



# the elements

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **WHERE IS THE POWER?**

The Elements have been commissioned to present a performance and workshop as part of the **"Rooting Out Racism"** conference on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2000, in the **Edinburgh International Conference Centre**, Morrison Street. Organised by **Lothian and Borders Police** in partnership with **ELREC (Edinburgh and Lothians Racial Equality Council)**, the conference focuses on effective strategies in policing and education and the challenges ahead.

The 15-minute dance/drama, **"Where Is The Power?"** has been devised by **The Elements' Justice Project Multi-racial Youth Group** and will be presented at the opening session of the conference. The characters, **"Rulers"** and **"Outsiders,"** are caught in a power struggle between past values and present priorities. The **"Outsiders"** challenge the **"Rulers"** way of dealing with conflict by shifting the focus of attention from fear to friendship and fun. Seeing their power from a new perspective enables the **"Rulers"** to redirect their energy to more inclusive, creative ways of benefiting both individuals and society as a whole.

After the performance, **Lee Gershuny**, writer/director, **Andy Howitt**, choreographer and members of **The Justice Project Youth Group** will lead a **"Where is the Power Workshop,"** focusing on diversity as a valuable resource instead of a problem to be solved. A fun, challenging way to encourage creativity in the here and now, the workshop is an introduction to **The Elements' "Wealth of Difference Workshop,"** offered to public and private sector organisations, and provides an environment for community growth and team building while maximising the creative potential of the individual within the group.

**The Justice Project Youth Group** is a collaboration between **The Elements, ELREC, James Gillespie's and Drummond Community High Schools**. **"Where Is The Power"** is conceived and directed by **Lee Gershuny**, The Elements' Artistic Director. **Andy Howitt**, Artistic Director and **Katy McKeown** of Scottish Youth Dance and **Priya Sreekumar**, Artistic Director of Dance India Scotland choreographed the work. The performers are all students at James Gillespie's High School, Edinburgh.

The Elements greatly appreciate receiving financial assistance for **The Justice Project Youth Group**, from The **City of Edinburgh Council** Departments of **Education** and **Recreation** and from **ELREC**.

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **WHO ARE THE ELEMENTS?**

Registered as a Scottish charity (No. SC022072), The Elements are a group of professional and apprentice arts practitioners and educators, developing collaborative arts projects across art-forms, communities and cultures.

We believe that everyone is a creative human being co-creating the culture in which we live with whatever imaginary and real elements are present at the time; and that the creative process is as applicable to the arts as it is to life.

Our projects aim to: (1) DEVELOP individual and collective creative potential through active participation in the arts; (2) PROMOTE co-operation between artists, art forms and the public; and (3) PRESENT alternative theatre at the highest possible standard.

Since being founded in Edinburgh in 1992, we have been developing "Theatre of Being" with a diversity of participants including: youth, older people, unemployed workers, primary school children, users/survivors of the mental health system; homeless people; and adults with physical and learning difficulties.

#### **Lee Gershuny, Ph.D., Artistic Director**

An award-winning scholar, Lee has taught literature and writing for over 25 years in secondary schools, colleges and universities in the USA, including the culturally and racially diverse City University of New York, where she was Full Professor of English. Resident in Scotland since 1988, she is a director of the Foundation for Community Leadership Development, where she led workshops in creative leadership and conflict facilitation.

As founder/Artistic Director of The Elements, she has been developing "Theatre of Being" - a new collaborative art form dedicated to the creative development of the whole person. She has led Theatre of Being Workshops with a diversity of participants in England, Germany, Mexico, Poland, Scotland and the USA including professional artists, youth, older people, primary school children, people with physical and learning difficulties, homeless people, survivors of substance, mental and physical abuse and users of mental health services.

As Leeala, her *non-de-plume*, she is an internationally published poet and award-winning playwright in both the USA and the UK. Her poem, "Side Effects," was recently published in the poetry anthology, *The Art of Dis/appearing: Jewish Women on Mental Health*.

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