



Black Grace photo by Toaki Okano

Black Grace Unveils a Triptych of Resilience

A mesmerizing fusion of dance, culture, and history

White Bird is thrilled to host the acclaimed New Zealand/Aotearoa-based dance company, Black Grace. Under the artistic direction of Neil Ieremia, Black Grace will perform at Portland's Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall for ONE NIGHT ONLY on

Wednesday, February 21 at 7:30 PM. The captivating performance will include three distinct pieces: "Handgame," "Kiona and the Little Bird Suite," and "Paradise Rumor," promising an evening of dynamic and culturally rich dance.

The runtime is approximately 90 minutes which includes one short pause and one 20-minute intermission. Black Grace's performance showcases a mesmerizing fusion of dance, culture, and history. "Handgame", a section from one of Ieremia's earliest works choreographed in 1995, is based

on a story of a boy being beaten by his father for going against his wishes and attending a school dance. Performed to an orchestra of body percussion, this piece incorporates elements of traditional Fa'ataupati (Samoan slap dance). "Kiona and the Little Bird Suite" is a collection of traditionally inspired works and excerpts from the company's repertoire over the last three decades. It draws from works including Relentless (1996), Fia Ola (1998), Surface (2003), Pati Pati (2009), Gathering Clouds (2009) and E Toa, E Toa (2018).

This work utilizes body percussion influenced by traditional Samoan Sasa (seated dance) and Fa'ataupati (slap dance), and incorporates live drumming, singing and chanting. As Dance Tabs says: "Kiona is a moving example of the fusion possible between the traditional and the contemporary and was the first taste of what these dancers can do: fly around the stage with astonishing momentum and stop-on a dime". The evening concludes with excerpts from Ieremia's "Paradise Rumour", which is an extension of his 2009 work Gathering Clouds, a response to

an economist's discussion paper, "Growing Pains: The valuation and cost of human capital and the impact of Pacific migration on the New Zealand economy".

The author's controversial claims caused significant hurt within the Pacific Island community in Aotearoa, while emboldening those with more xenophobic views. The use of live drumming and a mix of traditional and contemporary music, including Te Vaka's "Kaleve," adds an extra layer of depth to the performance. For tickets, please visit: <https://whitebird.my.salesforce-sites.com>