

Dance

Company Clare Dyson ***Churchill's Black Dog***

This work looks at depression, darkness and the human psyche. It's about how we all get through the day — particularly a bad day, month or year.

Throughout his life, Winston Churchill, one of the greatest leaders of the 20th century, was shadowed by violent mood swings, fits of depression and periods of emotional doubt. He felt that he was followed by this unpredictable darkness and uncertainty. He was followed by his black dog.

This beautiful work uses movement, text and visual imagery to create a landscape of dislocation and isolation: two common characteristics of depression. It focuses on four characters who journey through their days and lives in worlds that are distorted by paranoia, fear and darkness.

Clare Dyson has created numerous dance, theatre and site-specific performances in Australia, Europe and America, with a focus on the collaborative process. She has worked with visual artists, composers, circus performers, musicians, singers, dancers, lighting designers and installation artists, been a choreographer-in-residence at the American Dance Festival, and created works for national art galleries, festivals, theatres and site-specific events.



Photographer Fiona Cullen

Dancenorth
roadkill

A couple is stranded in the Australian outback with a car that won't start next to a phone box that doesn't work. Their water is running out.

This stunning, unsettling piece of dance theatre is a manic ride down the highway of misconceptions about the heart of Australia. Using unorthodox, amazingly irregular movement and intense drama, *roadkill* is part road movie, part excavation into the urban legends and paranoia that surround the centre of this continent.

Dancenorth is an exciting and athletic dance company under the directorship of Gavin Webber since 2005. Influenced by his years with Wim Vandekybus and Meryl Tankard, the company works under a spirit of collaboration and co-production, and has become one of Australia's leading dance companies.

Based in Townsville, North Queensland, Dancenorth employs a core group of dancers and engages national and international guest artists and designers for each production. It has four touring productions in its repertoire: *lawn*, *Underground*, *roadkill* and *Nightcafe*. *lawn* was nominated for two Helpmann Awards in 2007 and opened Tanzplattform 2006 in Stuttgart. In 2007, *roadkill* was part of Dance Umbrella and BITE Festival at the Barbican Centre in London. *Underground* will tour Australia in 2008 and Dancenorth's latest work, *Nightcafe*, blends cabaret and dance theatre with music by DOCH Gypsy Orchestra.

In the past two years, the company has toured around Australia as well as to London, Berlin, Stuttgart, Heilbronn, Freiburg, Yokohama and Singapore.



Photographer Tim Page

The Mabo Dance Company
Koiki

Koiki is a new form of creative expression that tells the story of native title campaigner Eddie Mabo's life by incorporating traditional Torres Strait Islander song and dance with contemporary music and movement. *Koiki* is the first production written, directed and choreographed by Gail Mabo, who is the daughter of the late Eddie 'Koiki' Mabo.

The creative concept was to develop a dance work which captures the innocence of a child watching her father, mesmerised by his wealth of knowledge and passion for his beliefs. This attribute would direct him to make a stand against social injustices and to fight for native title.

Gail Mabo attended the Aboriginal and Islander Dance Theatre for four years, providing her with a foundation in traditional and contemporary movement, as well as an understanding of the protocols and traditional dance techniques for both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural dance practices. During this time, Gail also toured with the Dance Theatre throughout Australia to national centres and remote Indigenous communities.



Photograph courtesy Mabo Dance Company

Theatre

Circa **by the light of stars that are no longer...**

by the light of stars that are no longer... is an emotionally intense contemporary circus work. It explores the individual's relationship with the infinite and to others. The work is built out of traditional circus acts which are placed under stress – they are broken, repeated, interrupted and stretched. From the core languages of acrobatics, tumbling, pitching trapeze and hoop diving, a series of leitmotifs emerge – the upside down body, the caesura, the body frozen and then reawakened by another's touch.

The show is structured in three parts. It begins with an acrobatic duet, builds through various overlapped solos and duets to high level acrobatics and a solo trapeze routine before ending in a crescendo of bodies in extreme movement.

Under the direction of Artistic Director Yaron Lifschitz, *Circa* fuses traditional circus craft with contemporary arts practices such as music, multi-media and improvisation to create dynamic, moving and beautiful performances.

In 2007, the company returned to Australia from Ireland's prestigious Galway Arts Festival with applause from their many standing ovations still ringing in their ears.

The *Irish Independent* wrote that *Circa* was '... stunning audiences into a mesmerised silence with ... seemingly impossible grace ... that leaves you in no doubt you are witnessing something genuinely special'.

The Galway Arts Festival capped off a tour that encompassed the United Kingdom, Germany, The Netherlands, Hungary, Japan, Canada, Romania and Thailand. In 2008/9 *Circa* will tour to Canada, the US, Colombia, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark and Ireland.



Photograph courtesy Circa

Arts Asia Pacific
The Window

After viewing *The Window* in a Tokyo theatre, critic Nobuko Tanaka of *The Japan Times* wrote “everyone applauded and some shed tears of joy ... one of the best productions in Tokyo this year”.

Since premiering in 2006, *The Window*, an intimate, beautifully realised and acted journey of discovery, has received rave reviews in Australia and Japan, also taking out the award for Best Set Design at *The Japan Times*’ annual performing arts awards.

A five-year project for Queensland writer and director Mark Bromilow, *The Window* is a multi-disciplinary work that includes theatre, puppetry and multi-media elements, bringing together emotion and technology, narrative and form. The strong performances by Julie Eckersley and Jo Turner bind the varied components to form an intensely personal piece that has proven to be highly accessible to an international audience.

The Window is produced by Arts Asia Pacific, a company with extensive touring expertise throughout Asia, and will be playing in Adelaide and Brisbane in 2008.



Music

Linsey Pollak *Cycology*

Linsey Pollak prides himself on being able to make music from anything. Well, almost anything!

Carrots, chairs, even blow-up frogs have become instruments in the hands of a man *The Courier Mail* newspaper labelled ‘...one of Australia’s most brilliant and under-rated composer/musicians’.

The humble bicycle is his next target. In his latest show, *Cycology*, Linsey makes musical instruments and surprising sounds from the handlebars, gear cables, bike pumps, inner tubes, spokes, the seat, even the frame, and then records, layers and replays these sounds live to create his unique compositions while you watch.

Linsey Pollak’s immense talent and extraordinary imagination takes audiences beyond the expected and into a new arena of invention and stunning musicality.

