

# MANIFESTO



Sydney  
Festival  
2023

# MANIFESTO

Stephanie Lake Company  
WORLD PREMIERE SEASON

Carriageworks - Bay 17  
12-15 Jan  
60 mins (no interval)

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## CAST AND CREDITS

**Choreographer** Stephanie Lake

**Composer** Robin Fox

**Lighting Designer** Bosco Shaw

**Set Designer** Charles Davis

**Costume Designer** Paula Levis

## Dancers

Rachel Coulson, Marni Green, Samantha Hines,  
Melissa Pham, Harrison Ritchie-Jones, Robert Tinning,  
Josie Weise, Kimball Wong, Jack Ziesing

## Drummers

Robbie Avenaim, Nat Grant, Alon Ilisar, Maria Moles,  
Tina Nguyen, Rama Parwata, Rohan Rebeiro, Alex  
Roper, Jen Tait

**Production Manager** Emily O'Brien

**Producer** Beth Raywood Cross

**Consultant Producer** Vivia Hickman

**Assistant Lighting Designer and Operator** Rachel Lee

**Sound Engineer** James Wilkinson

**Costume Maker** Fiona Holley

**Financial Manager** Bree Nurse, Cloud Bookkeeping

**International Agents** Wolfgang Hoffman, Aurora Nova

**North America Agent** Cathy Pruzan

## ABOUT THE SHOW

Nine dancers. Nine drummers. Nine drum kits. *Manifesto* is an explosive 'tattoo to optimism' with electrifying dancing and huge, raw sound. Situated on a grand, elevated set reminiscent of Busby Berkley, nine drummers surround the nine dancers in front of them. Starting with a bang, the show becomes more complex and thrilling as it builds towards a wildly loud and powerfully danced crescendo.

*Manifesto* strips performance back to its most basic elements: rhythm and movement, drumming and dancing. Primal and ecstatic, the performance is to be experienced, not analysed or intellectualised. It offers unmediated energy, powered by the human body.

Created in collaboration with internationally renowned audio-visual artist and composer Robin Fox and a superb team of designers and performers, *Manifesto* has toured Australia and been met with rave reviews and standing ovations across the country. It sets off on international tours in 2023. We are so excited to share it with Sydney audiences.

## A NOTE FROM THE CREATORS

### From Stephanie Lake - Choreographer

The seed for *Manifesto* was planted many years ago. I went to an intimate gig, an experimental drum solo, and was seated on the floor right next to the kit, my head just centimetres from the bass drum. The power of the sound was overwhelming and completely enlivening. I knew I wanted to make a work with drums.

Over the years, the idea started to incubate. I imagined a grand array of nine drummers and started to envisage grandiose staging with a Busby Berkley-like opulence. From there, *Manifesto* started to crystallise: nine dancers and nine drummers on nine drum kits. A beautiful, simple symmetry. I wanted to create a show that only used live sound - and blisteringly loud sound at that. As the pandemic wore on, that urge only got stronger. I wanted surging liveness; a show powered only by human energy and endeavour.

The Melbourne lockdowns gave me an unusual amount of time to dream on this show. Whilst we waited for rehearsals to become possible, I imagined whole scenes and planned the beginning and end of the show. I had the luxury of time for long conversations with Robin Fox, my partner and collaborator, dreaming up what was possible and what we might play with once we could. A lot of *Manifesto* existed in my imagination before we set foot in the

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studio. After many, many months of heartbreaking delays we finally made it to the rehearsal room and began to create. The noise in the studio made the suburb quake.

Gathering eighteen astonishing performers together was pure joy and electricity. The creative process has been very collaborative, a rich creative exchange with ideas ricocheting between dancers, choreographer, drummers, composer and lighting and costume designers. Robin's composition cleverly elicits nuanced tone and even emotion using only one instrument - a remarkable feat. Charlie's set design is bold and exuberant; Bosco's lighting sculptural and exciting; Paula's costumes sophisticated and textured. Since my earliest choreographies, I have been drawn to rhythm. *Manifesto* strips performance back to its most basic elements: rhythm and movement, drumming and dancing. There is something primal about this show. It is to be experienced, not analysed or intellectualised. It is unmediated energy and force.

The byline for *Manifesto* (in my own mind) is A Tattoo to Optimism. It is a show about history, rebellion, obedience, joy, wonder and tenderness, as well as sorrow and rage. But ultimately it is optimistic - a rallying cry for solidarity. I want to thank Adelaide, RISING, Brisbane, Perth and Sydney Festivals for their incredible support of *Manifesto* through the Major Festivals Initiative, as well as the Canny Quine Foundation, Humanity Foundation, Chloe Munro Bequest and all of the wonderful individual donors who have contributed to this work. A show of this scale is a massive team effort and I am humbled by the backing from all the people, funders and organisations that helped make *Manifesto* a reality. My deepest thanks go to the dancers, drummers, collaborators and production team members who have all given their heart, soul and vast talent to this show. We are ecstatic to be sharing *Manifesto* with you, our audience. Thank you for coming on the ride.

## Robin Fox - Composer

Making music for nine drum kits feels like the culmination of a long, slow-burning teenage fantasy of mine. I was a passionate (though you could argue mediocre) metal drummer for most of my teenage years and have continued drumming for pleasure ever since. I sometimes think I am happiest when playing free behind a kit. So, when Stephanie said she wanted to work with percussion I was dead keen to be involved. As the project grew in scope it became clear that this would be a substantial ensemble. Stephanie was interested in the drum kit initially, so, as a limiting factor I decided to replicate that nine times rather than put together a multi-timbrel percussion ensemble.

The kits are standard four piece with hats, crash and ride. The challenge became to extract an entire score from these resources. Working with four core drummers Nat Grant, Robbie Avenaim, Rama Parwarta and Alex Roper to develop the work was a sonic joy. All amazing players from a cross section of genres, they informed so much of how the final work has taken shape. The ensemble then expanded to nine players with the inclusion of Maria Moles, Rohan Rebeiro, Alon IIsar, Jen Tait and Tina Nguyen. Again, an amazing group of musicians who brought so much to the piece and, at times, produced the sonic equivalent of an earthquake. I thank them all for their musicality and patience. This has been such a special score to work on.

## STEPHANIE LAKE COMPANY

Stephanie Lake Company is a multi-award-winning contemporary dance company based in Melbourne. Known for a gutsy, original choreographic style and striking visual aesthetic, Stephanie Lake Company's highly acclaimed works include *Manifesto*, *Colossus*, *Monsters*, *Skeleton Tree*, *Replica* and *Pile of Bones*. Working in collaboration with Australia's leading dancers and designers, the company has performed in

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major festivals and venues across Australia and the world, touring internationally to France, Germany, Hong Kong, Denmark, Singapore, Scotland, Ireland and Taiwan. Stephanie Lake has won two Australian Dance Awards for Most Outstanding Choreography (*Pile of Bones* and *AORTA*), the Helpmann Award for Outstanding Choreography (*A Small Prometheus*) and the Green Room Award for Best Choreography (*Mix Tape*). She is a recipient of the prestigious Sidney Myer Creative Fellowship, Australia Council Fellowship for Dance and the inaugural Peggy Van Praagh Choreographic Fellowship. Stephanie Lake Company collaborates across theatre, film, music video, opera and visual art and has created several mass-scale public participation projects for over fifteen hundred participants.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government's Major Festivals Initiative, managed by the Australia Council, its Arts Funding and Advisory Body, in association with the Confederation of Australian International Arts Festivals Inc., commissioned by Adelaide Festival, Brisbane Festival, Perth Festival, RISING and Sydney Festival.

*Manifesto* has also been supported by Creative Victoria, Australia Council for the Arts, City of Moreland, City of Melbourne and Creative Partnerships Australia through Plus 1, and been assisted through the generous support of Canny Quine Foundation, Humanity Foundation, Linda Herd, Chloe Munro AO, Barry and Deborah Conyngham, Michael Kantor, Monica Lim and Konfir Kabo, Anne Runhardt, Ziyin Gantner, Gillian and Ian McDougall, Zoe and Vafa Ferdowsian and Anonymous.

