THE LAND THE CROSS & THE LOTUS

• Jingili Water Gardens Darwin • 7.15pm 9–12, 16–19 September 1998 •

A TRACKS DANCE PRODUCTION

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The Land The Cross and The Lotus comes out of my search for life's meaning, making sense of my own being and finding my place within my community. In living in the Northern Territory I have been tested and strengthened and then tested again.

My relationships with Aboriginal people and the opportunities I have had to place myself within their culture have deepened my understanding and knowledge of this land. As someone separated from my own blood family the Church has given me a familiar place to go to which is part of my culture. At my local Church I can be enriched by wisdom that has been gained over hundreds of years, yet simultaneously I can have young children on my shoulders. After spending considerable time sitting silently by myself my inner journey has become much richer by sharing it with other spiritual travellers at the NT International Buddhist Society. These Aboriginal, Christian and Buddhist elements feed my whole being and give me great hope. All are family to me.

This performance like so much of our culture draws its inspiration from religion and spirituality. It reflects on three life journeys; Purukupali the creator of Tiwi culture, the Virgin Mary of Christianity and Siddhartha, the Buddha.

In Darwin we live surrounded by a wonderfully diverse culture. The place is known for its spirit and the people for their tolerance. The Land The Cross and The Lotus celebrates this diversity, spirit and tolerance. It affirms the words of Buddha; "If you find truth in any religion accept that truth", and hopefully it will help us in our move towards building a national identity. As Aboriginal poet Kevin Gilbert commented "You cannot build a nation until there is a national spirit".

Tim Newth
Artistic Director
The Land The Cross and The Lotus

ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES

Tim Newth is a director and visual artist who works primarily in dance. Living and working in Darwin since 1988 he has created performance work in most states of Australia as well as New Zealand and Japan. In the NT he has developed work with the Aboriginal community of Lajamanu, Corrugated Iron Youth Theatre, Darwin Theatre Company, the Festival of Darwin and Tracks, of which he is now Co-Director. Tim was the Artistic Director of the highly acclaimed *4WD, Sweat Dust and Romance.*

Michael Leslie is a choreographer, director, dancer and teacher. He was a founding member of the National Aboriginal and Islander Skill Development Association (NAISDA). His choreographic credits include *Bran Nue Dae, Mimi, Shark Island Stories, Sistergirl,* and *Daisey Bates* and *The Dancer.* Michael has worked throughout Australia and overseas with such companies as Black Swan Theatre Company, Australian Dance Theatre, Chrissie Parrot Dance collective, The Marrugeku Company, One Extra Dance Company and Melbourne Theatre Company.

Kai Tai Chan was the founder and Artistic Director of One Extra Dance Company from 1976 until 1991. He is a pioneer in cross-arts and cross-cultural works in Australia. Kai Tai has worked and choreographed for the Sydney Dance Company, Australian Dance Theatre, the Australian Opera, the Hong Kong Fringe Festival and Extemporary Dance Company (London). Kai Tai is currently starting a new restaurant in the Blue Mountains.

Beth Shelton is a choreographer, community artist and teacher. She was Co-Artistic Director of Danceworks Dance Company Melbourne from 1989–91. Beth's choreography has been seen across Australia and New Zealand in dance companies, community performance projects and theatre work.

Stanley Stanislaus was born in Darwin, his father is of Tiwi descent and his mother's family are from the Central Tablelands. In 1997 Stanley graduated from NAISDA with a Diploma in Dance Studies. During this time Stanley undertook remote area teaching tours to Saidai Island (Torres Strait), Mildura (Victoria) and the Tiwi Islands, and performed under such choreographers as Steven Page, Ronnie Arnold and Kim Walker. He has performed with Tracks Dance within *4WD, Sweat Dust and Romance,* and *Invisible Heroes.*

David McMicken has worked in the NT since 1991 and is a founding Co-Director of Tracks. He was a founding member of Tasdance and formed and directed Storm in A Tea-Cup Dance Theatre in Melbourne. He is interested in creating work with a strong connection to 'place' and the people from that place, as well as his own personal inner landscape.

Rukshana Ramachandran was born in Sri Lanka. She is trained in the Bharatha Natyam style of Indian Classical Dance. Since moving to Darwin thirteen years ago she has performed classical works. More recently Rukshana has been developing a highly individualistic style of Sri Lankan and Indian folk dance, working with people from both of these communities.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

Conceived and Directed by Tim Newth
Musical Director: Claire Kilgariff
Design and Construction: Louise Carmichael
Lighting Design: Matthew James
Publicist and Administrator: Suzanne Fermanis
Stage/Site Manager: Vanessa Hutchins
Musical Engineer: John Hammat
Community Artist in Residence: Philip Piggin
(Professional Development Grant from the Australia Council)
Technician: Neil MacKnight
Assistant Stage Managers: Beryl Brugman, Chris Dunn, Lindy Hunt, Siobhan DeRamos, Ben McIntyre, Martin Goreing
Design and Construction Assistants: Annie Franklin, Grant Hayward
Dresser: Mehali Tsangaris
Publicity Assistance: Hania Radvan
Administrative Assistance: Bong Ramilo, Merrian Styles, (Executive Officer, Ausdance) Joeline Patterson

ADVISERS & CONSULTANTS

Bhante Sumedha, resident monk, NT International Buddhist Society; Father Peter Wood, St Pauls Catholic Church, Nightcliff; Rev Steve Orme, Uniting Church, Nightcliff; Rev Wali Fejo, member of the Larrakia Tribe and the Executive of the World Council of Churches; James Bennet, Curator of South East Asian Arts, NT Museum and Art Gallery; congregation of the Uniting Church, Nightcliff; Tiwi advisers: Gaby Leach, Kitty Kantilla, Cyril Rioli and Walter Kerinuia.

PERFORMERS

The Land

Steven Oliver: *the brother* (courtesy of the Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts, Brisbane)
Marian Patterson: *the mother* (Mudangkala)
Yasmin Crawshaw: *the wife*
Matthew Patterson: *the son*
Costume Design: Lenore Dembski, Paperbark Woman

The Cross

Jaesshanth Yoganathan: *the boy child*
Wendy Eccleston & Rosie O'Reilly, Ian O'Reilly & Shay O'Reilly, Sue Gleed & Tim McMeel, Fiona Fergusson or Michael Calwell & Elliott Fergusson-Calwell, Paul Kelly or Karen Weeramanthri & Kieran Kelly: *the wise people*
Peter McMeel, Beth McMeel, Rosie McMeel,Gillian Rose: *the Angel family*
David McMicken: *the Angel Gabrielle*
Dallas Elvery or Philip Piggin: *the Cross bearer*

The Lotus

Saeng Yodkhemarkul or Phang Fook Sin: *the guide*
Poolperm Saengjan, Ganthida Saengjan, Rattana Saengjan, Pimprapa Saengjan, Tiarn Trigar, Jacey Trigar, Varleak Srey, Joshipne Tchia: *the Lotus offering*

MUSIC

'Past Life Melodies' Sarah Hopkins, *Reclaiming the Spirit*
'Legends' The Brave, *Sacred Spirit*
'On the Road' The Brave, *Sacred Spirit*
'Panic' Not Drowning Waving, *Proof*
'Death Song' Tiwi Traditional
'Movement 2' Henryk Gorecki, *Symphony No 3*
'Jump' Jane Bayly, *Crying in Public Places*
'Traditional Manus Drumming from Paluai Island' Drum Drum, *Lahi Gabua Light the Fire*
'Amona ini Aoma, (O Come all ye Faithful)' The Poreporena Choir, *Christmas in Hanuabada*
'Child of Love' Tanya Sparke, *Cafe of the Gate of Salvation*
'Discourse of Love' Bhante Sumedha, *Buddhist Chant*
'Step by Step' Whitney Houston, *Step by Step*
'Passage' Rob Whiteside Woo, *Miracles*
'Lament' Dong Ke Jun

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

People of the Tiwi Islands; congregation of the Nightcliff Uniting Church; members of the Northern Territory International Buddhist Society; Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts; the staff of Darwin Entertainment Centre, the Festival of Darwin, Darwin Theatre Company, Brown's Mart Community Arts Centre, 24Hr Art, Greenant RAP, Darwin City Council, Darwin High School; Brown's Mart Trustees; Karyn Sassella (writer From Landscapes to Soulscapes); Roderick MacKenzie; Jenny Kelly; Therese Ritchie; Sarah Calver; Lana Stanislaus; Liann Stevenson; Mike Griffiths and the Rotary Club of Darwin; Ray Miller, Perkins Shipping; Rodger Gorge, Hannons; The Exhibitionist; all the "precious" others who assisted Vanessa Hutchins with the stage management; friends and family for all their support.

The Land the Cross and the Lotus would like to thank **CHUBB Security** for their support.

This project is assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council (its arts funding and advisory body), the Northern Territory Department of Arts and Museums and the Office of Ethnic Affairs.
Tracks is Company in Residence at the Darwin Entertainment Centre.

PROGRAM NOTES

The Land

Purukupali was born one of three children in the arms of his mother (Mudangkala) as she forced her way out of the earth. She created the world of the Tiwi. He became the creator of Tiwi culture. His story travels through a time before there was any death, to the moment when he discovers the limp body of his only child on the ground.

Choreography: Michael Leslie

Soloist

Stanley Stanislaus: *the man*

The Cross

This interpretation of the story of Mary (Theotokos—God bearer) is one of trust and faith in life, of taking risks and putting one's self at the edge. Mary gives birth to life itself and in doing so she experiences both joy and suffering.

Choreography: Beth Shelton

Soloist

Rukshana Ramachandran: *the God bearer*

The Lotus

The lotus section is a modern day version of Siddhartha's journey of the Buddha. Siddhartha's life begins in the protection of a golden palace. Eventually he breaks out of his home and begins his search. He sees the real world for the first time. In this world people deal with sickness and death while also searching for wisdom. Siddhartha finally finds enlightenment by following the path of the "middle way".

Choreography: Kai Tai Chan

Soloist

David McMicken: *the traveller*

There will be no interval

TRACKS

Tracks gives voice to Territory culture. Its highly original and strongly visual movement work acknowledges the people and place from which it originates.

Tracks is a Northern Territory based company which grew out of the dance development program at Brown's Mart Community Arts. It functions as a professional performance company with a strong community base. In Darwin if offers a community dance development program and provides choreographic support for many arts organisations and individual artists. Annual community dance events bring together participants from a diverse range of cultures in the region.

Activities outside Darwin focus on touring, extensive workshop programs and residencies reaching remote Aboriginal communities and regional areas. Tracks can be found at the Frog Hollow Centre for the Arts complex in McMinn Street Darwin and is company in residence at the Darwin Entertainment Centre. The Artistic Directors of Tracks are David McMicken and Tim Newth.

To keep up to date with the latest developments of Tracks make sure you are on the mailing list by contacting:

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Tracks