Director's Note
Ben Aubrey

PRESENTED BY a2 COMPANY
PAT O'HEAD, AND THE PRINCE FESTIVAL

Hello I'm Ben, co-director of a2 company and writer of Running into the Sun. This project is about community. In 2021 I wanted to make something with musicians and actors about how it feels to be a young artist looking into our world's grim future. Even from our privileged corner, the future looks extremely bleak. I agree that if you aren't angry then you aren't paying attention.

However, I keep coming back to this project because I have found that the more time I spend with other artists confronting the future, the easier it gets to imagine something hopeful and then to actively pursue it. I think that's because making and watching live art builds community. And communities give people collective purpose, and collective purpose forces change. Of course I have been the author to big problems, but I refuse to be overwhelmed by them, and I'm doing that by finding a people, making some theatre and running straight into the sun. Enjoy the show.

Creatives	Info
Ben Aubrey Writer Director Actor - 'Ash' Co-director – a2 company	Ben is a pākeha arts multi-hyphenate with a passion for theatre that builds community. He graduated from Toi Whakaari, The New Zealand National Drama School in 2020, and became the Artistic Director of Long Cloud Youth Theatre. He created 8 devised theatre projects with Long Cloud in two years, including the first iteration of Running into the Sun. In 2021 He won the Wellington Theatre Award for 'Artistic Leadership' and in 2022 he won the "Emerging Artist" award from Performing Arts and Young People Aotearoa (NZ national awards). Ben and Nadiyah are partners literally and creatively. They migrated to Naarm in April 2023 and formed a2 company. This is a2 company's Australian debut.
Nadiyah Akbar Choreographer Dancer Co-director – a2 company	Nadiyah Akbar, (she/her) is a contemporary dancer born and raised on Eora land. Nadiyah has lived and worked across Aotearoa and Australia. She is a graduate of the New Zealand School of Dance (2017-2019) and spent two years dancing for Footnote New Zealand Dance, Aotearoa's longest-running contemporary dance company, frequently touring nationally. Nadiyah has performed in Berlin, as part of the B12 Festival. She has toured with celebrated Australian choreographer Joel Bray Dance's Considerable Sexual License, presented her solo work, Freestyle In Shades Of Yellow at the NZ Fringe Festival. Most recently Nadiyah Performed in Belle: A Performance of Air at the Aotearoa Festival of the Arts.
Ethan Morse Actor – 'Morris'	Ethan Kalani Morse is an ambitious, young multidisciplinary artist spanning across performance art, poetry, dance, clown, & scriptwriting. He has recently moved to Naarm after graduating with a degree in Acting from Toi Whakaari. On stage, Ethan wrote and acted in 'Wise Guy' (dir. Keegan Bragg) and 'Wellingtonians' under his production company Soy People Productions which was nominated for 'Most Promising Emerging Company' at Wellington FRINGE festival 2 years running. His credits include: 'Thinking Dolphins' (dir. Tabitha Arthur), 'Bodyge' (dir. Moana Eto), 'Giggle Butts in the Sand' (dir/char, Tupua Tingafua), & 'Almost Sober' (dir. Keegan Bragg). On screen - Ethan has worked on projects such as 'SOUNDMAN' (dir. Finn Holland), 'I Get Along Fine' (dir. Mark Whited), & 'Gate Crash' (dir. Paloma Schneidaman) which was a finalist at the NZIFF for Best NZ Short and was also screened as part of the 'Accelerator shorts' in MIFF. Most recently he played "Neo" in SLUTNIKTM; Planet of the Incels at Theatreworks, Melbourne.
Jasmine Susic Dancer – 'Mary'	Jasmine Susic is a Naarm/Bunurong based contemporary dancer with an interest in improvisation, installation performance and dance theatre. Jasmine completed her training majoring in Contemporary Dance at the VCA Secondary School and New Zealand School of Dance and has worked freelance between Naarm, Melbourne and Bunurong, Bass Coast on project based dance works since 2020. Collaboration is a key aspect of Jasmine's dance practice, working with visual artists of mediums including printmaking, photography and film to explore movement in response to nature and other art practices.
Alec Katsourakis Dancer – 'Jack'	Alec is an emerging Greek-Australian choreographer, dancer, dance, and yoga teacher. Their choreographic practice is focused on play, games and logic. Alec seeks to bring together artists from diverse backgrounds and disciplines to create vital and inclusive works through his project-based dance collective InPlay Projects. Alec has worked with prominent Australian and New Zealand dance choreographers including Stephanie Lake and Sean Macdonald. They have performed in works by Kelvin Hill, Huang Yi and Sam Coren during his time as a contemporary dance major at the New Zealand School of Dance. Alec has been obsessed with filmmaking since the age of 12 and often makes dance films as passion projects. Their film works have been featured in Dancefilms at Dancehouse, The Festival For Work In Development in Wellington NZ and Testing Grounds.
Luke Romero Dancer	Luke is a dance artist based in Naarm. He trained at the New Zealand School of Dance and graduated in 2021. Luke has a playful approach to dance and enjoys performing in an earnest but cheeky manner. He finds interest in the liberation of following pleasure in improvisation as well as a heavy curiosity and love of physical theatre.
Davin Ojala Composer, Bass	Davin Ojala is a musician and composer born in Aotearoa New Zealand, with ancestral connection to the Ariwan People of Urala, NSW. He recently moved to Naarm after completing an honours degree in music performance at Te Auaha, Whitirela (Wellington). The electric bass is Davin's primary instrument and the driving force behind his compositions and creativity. "I want to be able to shine a light on the beauty and sonic possibilities that lie within an often overlooked instrument". Davin has worked as a professional session Bass player for the last 4 years including; live performances, recording and Musical theatre pit work. He has worked, played and toured with groups such as Heavy Chest, Arjuna Oaks and The Gallery.
Tobias Leman Composer, Saxophone	Toby is a saxophone player and composer from Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Wellington Aotearoa. He has written music and played for numerous groups including HUMMUCIDE, Revulva, Earl Green, Distance, The Gallery, General Vibe, Rew Collective, Dr. Reknaw, Casual Healing, Half-Cast, Bush Lawyer, Serebil and others. "Running Into the Sun has come at a synchronous time for me, as someone who has existed within the Pōneke community until now, and is looking into the future and the world without answers".
Lennox Grootjans Composer, Drums	Lennox (Ngāi Tūhoe) is a drummer and musician who currently resides in Wellington, New Zealand. After completing his Bachelors of Music (Jazz Performance) at Victoria University of Wellington he has gone on to become a busy working musician within the local music scene. He plays with homegrown heroes Hummucide and Revulva (NZ) and has vast experience playing across genres with various artists including: Len Blake (UK), Arjuna Oakes (UK), Serebil, Will McClean, Dateline, Willydehlia, Dr Reknaw and Belladonna. Although primarily a gigging musician on festival circuits, in 2023 he performed in One Night Band, a 12 hour improvisational theatre piece which won 'Best Original Production' at the Wellington Theatre Awards.
Asha Barr AV & Spatial Design Director of Photography	Asha is a Pōneke-raised Production and Spatial Designer, passionate about all things visual, visceral, textual, and tangible. Her practice is a conversation. Intuitively understanding needs and desires, problem solving and revealing authentic solutions. She leads with rigorous curiosity and empathy.
Dany Akbar Lighting Design	Dany Akbar is a Director, Playwright and Lighting Designer. His credits include directing and writing "A Stolen Giraffe" (2025) (Sydney Fringe Finalist Best In Theatre), "Much Ado About Nothing" (2022), "The Dumb Waiter" (2021), "A Soldiers Testimony" (2019) (Short + Sweets Best Director and Best Production), "Balloon" (2019), "The Real Inspector Hound" (2017) and "A Stolen Giraffe" (2017 Short) and designing "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory"(2023), "Much Ado About Nothing" (2022), "Treasure Island" (2022), "The Theory of Everything" (2021), "James and the Giant Peach" (2021) "Dido & Aeneas" (2019). Dany is currently the Head of Lighting at The Concourse, overseeing the lighting team for a 1000 seat Concert Hall, 500 seat Theatre and a 300 seat Cabaret Lounge, which he designed and built the LX for. Here he has worked on such shows as "Boys" (2024), "The Sound of Music" (2023), "Annie" (2023), "Kinky Boots" (2023) and "La Cage aux Folles" (2023) as well as such live performances as "Don McLeans Australian Tour" (2023), "Frente" (2024) and "Paco Pena" (2024 & 2023).
Cleo Copplestone Graphic Design	Cleo Copplestone is an Aotearoa born, Naarm based graphic designer. She's passionate about editorial and UI/UX design, weaving content, aesthetics and functionality together to create engaging and cohesive visual experiences.

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