



LUCY MARINKOVICH
PHOTO: 90 SECONDS

MATTHEW MOORE
PHOTO: HUMBERTO ROMERO



MATTHEW MOORE
PHOTO: DIEGO GARCIA SOTOMORO

THE VALUE OF INTERNATIONAL CHOREOGRAPHIC RESIDENCIES

BY JENNY STEVENSON

Several senior dance practitioners from Aotearoa, including Charles Koroneho and Jack Gray, have been spending a great deal of time overseas employed in convening, facilitating or participating in choreographic and teaching residencies at cultural centres, universities and with established dance companies. Now the younger generation are starting to enjoy similar benefits. Tup Lang Scholarship winner, Lucy Marinkovich, and Eileen May Norris Scholarship winner, Matthew Moore, speak of the positive outcomes of their recent international choreographic residencies.

What is the value of participating in an international residency as a choreographer? It lies primarily in the luxury of time set aside in a space that is supportive and conducive to experimentation, working with or without other dancers, exchanging ideas and making fresh discoveries about the choreographic process. In the

precarious day-to-day existence of an artist, this type of opportunity is rare indeed. Working with people who have a different cultural perspective to the artist's own outlook, invariably provides fresh and valuable insights. The creation of new work can emerge from these developments, but it is not often an essential requirement, so there is little or no pressure on the choreographer to produce.

Charles Koroneho has been described as “an intercultural, interdisciplinary artist” and was honoured as the 2014 Arts Foundation Laureate in Dance for his work as a Choreographer/Director/Public Artist/Designer. He spends a significant portion of each year working in Canada and a recent “hybrid training and movement creation” workshop which he conducted in Toronto aimed to “facilitate communal space, promote health and an appreciation of art, performance, culture and politics”. Projects that Koroneho creates “align to indigenous communal practices, where actions of the sacred and profane convey the everyday and ideas of ceremony and ritual are informed by cultural contexts”.¹

Jack Gray is currently based in the United States, where he is a research scholar at Asian/Pacific/American Institution at New York University. Most recently he facilitated the Creative Arts Lab for the First Nations Colloquium in Bloemfontein, South Africa and is about to tour the

¹ www.thearts.co.nz/artists/charles-koroneho

MATTHEW MOORE, SPAIN
PHOTO: HUGO IGLESIAS



MATTHEW MOORE, SPAIN
PHOTO: DIEGO GARCIA SOTOMORO



MATTHEW MOORE, SPAIN
PHOTO: DAVID FLORES RUBIO



LUCY MARINKOVICH, RIMBUN DAHAN
PHOTO: 90 SECONDS



MATTHEW MOORE, MEXICO
PHOTO: DANIEL LUGO



LUCY MARINKOVICH, PENANG
PHOTO: JOIE KOO

I MOVING LAB project in a four centre tour of Hawaii. He has also recently worked at UCLA (University of California) and Illinois State University. His research is focused on establishing reciprocal relationships between University and Theatre spaces for indigenous peoples and causes.

In the shrinking world of globalisation, both Koroneho and Gray are very much in demand for the huge body of knowledge that they possess and they are able to assist numerous young choreographers and dancers through the work that they do both internationally and in Aotearoa. Gray says that “it’s truly humbling to be received for what we have in our body, mind (and) soul”.

Of the younger generation within New Zealand, choreographer Lucy Marinkovich has already attended three international residencies this year, in Singapore, Malaysia and Croatia. She perceives the principal benefit of such placements as being “to engage in a dialogue about different creative practices and our responses to these as artists”.

In terms of the development of her choreographic practice, Marinkovich found that “the process of the residencies and working with artists from very diverse cultural and artistic backgrounds was quite exposing for certain aspects (of) my creative process”. She found it challenging “to speak with greater simplicity and clarity when discussing my ideas with the dancers” and views developing this need for simplicity in her work as being one of the more useful outcomes of her residency.

Choreographer Matthew Moore, who has also attended several international residencies in Mexico, Liechtenstein and Spain over the last few years, comments on what

it has meant to him personally: “The travelling and independence has made me more comfortable with who I am as an artist. This includes my ability to believe in myself and take risks”. He has also learnt “to make material more simple, bold and extreme so that the audience is given clear physical messages” and believes that he is “a lot more attentive towards making effective and efficient choreography” than he was previously.

Marinkovich engaged in a number of different activities during her residencies, particularly while in Malaysia, and believes this was due to her “being flexible and responsive” to any opportunities that came her way. These included creating a duet for a “modern/contemporary dancer and a traditional Malay dancer” as well as a solo for a butoh artist. She taught a number of classes, including for the South East Asian Choreolab, and was “invited to dance in the Choreolab as the only choreographer ever from a non-ASEAN country”.

Moore who started out as a hip-hop dancer was keen to work with Mexican choreographer Iratxe Ansa after attending a workshop that she conducted in Auckland in 2015. After hearing about her Metamorphosis residency in Mexico he “was inspired to take a leap into the realm of international collaboration”.

He was excited by the “improvisation, extremities, fulfilling movement pathways and the physicality Iratxe’s work requires. Ballet technique is the base of her movement style and I was hungry to push myself in this direction,” he says. He believes it has “given me the tools I need to change the way I view hip hop dance... I have become more intelligent with the decisions I make within the work space... I no longer feel like I am a habitual mover”.

Marinkovich's dance aesthetic is concerned with "devising material which is expressive, generous and humorous" and she is keen to return to Malaysia in the near future where there has been further interest in her work on performance installations.

Moore who describes his work as "an intense energy which offers vivid isolations and creates clear images with the body" is keen to continue the work he has already begun through undertaking further residencies next year in Mexico and perhaps further afield in Spain and China.

It is heartening to learn that the US-based Alliance of Artists Communities, an international association of artist residency programmes founded in 1991, now lists over 1,000 opportunities for artists of any discipline to research and develop work.²

It seems certain that New Zealand artists will continue to expand their consciousness and hone their craft in the future, by participating in international dialogue in this manner. ■

² www.artistcommunities.org



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