

AN HOMAGE TO HAMISH HENDERSON

ELEGIES

DANCE | POETRY | MUSIC | STORYTELLING

11 NOV 2023
19:30

SCOTTISH STORYTELLING CENTRE
43-45 HIGH STREET, EDINBURGH, EH1 1SR



#hamishmatters
#righttobehuman
#traddanceforumscotland

WITH THANKS TO **HAMISH HENDERSON'S** ESTATE AND ESPECIALLY TO **KÄTZEL HENDERSON** FOR THE KIND PERMISSION TO PRODUCE **ELEGIES** – THE FIRST DANCE ADAPTATION FOR THE STAGE AND SCREEN OF **HAMISH HENDERSON'S** ELEGIES FOR THE DEAD IN CYRENAICA (1948)

ELEGIES EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: **TRADITIONAL DANCE FORUM OF SCOTLAND** AS PART OF **TRADITIONAL ARTS AND CULTURE SCOTLAND (TRACS)** COMMISSIONED BY: **SCOTTISH INTERNATIONAL STORYTELLING FESTIVAL** CURATORS/PRODUCERS: **WENDY TIMMONS, ILIYANA NEDKOVA & JIM MACKINTOSH** CURATORIAL SUPPORT: **LING HONG, JEYDEN XIE AND MARIANELLA DESANTI** ADDITIONAL SUPPORT: **DONALD SMITH, STEVE BYRNE, RÓISÍN O'BRIEN, WILLIAM DIAMOND, DANIEL ABERCROMBIE AND ROB ARMITAGE** VIDEOGRAPHER: **BARRIE BARRETO**

FOR OUR OWN AND THE OTHERS

INTRODUCTION BY JIM MACKINTOSH, ILIYANA NEDKOVA WENDY TIMMONS

Traditional **Dance** Forum of Scotland is delighted to present the first sharing of *Elegies* on 11 November 2023 at the Scottish Storytelling Centre – the only dance adaptation to date for the screen and stage of **Hamish Henderson**'s series of poems *Elegies for the Dead in Cyrenaica* (1948).

As one of the Scottish International Storytelling Festival 2023 new commissions, *Elegies* resonates with the festival's theme *Right To Be Human* and issues of social justice, peace and anti-militarism. It explores aspects of our common humanity. The premiere night coincides with the author's 104th birthday and marks two 75th anniversaries – the first publication of the poems and the adoption by the United Nations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Henderson's *Elegies for the Dead in Cyrenaica* won the Somerset Maugham Award 1949 and are still considered the finest poetic writing to come out of the Second World War. The poems highlight the tragic chaos and waste of life without losing sight of humanity and what we can do now, seven decades on.

Our ambition is for this new adaptation of the *Elegies for the Dead in Cyrenaica* to become an innovative dance celebration of **Hamish Henderson** (1919-2002), the soldier-poet and scholar-folk revivalist, but also a dance poem of serious reflection – a lament for all lives lost in our challenging world of wars and pandemics, political and economic oppression, ecocide and inequality.

This new dance theatre production is led by a duo of dancers and choreographers **Helen Gould and George Adams** who together with community cast dancers **Nicola Thomson and Edwin Wen** embody and represent the characters from the nine elegies by interpreting swing and lindy hop – the popular social dance culture of the 1940s whilst creating a cultural bridge to the present day.

Through their movement directorship Gould and Adams weave in the reading of the poems by spoken word artists and poets **Morag Anderson and Stephen Watt** and the live music of vocalist and multi-instrumentalist **Cera Impala**, all set against a backdrop of audio-visuals by filmmaker **Roddy Simpson** and upcycled costumes and set by designer **Katie Duxbury**.

We do hope that you will feel the urgency of exposing the trauma, fragmentation and wholeness of life as depicted in **Hamish Henderson**'s first-hand accounts and captured in his dedication of the *Elegies for the Dead in Cyrenaica*: '*for our own and the others*' – for this is the story of the common bonds in the 'deadlands' of North Africa and the shared helplessness of those loved ones at home waiting, praying, dancing.

PRESENTED BY



THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
Moray House School of
Education and Sport



SUPPORTED BY



PROGRAMME

PROLOGUE

THE DUMB BELL GUNS OF VIOLENCE

FIRST ELEGY. END OF A CAMPAIGN

THERE WERE OUR OWN, THERE WERE THE OTHERS

SECOND ELEGY. HALFAYA

FRIENDS AND ENEMIES, HATERS AND LOVERS

THIRD ELEGY. LEAVING THE CITY EXTRACT

BE SEEING YOU WHEN THIS PARTY'S OVER

FOURTH ELEGY. EL ADEM EXTRACT

SOW COLD WIND OF THE DESERT

FIFTH ELEGY. HIGHLAND JEBEL EXTRACT

WITH THE GRECIAN GAEL. (AND THOSE OTHERS)

INTERLUDE. OPENING OF AN OFFENSIVE EXTRACT

MAK SICCAR! (MAKE SURE!)

PART TWO. SORLEY MACLEAN

SITTING DEAD IN 'DEATH VALLEY'

SIXTH ELEGY. ACROMA

OTHER WORDS WOULD BE POINTLESS

SEVENTH ELEGY. SEVEN GOOD GERMANS

DEAD IN AFRICAN DEADLAND

NINTH ELEGY. FORT CAPUZZO

NEVER VOLUNTEER FOR NOTHING

SO LONG FOLLOWED BY A RECORDING OF HAMISH HENDERSON'S VOICE

TO THE AFRICAN DEADLAND – GOD HELP YOU – AND GOODNIGHT



PLEASE NOTE, THE PERFORMANCE IS BEING FILMED, EDITED & SHARED BY TRADITIONAL DANCE FORUM OF SCOTLAND

LINKTR.EE/TRADDANCEFORUMSCOTLAND

LEAD DANCERS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS: **HELEN GOULD AND GEORGE ADAMS**
COMMUNITY CAST OF DANCERS: **NICOLA THOMSON AND EDWIN WEN** SPOKEN WORD
ARTISTS: **MORAG ANDERSON AND STEPHEN WATT** LIVE MUSIC AND VOCALS: **CERA**
IMPALA LIGHTING AND AUDIO VISUALS: **RODDY SIMPSON**

SHORT BIOS AND FURTHER DETAILS: **LINKTR.EE/TRADDANCEFORUMSCOTLAND**