

SHAKE YOUR GROOVE THING!

BY LYNE PRINGLE & DR. MARIANNE SCHULTZ

In a follow up to the article in Issue 40 exploring the opportunities arising from the public's desire to 'shake their groove', Lyne Pringle and Marianne Schultz explore how professional and recreational dance is working in partnership to meet this demand, and the myriad of participatory offerings coming up in 2016.

In case you haven't heard participatory dance is the 'in' thing – everybody's doing it. From *The Garden of Courtly Delights* at the *Hamilton Gardens Arts Festival* to Wellington's *CubaDupa Festival* in early 2015 with its sublime Swan Dance Zone (planning is underway to repeat this marvellous event in 2016 in partnership with DANZ), to the New Zealand Festival's *Le Grand Continental* as the opening free event in 2016. This latter project welcomed anybody with an interest in dance to audition. And they did as 250 people showed up. A core cast of 150 local dancers have been selected to work with a team of professional dancers and French Canadian choreographer Sylvain Émard. Together they will create a pulsating and vibrant contemporary line dance in Wellington's Civic Square, followed by a dance party that invites the entire audience to get down and boogie. This performance challenges the old bastion and catch phrase of the elite dance realm – 'excellence'.



SUMMER IN THE SQUARE:
AUCKLAND LIVE - 2014



So who's to say that a participatory event can't be excellent? Who's to say that pros can't rub shoulders with recreational dance aficionados to create something magical?

National and international trends are challenging these paradigms, as more choreographers reach out to communities in a spirit of inclusion and a reframing of the questions 'who is dance for?' and 'how can people engage with the art form at a deeper level beyond watching young athletes on stage executing super human feats?'

The variety of professional and community collaborations across Auckland in early 2016 highlight the diverse dance activity that occurs on a regular basis in the 'Super City'. With the long summer nights and an abundance of outdoor events, dance will be given a good airing in Auckland from December to March.

Auckland Live's *Summer in the Square* is sure to activate the CBD over three special weekend events during January and February. The 'Vintage weekend' to be held on 22–24 January will host Swing Out Central leading open, public classes in swing dance, culminating in an 'under the stars' free dance hall. The second themed free event in the square, the 'Urban weekend' from 29–31 January, will feature popping, locking and hip hop with the Auckland popping community. Passionate lovers will find a suitable outlet to express their love in Aotea Square on Valentine's Day with a fiery tango or steamy salsa during the 'Latin weekend' from 12–14 February. Led by instructors from Viva Dance studio, this will be an opportunity to rub shoulders (and hips) with dancers from all walks of life on a sultry Auckland evening.

The Art of Colour, a work by Malia Johnston that featured in this year's WOW (World of Wearable Art) public



programme in the streets of Wellington, will be performed in Aotea Square, with two performances daily, from 7-11 December. Working with dancers from the Unitec contemporary dance programme, Johnston's work will brighten up the Square for lunching office workers, tourists and young skateboarders.

The *Auckland Arts Festival*, now an annual event, will have several dance events across the city in March 2016. Undoubtedly the largest meeting between contemporary dance and community participation will be *Ruaumoko* directed by Moss Patterson from Atamira Dance Company in partnership with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, with a cast of over 100 Auckland school children. This will be performed at the majestic Civic Theatre in downtown Auckland on 11-12 March. Composer Gareth Farr's *Ruaumoko* provides the setting for this exciting dance event that has grown in popularity since its inception in 2011 beginning with the ambitious *Sacre*, led by the late Sally Markham. The festival's family weekend, viewed as the Auckland Art Festivals' gift to Aucklanders of all ages, runs from 12-13 March. Free events include the ACE crew K-Pop's performances and workshops in Aotea Square and performances by the Belgian-based circus La Cucina dell'Arte. *White Night*, the Festival's roaming art event, will be held on 12 March from 6pm – midnight. The 2016 incarnation will feature contemporary dance and hip hop, from both professionals and recent tertiary graduates, popping up across the city at various art galleries and other public spaces. Aucklanders strolling through the city on *White Night* will no doubt encounter dance that will entertain, provoke and inspire, allowing a glimpse into the myriad of dance activity that the City of Sails offers beyond the studio walls, spilling onto the pavement.

These are exciting times as participatory dance moves to centre stage. So if you get stuck in and *shake your groove thing* this summer, in whatever capacity takes your fancy, you will be 'on trend' with where the world of dance is moving. ■

For more information about the events mentioned in this article:

Moving Communities Conference: www.otago.ac.nz/moving-communities/programme-and-speakers/index.html

NZ Festival: www.festival.co.nz/2016/events/le-grand-continental

CubaDupa: cubadupa.co.nz/

Auckland Arts Festival: www.aucklandfestival.co.nz/events/genre/dance/

Hamilton Gardens Arts Festival: www.hgaf.co.nz/

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For further information visit:
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Applications close on 1 June 2016