

The Rebel Alliance presents

# Grace



*In 1907 she faked her death*

**Wellington** Bats Theatre August 19 – 23    **Auckland** The Basement (nee Silo) September 15 - 20

Supported by **THE EDGE**<sup>®</sup> as part of the 2008 **STAMP** programme



## Media Release

# Grace

**In 1907 she faked her death**

**Grace** written and directed by Sophie Dingemans

Wellington BATS Theatre

August 19 – 23 all performances at 8.30pm

Tickets: \$18/\$12 Call BATS on (04) 802 4175 or [book@bats.co.nz](mailto:book@bats.co.nz)

Auckland The Basement (nee Silo)

September 15 – 20 Mon-Fri 8pm, Sat 2pm & 8pm

Tickets: \$25/\$20 Call 0800BUYTICKETS or go to [www.the-edge.co.nz](http://www.the-edge.co.nz) service fees apply

In 1907 writer and director Sophie Dingemans' Great Grandmother, Grace Oakeshott, did the unthinkable; **she faked her own death and ran away to New Zealand with the man she loved.** The Rebel Alliance, the company behind *The Orderly*, *A Night of French Mayhem* and *The Bomb* is delighted to bring you a story of extraordinary sacrifice and passion. What would you give up for love?

More than 20 years ago Sophie was first told Grace's story and ever since then she has wanted to bring it to the stage. After **more than 2 years in the making** *Grace* will debut at BATS in Wellington before touring to Auckland's Basement Theatre.

Only 3 years old, a mere toddler in theatrical sense, The Rebel Alliance has quickly grown to become a force to be reckoned with. With a fierce focus on producing new plays by and with up and coming actors, writers and directors, the company has already developed an impressive track record. **The Rebel Alliance productions feature some of the most talented theatre makers you've probably have never heard of.**

Nicci Reuben plays Grace. Imported from the UK *Grace* is her first lead on the New Zealand stage. She is supported by Jo Lees as Grace's feisty sister Amber; Brian Moore as Grace's tirelessly working husband Harold; Matthew Baker as the breathtakingly charming Dr. Walter Reeve and the inimitable **Michael Downey as H.G. Wells.**

All of The Rebel Alliance productions have been produced by Anders Falstie-Jensen. **A Danish man with squid-like qualities** he wields his tentacles in a plethora of trades. He has directed the three previous Rebel Alliance productions, wrote two of them and publicised all of them. From 2005 to 2007 he worked as a producer with the Indian Ink Theatre Company and is currently the publicist for the 40<sup>th</sup> Auckland International Film Festival.

*Grace* is made with generous support from EAT (Emerging Arts Trust), Arts Alive and is part of THE EDGE's® STAMP programme.

### **THE REBEL ALLIANCE**

In 2006 the critically acclaimed solo show *The Orderly* launched The Rebel Alliance. It has since then had two Auckland return seasons and been adapted for radio by Radio New Zealand. In August **it boldly goes where no Rebel Alliance show has ever gone before. To Upper Hutt.** *The Orderly* was followed by *A Night of French Mayhem*. Featuring heaving bosoms, horny men and dodgy bastards the show became a runaway success at The Herald Theatre and more than 1000 people came along this **"Bold and innovative (NZ Herald)** new play. Finally *The Bomb* was dropped on the Herald Theatre in 2007. A 50 megaton thermonuclear warhead was stolen. Te Papa was blown up by suicide skydivers and Auckland disappeared in a radioactive mushroom cloud... *Long may the force be with them* (Theatreview)

***"The Rebel Alliance is establishing itself as a company to watch"***  
(NZ HERALD)

[www.therebelalliance.co.nz](http://www.therebelalliance.co.nz)

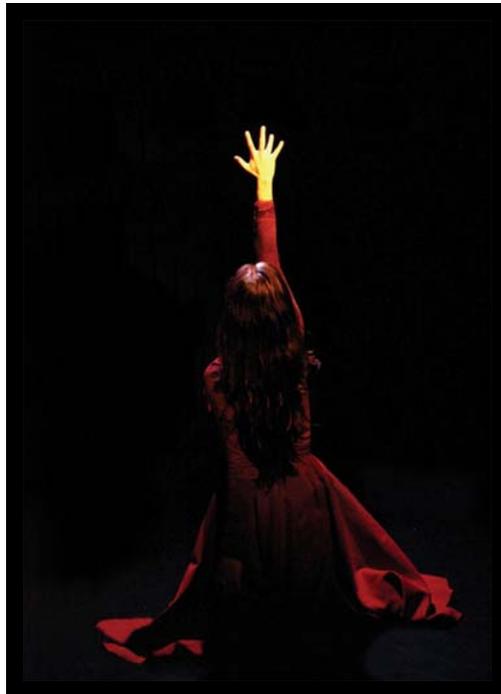
## **The Play**

When Sophie Dingemans was ten years old she was told the extraordinary story of how her great-grandmother, Grace, faked her death by drowning to elope to New Zealand with her great-grandfather Walter

Set in London in 1907, the year Grace faked her death, the events of the play unfold against the backdrop of the Fabian Society - its politics and personalities - and the exceptional election campaign in which Grace fights for a seat on the London County Council.

*Grace* is an incredible story with all elements you need for great drama: forbidden love, emotions clashing with the rules of society, betrayal of loved ones, unbelievable sacrifice and an incredible deed that both appals and fascinates.

To fake your own death in order to start afresh; to give up everything in one irreversible moment; it's an extraordinary thing to do. Is it courageous or cowardly? Is it something we all sometimes secretly wish we would have the courage to do?



## The company

In only two years The Rebel Alliance has made a significant impression on the Auckland arts scene with our productions *The Orderly*, *A Night of French Mayhem* and *The Bomb*; three very different shows with high production values that have both been critical and box office successes.



*The Orderly*, the solo show that launched The Rebel Alliance has had 4 seasons since its premiere in March 2006. Inspired by the real life of an Auckland Hospital orderly it is a funny and moving underdog story about Peter who in the weekend's transform from frail orderly to ferocious Saxon warrior

*"This is quality work, a story told on several levels, solo theatre as it should be"* **Capital Times**

*"Downey displays consummate skill in the demanding art of the one-man show and seems to effortlessly carry off the lightning quick character changes that allow to him to hold up both sides of a conversation.... Anders Falstie-Jensen's finely balanced direction is well supported by a production design that uses simple devices to depict the play's starkly contrasting domains."* **NZ Herald**



*A Night of French Mayhem* became a runaway hit at Auckland's Herald Theatre. More than 1000 people came along for a night of heaving bosoms, horny men and dodgy bastards. Consisting of two one-act comedies performed back to back by 8 actors; featuring a large cast and lavish costumes *A Night of French Mayhem* could hardly have been more different from the lone warrior in *The Orderly*.

*"The Rebel Alliance is establishing itself as a company to watch. In A Night of French Mayhem it delivers a finely crafted production that is bold and innovative while displaying deep understanding of theatrical traditions"* **NZ Herald**



Their third production *The Bomb* was a dark comedy in the style *Dr. Strangelove* about fanaticism. Featuring a nuclear explosion, helicopter raids, and suicide skydive attacks on Te Papa *The Bomb* was The Rebel Alliance take on a stage version of an American block buster action flick.

*"The Rebel Alliance consolidates its reputation for productions that offer a quirky alternative to mainstream theatre."* **(NZ Herald)**

*"The Rebel Alliance continue in their quest to bring a youthful freshness and originality to the scene of Auckland Theatre. Long may the force be with them."* **(Theatreview)**

## The Rebel Alliance

### BIOS

#### **Sophie Dingemans: Writer and Director**

Sophie has been making and performing theatre and dance since childhood. In 2007 she completed an MA in Theatre Studies (First Class Honours) at University of Auckland. She is a graduate of Victoria University's Theatre and Film programmes (Dronke Prize for Top Theatre Student), has trained in dance at UNITEC and the New Zealand School of Dance, and massage therapy at City and Islington College, London. She is in her second year of training as a Feldenkrais Method practitioner. In 2004 Sophie devised and directed *The Laudanum Kiss* about legendary Southland baby farmer Minnie Dean. Projects as a collaborator and performer in Wellington and Auckland include: Theatre Pataphysical's *After Kafka* (04) and *Despatch* (06); Maria Dabrowska's *Evil Fiona's Love Test* (04); Penny Bousfield's *Eden Song* (05). In 2005 Sophie studied with Teatre Piesn Koszla in Wroclaw, Poland and Robin Dingemans (DV8, Siobhann Davies) in London. In recent years Sophie has choreographed three new short works performed in seasons at the Kenneth Myers Centre; worked as assistant director for Murray Edmond in a season of plays of the modernist European avant-grade, also performing in Artuad's *Jet of Blood* and Blok's *The Puppet Booth*. In 2006 Sophie wrote, directed, and produced *Grace* at the Drama Studio and after extensive development, re-staged the work in October 2007.

#### **Anders Falstie-Jensen: Producer**

Anders graduated in 2005 from The University of Auckland with an MA in Drama Studies. Before coming to New Zealand he studied dramaturgy in Denmark for three years. Anders co-founded The Rebel Alliance Theatre Company and has directed and co-produced their three productions *The Orderly* (by Michael Downey), *A Night of French Mayhem* (by Molière and Anders Falstie-Jensen) and *The Bomb* (by Anders Falstie-Jensen). From 2005 to 2008 Anders worked as a producer for the Indian Ink theatre company, the makers of *Krishnan's Dairy*, *The Candlestickmaker*, *The Pickle King* and *The Dentist's Chair*. He currently works as a publicist for the 40<sup>th</sup> Auckland International Film Festival.

#### **Catherine Nola: Co-Producer**

Catherine has a MA in Drama Studies (First Class Honours) from the University of Auckland. Recent directing credits include Frank McGuinness' *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*, and Molière's one act play, *Two Precious Maidens Ridiculed*. She assistant directed the Greek Tragedy *The Libation Bearers*, directed by Murray Edmond. Recent performances have included *A Night of French Mayhem* (produced by The Rebel Alliance), *Thrill of The Chaste* (a new New Zealand work produced by The Caught Jesters Theatre Company); the Nanny in *Lear's Daughters* (a prequel to King Lear); Olivia in *Twelfth Night* for the University's Summer Shakespeare, and a mix of Shakespeare, Beckett and Chekhov characters in a devised piece titled *Three Weird Sisters* and has worked as a stage manager on the URBIS 24 hour deadline theatre. In 1997, Catherine completed a Bachelor of Communication Studies, majoring in public relations, and has worked as a marketing and events coordinator for Ernst & Young and Chapman Tripp. Catherine works as an arts administrator for Q Theatre, an industry led organisation which aims to get a new flexible theatre venue built in Auckland by 2010.

#### **Nicci Reuben: Grace**

Nicci Reuben has recently completed her Masters in Drama Studies from the University of Auckland. Before this she worked as a researcher for a children's cartoon and helped to develop the voices for many of the characters. In the United Kingdom Nicci was a founding member of Bare Faced Cheek Theatre Company who is based in Liverpool where they received the Echo award for best new comer in 2000. She has worked for MYPT, a children's theatre company in Liverpool, and toured extensively through out the UK performing and teaching.

**Jo Lees: Amber, Grace' sister**

Jo is a graduate of the Newcastle School of Performing Arts and did numerous productions in the UK and Edinburgh, before travelling to New Zealand. She was most recently seen in the one act play festival at the Stables in Eilerslie and has worked extensively as an educational actor. Jo has written several scripts for school performances and currently works at Auckland Museum as Live Performance Coordinator. For 5 years Jo performed as Agent Ani, the Eco Superhero. She also fought for a better world in *The Bomb*, her first Rebel Alliance production.

**Michael Downey: H.G. Wells**

Michael Downey trained as an actor at The Unitec School of Performing and Screen Arts, and also holds a B.A in English Literature from The University of Canterbury and an M.A in Drama Studies from The University of Auckland. Theatre credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Theatre Stampede, *The URBIS 24 hour Deadline Theatre Project*, *The X Folios* with N.Z Theatresports and *Oedipus Rex* with Free Theatre Inc. On screen he has appeared in *Shortland Street*, *Interrogation*, *Street Legal*, *Xena: Warrior Princess* and the short film *Personal Ad*. As a writer his play *Flower Day* was produced by Couch Soup Productions for the 2005 Wellington Fringe Festival. Michael currently works for the Auckland War Memorial Museum's live performance programme. He also the writer and performer of the solo play *The Orderly*, The Rebel Alliance's first production.

**Brian Moore: Harold, Grace's husband**

Brian spent his teenage years devising and performing comedy sketches and plays with 'The Way', of which he was a founding member. Following high school, he went on to complete the Selwyn Diploma of Performing Arts before attending Unitec's Bachelor of Performing and Screens Arts course. Due to irreconcilable differences Brian has always had with unpleasantly hard work, he parted ways with Unitec after his first year and became a theatre technician for a short while. This 'for a short while' was to become a theme throughout his twenties as he flirted with various occupations from university student through to barman, ESL teacher and, currently, taxi driver. (0508 4GREEN) Brian's screen credits include the role of 'Tyros' in the independent feature *Song of the Hunted* (HynesFilm), short roles on *Shortland Street* and *Mercy Peak* (South Pacific Pictures), 'Sean' in *Quiet Night In* (Burning Rope Productions), 'Monat' in the SciFi Channel Pilot *RiverWorld* (Alliance Atlantis/Tasman Riverworld) and various commercials and and shorts including 'DK Bond' in the 2005 48 Hour Film Festival wild-card winner *Jungle Fever* (HaynesFilm), which was recently adapted into 12 two-minute episodes for JuiceTV . On the stage, Brian has played 'Buckingham' in Shakespeare's *Richard III*, 'Septimus' in *Arcadia* by Tom Stoppard, 'Romeo' in *Romeo and Juliet* and 'Arthur' in *Teeth 'n' Smiles* by David Hare for Titirangi Theatre, 'King' in *The Naked King* by Evgeny Shvarts at the Herald Theatre and performed Getrude Stein's *Saints and Singing* at the Wine Cellar as part of a two-hand ensemble.

**Matt Baker, Dr. Walter Reeve**

Before completing his degree at the UNITEC School of Performing And Screen Arts in 2004, Matt joined the Australasian production of Disney's *The Lion King* in Sydney, which he then toured with to Melbourne and Shanghai for over two years. Since returning to New Zealand Matt's theatrical credits have included *The Buddy Holly Story*, *Beautiful Thing*, *My Night with Reg* and *The Full Monty*.

**Robert Larsen: Lighting Designer**

Robert is a Wellington based freelance designer and technician for theatre, music and dance. His credits include productions for the NZ International Arts Festival, Circa and Downstage Theatres, Auckland Theatre Company, Capital E National Theatre for Children and BATS Theatre, where he was also the Technical and Facilities manager for several years. In 2007, as a theatre technician, Robert worked for the Southern Lakes Festival of Colour in Wanaka, the NZ International Comedy Festival and the Taranaki International Arts Festival as well as touring NZ and Australia with shows including *Wheeler's Luck* and *Hatch*.

### **Simon Coleman: Set Designer**

Simon has worked full time in the theatre industry for the past 20 years. In 2006 Simon directed *Fame The Musical* for ACG Strathallan and Senior Colleges, *The King And I* for Tauranga Musical Theatre, *Radio Active* for ACG Parnell College and devised and directed a *Wearable Arts Awards* in Huntly. Simon also designed the set and lighting for *500 Letters* for the Edge and *Silo Night, Holy Night* for The Morrisons at the Silo Theatre. Last ear he devised and directed *Hear My Song* for the Centre City Music Theatre, Designed the set and lighting for *This Is How It Goes* for the Silo Theatre, Costumes for *Beauty and The Beast*, the set and lighting for *The Complete History of NZ Abridged*, assisted Warwick Broadhead with his new production *The Resting Show*, devised and directed *The Supertramp Experience* for an NZ tour and directed *The Who's Tommy* for ACG Senior College at the Maidment Theatre.



Grace and the men in her life: Her husband Harold and Dr. Walter Reeve

# BATS Theatre

## GRACE August 19 - 23

**Tickets:** \$18/\$12 Call BATS on (04) 802 4175 or [book@bats.co.nz](mailto:book@bats.co.nz)

Tue	Aug 19	8.30pm
Wed	Aug 20	8.30pm
Thu	Aug 21	8.30pm
Fri	Aug 22	8.30pm
Sat	Aug 23	8.30pm

## The Basement (nee Silo)

### GRACE September 15 - 20

**Tickets:** \$ Tickets: \$25/\$20 Call 0800BUYTICKETS or go to [www.the-edge.co.nz](http://www.the-edge.co.nz) service fees apply

Mon	Sep 15	8pm
Tue	Sep 16	8pm
Wed	Sep 17	8pm
Thu	Sep 18	8pm
Fri	Sep 19	8pm
Sat	Sep 20	2pm & 8pm

#### Further information

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