



***EMBRACE* – a dance performance exchange**

British-Australian choreographer and dancer **Tess de Quincey** alongside two members of her company will be leading masterclasses for professional dancers followed by a presentation of site-specific performances at different sites around Kolkata. Arranged by the British Council in collaboration with Seagull Media & Resource Centre and ITC Sangeet Research Academy, a workshop Tuesday 25 November till Saturday 6 December will culminate in performance ***EMBRACE: a silent thread*** at ITC SANGEET RESEARCH ACADEMY, SATURDAY 6 DECEMBER.



Photo: Russell Emerson

The three members of **DQC – De Quincey Co**, one of Australia's leading contemporary dance performance companies have come to Kolkata for a 3-month residency – the first stage of a cross-disciplinary and inter-cultural project entitled ***EMBRACE*** supported by the Australian Government. This long-term project will see performances in Kolkata in December 2003 ahead of a performance for Sydney audiences in May 2004. The project will culminate with large-scale performances envisaged for Kolkata and Delhi in late 2005 followed by performances in Sydney and Perth in early 2006 which will involve both Indian and Australian artists.



Photo: Victoria Hunt

The departure point for ***EMBRACE*** is an investigation of underlying principles between Indian artistic practice, in particular the **Natyasastra**, and **Body Weather**, a practice founded in Japan which forms the basis of DQC's work. The aim of the residency is to engage in an exchange of ideas, skills and practices centred around these two artistic philosophies and to gather choreographic material for the performances of ***EMBRACE***.

Awarded an AsiaLink residency, DQC's Artistic Director **Tess de Quincey** is joined in this cultural exchange by two DQC core performers, **Kristina Harrison** and **Victoria Hunt**, and for a 3-week period by lighting and visual designer **Richard Manner** funded by the Australia-India Council and the NSW Ministry for the Arts. Also with them is longtime associate performer **Peter Snow** and intern **Nic Hempel**. The hosts of the residency are dance ethnologist **Ranjita Karlekar** and multimedia/film company **Shape**. They are facilitating the process of contact between DQC and a wide base of artists who will become collaborators in the project, whilst supporting the intellectual and conceptual development of the project with Ranjita Karlekar as research partner and dramaturg.

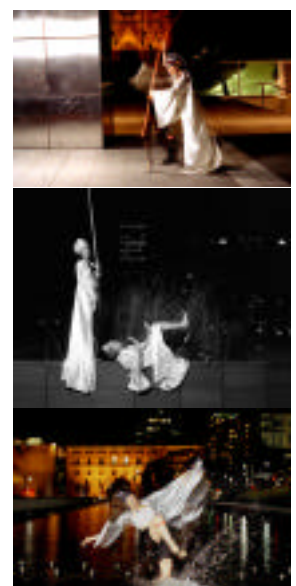


Photo: Paris Spellson

As part of the cultural exchange Karlekar is also facilitating Harrison and Hunt's participation in classes with senior Indian performance practitioners,

and in the organisation of Body Weather workshops which the company is leading for practicing artists and students in Calcutta. One of these is for the **Calcutta School of Music** from Sunday 9 till Tuesday 18 November. The company will also offer Body Weather workshops and performance **EMBRACE: limitless** with the **Calcutta Social Project**, alongside a further performance **EMBRACE: drench** for the **artisans of Kumartuli** as a gesture of thanks for the puja season.

Bodyweather is an open-ended training practice for dancers and performers. Drawing from ancient elements of both eastern and western theatre practice and dance, martial arts, sports training and contemporary arts practices, it was founded by Japanese butoh dancer **Min Tanaka** and his Mai-Juku Performance Co in the 1970s in Japan. As a former member of his company, de Quincey has promoted and developed the practice extensively in Europe and Australia. It is also the basis for her work as a performer and choreographer.

Tess de Quincey is a highly regarded independent choreographer and dancer. She has performed her solo works extensively in Europe and Australia since 1988, and formed the ensemble De Quincey Co in 2000. Originally trained in ballet as a child followed by modern and contemporary dance, she then studied graphics and sculpture in Copenhagen whilst also performing in a number of Danish dance and performance companies. However her training in Balinese mask dance and Noh theatre led her to a deeper immersion in oriental practice and to a 6-year stay in Japan where alongside formative work with Min Tanaka, she also studied with Butoh master Kazuo Ohno besides dancing in Tatsumi Hijikata's dance theatres. Her performance work in different terrains – from city to desert – around the world has engendered a series of works concerned with inhabitation and the nature of place. Her main emphasis is on intercultural, site-specific and durational works.

Projects involving this level of commitment and depth of inter-cultural exchange are rarely embarked upon in the performing arts in Australia. This stage of the project is funded by AsiaLink, the Australia-India Council and the NSW Ministry of the Arts and the Australia Council for the Arts.



Photo: Victoria Hunt

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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THIS PROJECT IS SUPPORTED BY

