

Extracts from Reviews

FIVE short solos June 2005

The Australian – Deborah Jones

I can't think of another 75 minutes in the theatre that yielded so many riches.

The Sydney Morning Herald – Jill Sykes

Five Short Solos is a De Quincey Co presentation that will be talked about for years.

embrace: AN IMMODEST GREEN May 2004

The Sydney Morning Herald – Jill Sykes

Tess de Quincey and her team are deep in a project that began in Kolkata and has emerged, like a precious jewel, in Sydney. Each performer is distinctive. Harrison is tall with an elegant carriage and remarkable ability to exude ecstasy and deep grief. Hunt has an earthy grasp on tightly controlled action that adds intensity to what she does. Bose's expressive face and stylised movement – especially his arms and hands – are engrossing. Dancing up and down the stepped seating, involving their audience with fleet-footed vitality, taking us with them in tragedy and in celebration. Embrace is an ambitious production, the many ingredients of which come together with as much warmth and flavour as the dhal that was cooked by the end and handed out to the audience.

RealTime – Eleanor Brickhill

The performers became hosts, inviting us into a strange and exquisite culture. We enter a scape, either city or elsewhere—a profusion of events, things, a chaos of bits and pieces. The performers are chopping vegetables and spices, a beautiful array of colour, and we're invited to kneel and talk with them instead of distantly observing. A huge cauldron of dhal is being prepared by Santanu Bose on the stage. There's a sense of great potential, a depth of generosity, of boundless sensation, of a fullness as well as a coldness and strangeness. The sparse text (some of which is selected from the Rig Veda) seems heightened and full of portent. In a way, it's a story about Kolkata and the tremendous profusion of life in all its extremes. Not linear, but timeless and cyclical. Having your feet washed in milk is by invitation. One memorable scene sees a dancer reclining amid the dirt, slight impulses twitching through her body, both a travesty of seduction and the real thing. At one point the performers create a fascinating duet between the seating blocks, of strange marionettes, vile cries, expression taken to an extreme, almost hideous and open-mouthed like a cry, or a great breath, or a gasp of surprise.

NO COLD FEET May 2003

RealTime – Keith Gallasch

Some were momentarily caught up in the flow of the work or, often, entranced for the duration. The pleasure to be had was in fragmentary gatherings, delicate duos and trios... as the company slowly and elegantly moved into more intimate spaces and into distinctive lighting frames, along and into the stretch of water and, finally, down the stairs, disappearing into the adjoining little park, the sense of space transforming and an ambulatory adventure for the now sizeable audience had been firmly realised.

THE SCENT TRILOGY

Part 3 – SHIVER October 2003

RealTime – Keith Gallasch

...words slide across the screens and leap from the argumentative exchanges that envelope us in Barbara Clare's engrossing dance club musical score... a curious grip, sending even the odd shiver up the spine as the performers surround you, whispering with the soundtrack, "I'm alright. Are you alright?", hanging over you with a curiously languorous urgency... Two of the group are counter-tenors in long blonde wigs. They often frame the action, moving slowly through the crowd, the meeting of their long locks providing a curiously ritualistic climax to an inexplicable, often hypnotic event... forming exotic tableaux vivant... an engrossing and curiously memorable experience.

Part 2 – SEEP November 2002

RealTime – Keith Gallasch

The cultural and gender fantasia of De Quincey Co's Seep was hilariously delinquent and rudely non-specific... cultural and gender identity bled in every direction in a gloriously promiscuous collaboration...

WALKING SPECIES 1 January 2001

RealTime – Keith Gallasch

Three women in raincoats walk the perimeters of the room, each at her own pace, in her own time, until we absorb their rhythms, glimpse images and texts on small video monitors in corners, a landscape projection on a wall (finally an electrical storm), absorb sounds – from the swish of coats, feet, Wade Marynowsky's score. Rhythms change, the trio intersect, speed becomes collective, the bodies almost in competition to hold the space. The facility of performance to evoke states of being (in contemplation, under physical duress, both here it seems) is nowhere more evident than in this kind of work.

SKYHAMMER March 2000

Capital Q Weekly – Merryn Johns

As the title suggests, this performance piece is about the forces of nature and base elements so apparent in Central Australia. Just under an hour in duration, Skyhammer is fascinating and mesmerising. The bodywork of the performers is finely conceived and executed, managing to translate the rawness of experience one associates with harsh terrain and endless space. Sound, lighting and imaging provide atmospherics in what is essentially an environmental and site specific work. Several moments in the strong second half, especially the closing image of enchantment and awe, convince the viewer that this is a powerful and intriguing new work. It has the potential to hold any audience in its thrall.