

## *AGM Artistic Report fLiNG Physical Theatre 2010*



### **PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

**2010 was another bustling year of youthful energy dance and drama for fLiNG Physical Theatre. The company enlisted a new group of enthusiastic talent performers who performed in three local performances. We also welcomed two professional artists in residence, one as our first international guest artist and four fLiNG Alumni came back into the fold for a brief time.**

### **AUDITIONS AND COMMENCE COMPANY TRAINING PROGRAM**

Auditions held on Saturday Feb 6<sup>th</sup> successfully recruited twenty-three fLiNG and fifteen YfLiNG members into the company program. Brazilian Gymnastic coach Diogo Mendez who was working at Eden Area Gym with Ben Moroney taught gym on a weekly basis during March to June to help brush up fLiNG members' gym skills.

### **COMMUNITY CLASSES AND SCHOOL SERVICES**

Throughout 2010 Lee Pemberton and three casual or volunteer fLiNG tutors were engaged to help deliver weekly community classes and one off programs. fLiNG Tutors are members of the company with a minimum of three years training, performance and touring experience. The community program runs during school terms from February to December and offers gym and dance classes to 7 to 12year olds. Lee Pemberton works with Tathra Public and Mumbulla Steiner Schools during term three.

## WORKSHOPS & RESIDENCIES

### **Charles Koroneho Residency supported by NAISDA April 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> –**

Charles Koroneho is a Maori performer and artist of Nga Puhi descent, is based in Auckland and works in the fields of culture, performance, visual arts and education. During his visit to Australia to recreate his work, *He Taura Whakapapa* (a Rope of Genealogy) a weaving dance for students at NAISDA College Charles managed to find five days to come to the Far South Coast and be in exchange with fLiNG.

Although a free workshop with Charles for Indigenous students was arranged for Eden High School at the last minute and at great disappointment the school canceled. Charles spent his time here in deep discourse with Lee Pemberton. Charles also delivered 4 sessions of practical performance work to members of fLiNG and YfLiNG.

### **Fiona Malone residency April 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> – June 28<sup>th</sup> to July 9<sup>th</sup> -**



Fiona had expressed an interest of working with fLiNG when the company toured Sol's Way to Riverside Theatre in 2009. We were lucky to be able to engage her in our project, *The Voyage*, in 2010 and the April dates were our first rehearsal session together. Fiona's insistence that the show make a clear narrative and her sublime choreographic style along with her pleasant attitude to working with young people made her an excellent choice for this company project.

*Above: Fiona Malone with fLiNG*

Production rehearsal became intensified as Fiona returned to fLiNG. Fiona and Lee spent three days locked in discussion about the sections, dramatic curve and characters for *The Voyage* before we met with performers.

Lauren Gemmell, fLiNG Alumni Awake, Take fLiNG 2008 & 2009, joined the company rehearsals as assistant to the director. Lauren was completing her studies in Performance at Bathurst University and had chosen a placement fLiNG as part of her course requirement. She returned during production week and was a great asset to the project.

### **Australian Youth Dance Groups Conference Canberra July 31<sup>st</sup> to August 2<sup>nd</sup> -**

Lee Pemberton, Artistic Director of fLiNG attended the Australian Youth Dance Company Group conference in Canberra along with managers and directors from Stompin', QL2, Steps, Torsion, You Move, Restless and Extensions. The conference was facilitated by Michelle Silby and the company managers and directors spent the days discussing, dreaming and scheming for a closer and more active relationship, a higher profile for Youth Dance Company work in Australia. It was a highly successful and motivating three days.

## PERFORMANCES

### **April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2010 - WINDSONG Four Winds Community Festival Opening**

Windsong was a celebration of local artistic endeavor, of elite musicianship, of a vibrant festival, and of the rich and diverse community in which we live.

fLiNG Physical Theatre worked throughout February to April devising and rehearsing dance and physical performance for the Four Winds Community Project in collaboration with four community artists.

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The artists were; Geoffrey Badger, he composed sections of music and conducted singers and players who performed in Bega Community Choir Heartsong and Bega Community Stringed Orchestra. David Hewitt who worked with community members in creating percussion and music made from found objects. Dan Scolay works as a community theatre and choir practitioner based in Bermagui and she worked with local people devising theatre and making large puppets. The Windsong project was collaborated under the Direction of John Bolton.

Over 100 community dancers, singers, musicians and performers from the Bega Valley participated in this event. fLiNG members were dancing along side some amazing musical performers including: Warren and Stephen Foster, Paolo Pandolfo, Andrea Keller Quartet, Jessica Aszodi, Karen Schaup, E21, Black Armband, Flinders Quartet, Marshall McGuire, Helen Gill and Genevieve Lacey.



### **‘The Resonant Village’ directed by David Hewitt with Lee Pemberton April 3<sup>rd</sup>**

A whimsical spatial performance of percussionist, instrumentalists, sound makers and movers constructed through improvised movement devised to entrance and encompass the living environmental sounds of the Four Winds outdoor venue.



### **The Voyage September 10<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> - Production and Preview**

Gerry Corcoran and Robb Jamieson build a lighting rig in the stadium roof. Gerry begins bumping in his lighting design. An enormous effort is made to build tiered seating for 250 people in the stadium using a truckload 60 brick pallets and a trailer load of chipboard flooring.

### **Set designer, Neil Taylor briefing and onsite specifications July 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> -**

Melbourne sculptor Neil Taylor has been creating intricate forms using one of the most humble materials – wire – for some thirty years. Originally a schoolteacher, he encouraged his students to create structures made from wire and papier-mâché, for want of more expensive or traditional art materials.



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Neil is brought into the project to create a set design, which he builds with Paul Hopper creating a most theatrical illusion of a ship.

The Indoor basketball courts are transformed by a group of helpful and dedicated parents to create fLiNG's theatre. Thirty-two dozen muffins are baked by mothers who donate their efforts and time to the canteen which will run over the six nights. A roster for backstage chaperones, front of house, canteen, costume laundering and post show cleaning is made for over sixty fLiNG parents to coordinate jobs.



### Opening Night The Voyage premieres September 16<sup>th</sup> -

The Voyage is staged over two weeks with 8 performances including 2 school matinees. The production includes school notes for teachers for primary and secondary level. A 7min You Tube version of the Voyage constructed by Andrew Gray may be seen at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=elkFs9LOS\\_s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=elkFs9LOS_s)

### Home Base December 13<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> -

Four fLiNG Alumni are resident during Home Base. Pictured below from left they are Julie Baker graduate Adelaide Performing Arts Centre, Solomon Thomas 1<sup>st</sup> yr student at Wollongong University performance, Patrick Meessmann graduate Victorian College of the Arts and Leif Helland 2<sup>nd</sup> yr student Victorian College of the Arts.

Home Base Week provides the opportunity for the Alumni to make a work on the company during an intensive week of rehearsals. The fLiNG performers learn an enormous amount from their older peers. It is an enormously enjoyable and satisfying week that culminates in a one off performance called Take fLiGHT.



*Above fLiNG Alumni with fLiNG*

### Take fLiGHT December 18<sup>th</sup> -

Take fLiGHT is fLiNG's end of year Christmas celebration and attracts about 300 audience members. The show is staged at the stadium in the form of a cabaret and the audiences are encouraged to bring

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some refreshments to share. Take fLiGHT is always very well received by our community and is a fun evening.



Above Take fLiGHT 2010

## FLiNG ACHIEVEMENTS

### **Employ of assistant trainers to create an increase of community class activity -**

Gymnastics trainer, Diogo Mendez was employed for the first 6 months of the year he raised the strength and standard of fLiNG members gymnastic skills. fLiNG tutor Karina Gaal assisted with community dance through 2010. Abbey Turton and Ariane Lloyd-Pity trained with the Active After School program and ran dance programs after school at St Patrick's School in Bega.

Despite these volunteer tutors the community class numbers dropped in 2010. There are three possible reasons for the decline. It is possible that the move from Bega Town Hall to Bega Indoor Stadium caused a loss of visibility from the community. Bega Town hall was situated right in the parking lot of the CBD in Bega and we think in the move to the Stadium fLiNG has lost a visible point in the town. Also, in occupying the new space our timetable changed and the days that the community program ran in 2010 changed from 2009. We did not run a Hip-hop class in 2010 because our tutor, Jared Mizon, has moved to Canberra and Hip-hop was one of our most popular classes.

### **Community Partnering –**

The Four Winds festival community performance reinforced our place for delivering movement based performance in the community. The project with Four Winds gave us the opportunity to be showcased in Bermagui as well as working with elite musicians and composers. The new partnership with Dave Hewitt is an exciting one. His fine musicianship and ability to traverse from professional to community and back again holds limitless possibilities for future collaboration and creativity.

### **Company season The Voyage –**

The Voyage was a highly successful performance. It delivered 20 company members to their first full fLiNG season as a company. The growth of these fLiNG performers was spectacular. It also fostered the growth of 15 YfLiNG performers in their training year. The company delivered a potent performance that was a mixture of dance, gymnastics, highly skilled movement and theatre which was long listed for an Australian Dance Award.

It was disappointing that our audience attendance did not realise the numbers we expected in our planned budget and consequentially the project made a small loss. In discussion with the board members we think the drop may have occurred because of a lack of rigor in the marketing and promoting plan. We were also extremely disappointed at the lack of attendance by schools to our matinees in 2010. At the board's company development and planning meeting held in January 2011

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there are a number of strategies being put in place to help raise fLiNG's profile in the community during 2011.

### **Home Base Week and Take fLiGHT performance –**

Four artists who began their career performing with fLiNG returned to the area for Take fLiGHT week. The Alumni were given a small stipend to help cover any costs associated with working in Bega during Home Base.

The choreography created is innovative, relevant and contemporary. Home Base brings up to date influences from the hub of dance culture in Melbourne to Bega. This program is very popular with our Bega audience and community. The project stills runs at a loss financially but we feel it is one of our most important activities for the health of the company.

## **OUTCOMES**

fLiNG has continued to deliver a massive output across four areas of focus in physical theatre as a performance-company, a training organization, a community and education service in dance and physical theatre to Bega and surrounds. This is achieved with one full-time employee. It is unrealistic to think that we can be reaping a successful growth in productivity each year without any increase in funding.

There is a lively interest in fLiNG's trainee program in YfLiNG and plenty of enthusiastic performers in the company main. The job of trying to fulfill the demands and potentials the company is increasingly difficult. For fLiNG to succeed and be sustained into the future a new approach is needed.

The development of our education wing would bring in better attendances to our school matinees and develop activities at schools and increase the interest in company programs across the board. This aim is reliant on fLiNG Physical Theatre being able to support the employ of another dancer/choreographer.

In January 2011 the board met to address the positives and negatives of 2010 and discuss fLiNG's future. It is envisaged that we will be seeking more financial support from Arts NSW in 2012 to engage the community, enhance our company programs and allow the company to continue to thrive in regional NSW.