and a group of recent graduates keen to learn more about dance for the camera. Another project was for a Māori choreographer in Auckland to mentor Māori dancers in the South Island to assist with programme development for ongoing exploration in Māori contemporary dance.

One of the major success stories from the mentoring programming has been the establishment and development of MAP (Movement Art Practice) in Christchurch. MAP has been supported by DANZ since its inception in 2013, and was formed through DANZ mentoring sessions with Jamie Bull in 2012. Julia Harvie, MAP Artistic Director, says: "Through various forms of mentoring from facilitated brainstorming sessions, to business strategy and support for individual directors, DANZ has helped MAP grow and develop over the past three years. In 2015, MAP ran our first Research Series. These were 10 mini choreographic residencies held in Christchurch and Auckland. Each artist was provided with mentorship through the DANZ mentor programme. This was incredibly beneficial to the artists given that the focus of the residencies was on research. Having the mentoring gave the artists encouragement, fresh perspectives and further avenues of research to pursue. It was definitely a vital part of the project".

The benefits from the mentoring programme can apply equally to the mentors as well as the mentees. Tom McCrory from The Conch provided one to one mentoring in October 2015 to Jodie Bate developing her skills in object animation and physical storytelling which assisted the development of her solo work, *Amputation of*

Personality. As much of Tom's work was with large teams and large scale works, he enjoyed the opportunity to spend detailed time with one artist purely devoted to a solo work. Tom says, "It is a delicate task to assist in the development of a work and I learnt a great deal through the application of my skills to the specifics of the material. In particular, how to gently loosen a maker's grip on a deeply personal work in order that they can gain a higher degree of objectivity as an artist. In doing so my perspective on my own work shifted. The simplicity and detail enabled a high level of creative dialogue through the work – which was inspiring. The opportunity to mentor is important and in many ways quite unique within the arts environment".

The DANZ mentoring programme is by application and you must be a Silver member of DANZ. Please contact DANZ in the first instance to discuss your need for mentoring. The initial discussion can be broad and can be used to brainstorm and shape the mentorship. Initially you may not have a specific mentor in mind when you begin your application, or, alternatively you may have identified someone who has the appropriate skills that you require from a mentorship.

Since its establishment in 2002, DANZ has successfully completed more than 120 mentoring projects ranging from small to large and involving a diverse range of individuals and groups, many of whom have gone on to become key contributors to dance in Aotearoa NZ. The DANZ mentorship programme fulfils our commitment to contribute to a vibrant and thriving dance industry in New Zealand. ■

AMPUTATION OF PERSONALITY
PHOTO: CHRIS SULLIVAN, SEEN IN DUNEDIN

