

Articles

Dance troupe debuts challenging work

ACCLAIMED contemporary dance troupe Black Grace this month returned to the stage with a splash, as dancers performed the world premiere of *Gathering Clouds* in Auckland.

The work responds to claims by economist Greg Clydesdale that Polynesians display the trait of under-achievement.

And research done by choreographer/company founder Neil Ieremia acted as a springboard for debate among the company.

“We started to ask questions like ‘why are Pacific Islanders good at sport and so physical?’ and ‘how we are represented in the media?’ he said.

“It was a very wide and deep process.”

■ Black Grace performs *Gathering Clouds* in Wellington (March 26-28); Manukau (April 16-17); Kerikeri on April 22-23; and at Hamilton (April 29-May 2).



Gathering Clouds, the new work from Black Grace founder Neil Ieremia.



HEAVY METAL:

Moving to Gisborne was “a dream” for US software engineer/artist/skateboard fiend Remo Williams (left). “The only thing missing was a bronze casting facility,” he said.

Picture by Dave Thomas

Bronze: An unpredictable art

ARTS
by Kristine Walsh

REMO Williams is a logical guy. He was part of the NASA software-writing team whose work led the 2001 Mars Odyssey spacecraft to detect water on Mars.

But Williams is also a keen bronze caster and, he says, there’s nothing scientific about that. “The bronze giveth and the bronze taketh away,” he says. “You never know what you are going to get.”

That unpredictability is one of the things that made the US native so miss the artform he took a break from after he and wife Julia moved to Gisborne in 2006.

It was an enforced break — the couple didn’t want to ship all of their own equipment across the ocean and there was no foundry operating in Gisborne.

It wasn’t long, however, before Williams stumbled across Hawke’s Bay “master metal-maker” Russell Evenson who, as luck would

have it, had his own portable foundry.

“He agreed to bring the foundry to Gisborne for three weeks and from that idea a workshop was established.”

Towards the end of last year, more than a dozen devotees gathered at the Creative Space art workshop where Williams taught them how to make moulds for the lost wax process of casting bronze. Then, a month later, they reconvened at the EastcapeART facility to do the casting itself.

The result is *Wax To Bronze*, an exhibition of nearly 30 cast bronze pieces that opens tomorrow at Creative Space.

And the works aren’t only for looking at. Guests are invited to fondle some pieces, to help develop their colour. Others they can hit with metal sticks to bring out their bell-like qualities.

Most of the works were cast during the Gisborne workshop. A few, however, are older pieces Williams made when he was still living in Tucson, Arizona.

“I wanted to show people the process of casting bronze and to expose them to the artform,” said Williams, a Tairāwhiti Polytechnic information and communication technology tutor. “It is such a primitive process but it captures so much.”

Meanwhile, the multi-tasking Williams is planning how to combine bronze casting with his other great love, skateboarding.

He believes bronze could be used for casting of skateboard trucks (axles), its weight creating more glide and momentum than that offered by those made of the traditional aluminium.

“Even if we have to use Russell’s foundry in Hawke’s Bay I hope to have the project at least started within the next six months,” he said. “It would be another way of exploring this wonderful medium.”

■ *Wax To Bronze* opens at Creative Space (Cobden Street) tomorrow at 5.30pm. It will be installed until April 10.