



THE AUSTRALIAN

Joys along the way - Deborah Jones - 28 June 2005

Five Short Solos

De Quincey Co. Performance Space Galleries, Sydney, June 23. Tickets: \$12-\$18. Bookings: (02) 9698 7235. Until Sunday.

YOU collect your ticket and a number is written on it, indicating where you should start viewing this tantalising suite of short dance pieces.

The Performance Space has given over its galleries and hallway to five intimate solos from De Quincey Co that take place separately but concurrently, running on a loop so small that groups of viewers - no more than eight at a time - can see all the performances in 75 minutes.

Each is 15 minutes long and when the music starts you know it's time to progress (in an anti-clockwise direction to prevent chaos) to the next performance.

The experience is almost shockingly intimate. In these very small spaces it's possible to hear every breath, to smell the bodies at work and to look directly into a dancer's eyes. Peter Fraser, in *Sip...*, makes it impossible for you to avoid his gaze. In *Contemplate Footsteps*, Tom Davies asks for, and receives, help from his audience.

Although each piece is seen in its own tiny space, fragments of text or music from works previously seen, or to come, are part of the soundscape, claiming part of the viewer's attention. Perhaps there is a connection to be made, a reaction reviewed or a sense of anticipation heightened.

The process is fascinating in itself. Would I think differently about the whole program had I started in another room and therefore finished in another place? Don't know. Would I have preferred to see the pieces in a different order from the one imposed? Possibly. Would I have liked to stay to see a piece again? Yes.

De Quincey Co's performance is based on *Body Weather*, a form of training involving a wide range of physical and theatrical elements designed not so much to give performers a specific look but a sense of alertness to the possibilities of body, mind and spirit. Each of the performers in *Five Solos* has a vivid physical presence and command.

Fraser's sinuous articulations perfectly illustrate his meditations on water; Victoria Hunt has whipcord strength overlain with poignant flutters of ancestral dance; Linda Luke distances herself from contemporary life and inspires thoughts of medieval monks and ancient Greek myths; Davies is a bravura wreck of a man; and Kristina Harrison a party girl contemplating aspects of her existence.

These reflections only touch the surface of what each performer offers and there's a lot of latitude for interpretation. I can't think of another 75 minutes in the theatre that yielded so many riches.