



RODNEY BELL

MEREMERE

By Movement of the Human

Aotearoa New Zealand

 **The Studio, Darwin Entertainment Centre**



Thu 18 & Fri 19 Aug 7pm

Sat 20 2pm & 7pm

Duration 1hr

NOTE Contains smoking or haze effects

DARWIN
FESTIVAL

Darwin Festival takes place on the land of the Larrakia people.

We wish to pay our respects to the traditional owners of this Country and to their ancestors. As the Festival welcomes contemporary artists and art from around Australia, we also celebrate the continuing culture of the Larrakia.

Scroll through to read more about this performance of *Meremere*.

Enjoy the show!

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ARTIST NOTE

I carved this Meremere for my cousins 40th. It is usually made of Pounamu (greenstone) which is carefully chosen. I was carving this one from Rakau (wood) and referred to it as Meremere, Mere Rakau.

It was my first Māori mission and brought up a lot of memories. Being a native hardwood, it took a long time, which brought on a deep meditative state in which I was reminded of how long I had been away and the different experiences I'd had.

I shed tears and laughter with the Meremere and my heart would skip a beat when it reminded me of some of the relationships I'd created and also the ones I'd fucked up. During it all I continuously thought of how I couldn't have done it all better and in the meantime the

Meremere was shaping itself and on its own journey of loss to seek a point of completeness, transformation, a resemblance of strength from a Rakau which once sat in the Pureora Ngahere (forest) peaceful and doing what it knows. These all cloaked by blessings as I would face it to the Sun before carving and ask for forgiveness even more as it moved towards completion.

So forth came the Stories for Meremere.

As the Meremere shaped itself, I started noticing the shavings. I actually wanted to stop as my own memories of loss collided with the shavings falling and bought on sadness, especially when I would carve outside and felt like the other trees around my Mum's house were saddened as well, so I began to collect them. I would spread some over the grass

or at the base of some of the Rakau at my Mum's and ask for forgiveness and now carry some of them out of respect to the Mother Black Maire Tree which they came from.

– Rodney Bell





DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In 2016 we created Meremere and presented the very first show as part of Tempo Dance Festival in Q's Loft Theatre. Little did we know that this show would have such an extraordinary journey and create so many opportunities, or that it would lead us to make sister works Harihari and Hurihuri, which have toured to Singapore and Australia as well as festivals in Aotearoa. Meremere toured New Zealand independently in 2018 and 2019 and then hit the road for a third time this year with the team at Tour Makers. Meremere has journeyed into schools, prisons, army camps, Maraes and community halls, it's a work that was made to be shared widely.

Thank you to all of those that have helped this work along its journey. I particularly want to acknowledge the collaborators

and friends that came together to make this show with Rodney. We have a new group of talented artists supporting and performing with Rodney in 2022. Finally, to you, the audience, it is hugely special to have this work back in the theatre with you. We acknowledge and pay tribute to the gift of being together.

– Malia Johnston



CREDITS

Performer Rodney Bell |Ngāti Maniapoto

Director Malia Johnston

Producer Romola Lang

AV Designer Rowan Pierce

Composer & Musician Eden Mulholland
| Ngāti Uepohatu

Lighting Designer Ruby Reihana-Wilson
| Ngā Puhi

Set Designer John Verryt

Dramaturg Emma Willis

Costume Designer Claire Croskery

Props Maker John Osborne

Graphic Designer Ian Hammond

Photographer Tom Hoyle

Te Mātanga Mātauranga Māori Tūī
Ranapiri-Ransfield | Ngāti Ohomairangi

AV Operator & Stage Manager Zane Allen

CREDITS

Lighting Operator Elekis Poblete Teirney

Guest Dancer Isabel Estrella

DARWIN FESTIVAL

Darwin Festival is the centre piece of what makes August in Darwin the best time of year. Loved by locals and adored by visitors, this tropical winter festival invites you to experience the very best in First Nations, Territory, Australian and international art, culture and music – not just as a spectator but to be one with it.

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