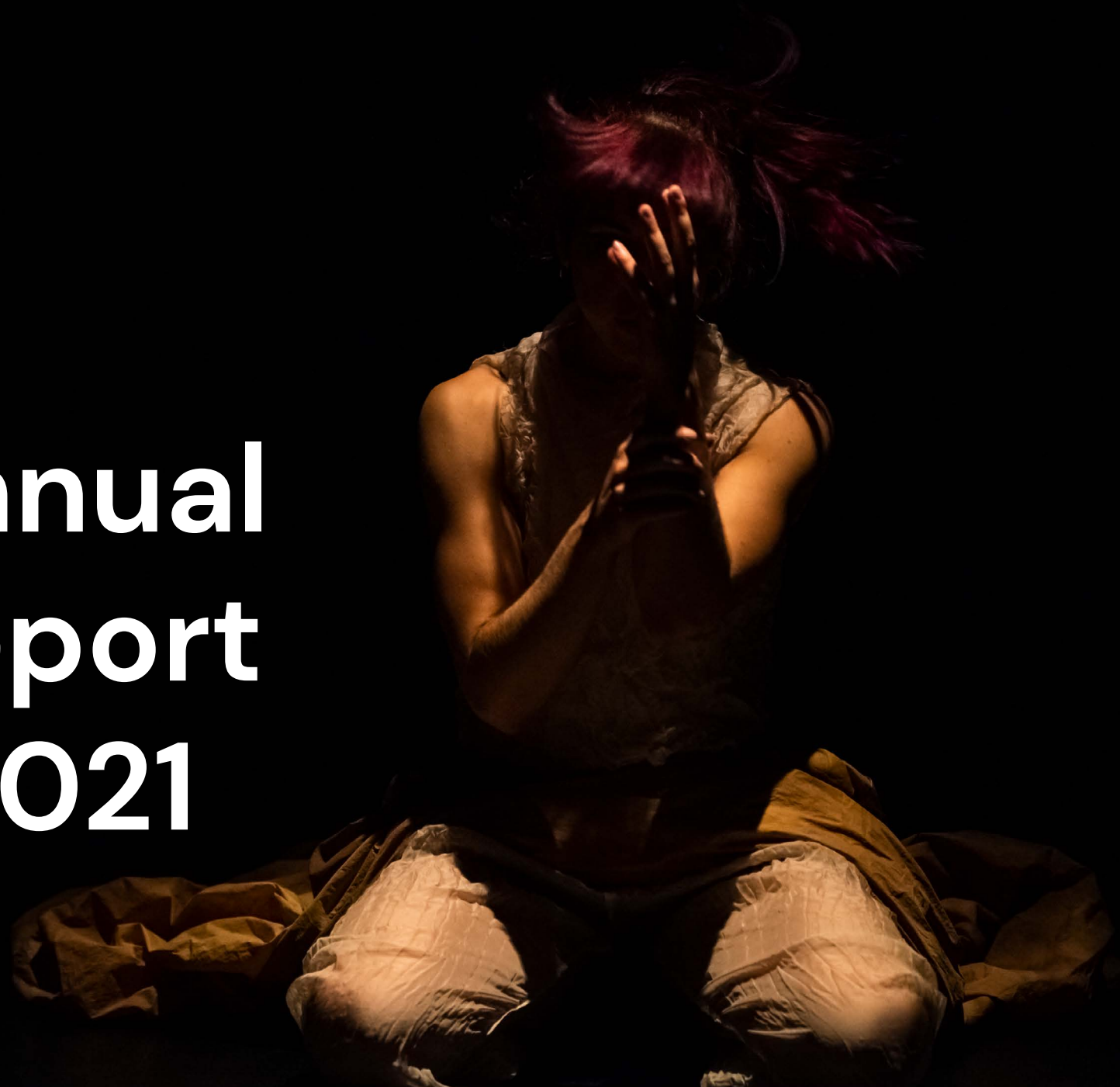


Annual Report 2021

DANCEHOUSE D



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Image credit (cover): Aimee Schollum, *MOTH* (2021). Photo by Gregory Lorenzutti.

Image Credit (right): Rebecca Jensen in *Now Pieces (Finalé 2021)*. Photo by Andrew Liu for Pride Productions.

IN SUMMARY

CEO / Artistic Director's Report

In 2021, Dancehouse endured a stop/ start program as Melbourne became the 'most locked-down city in the world' during the waves of Delta and Omicron in the COVID pandemic. Amidst the desperation and disaffection and the unproducing of many programs and festivals, Dancehouse, due to our small and versatile venue, resilient community and quick-thinking staff, revealed an incredible capacity to come together, celebrate, and present dance works and events. Embracing improvisation and spontaneity, Dancehouse bunny-hopped between lockdowns finding brief windows of time and space — mere weeks — to dance and invite communities and audiences to gather. The year was manic: total shutdown, to explosions of activity.

Initially conceived as short-lived 'Circuit-Breaker' lockdowns between 12–17 February, 28 May–17 June, 16–27 July lead to heavy restrictions between 18 June–15 July and then 28 July–5 August before a 13 week lockdown between 5 August–3 November. Much moved and many projects were un-produced. On reflection, as I write in 2022, all projects 'transferred' to 2022 have been remounted. Proudly, Dancehouse has not (yet) lost a project to cancellation.

Miraculously, Dancehouse presented three seasons of works and events in 2021. The simple act of presenting works and events to audiences during the year became a privilege many other venues and organisations were unable, sadly, to achieve. The book-ends of 2021 of Dancehouse were a joy and dance artists were electric — proving that our Season of models for grouped dance presentation offer exciting artistic possibility and opportunity. Curation including collaboration with community partners Sangam for South Asian and diaspora artists and work were a highlight. In 2021, Dancehouse offered a national call out offering to present Australian dance work in 2022 which was warmly received.

Envisaging a 2022 Keir Choreographic Award (KCA) seemed at many times impossible. Phillip Keir, with incredible prescience, divined the signs for a successful KCA and encouraged announcement of the commissions and season in November 2021. Thanks to his leadership, we are excited and proud to present the KCA, with an international jury, in June 2022.

The ethos of MASSIVE, a new festival of dance in Melbourne has continued to grow in 2021. Shared principles for this festival and its wide and enthusiastic partnerships will find form in 2023 — a credit to many discussions, consultations, roundtables, modelling under the stewardship of Dancehouse and Arts House in collaboration with local partners, independent artists and stakeholders.

COVID-resilient programs evidenced ingenuity from Dancehouse. A full summer outdoor-workshop program of Freedance workshops at Abbotsford Convent (with an additional edition at Federation Square) were a highlight. And Dancehouse initiated

a festival for screendance through Dance (Lens). Curators Andre Shannon, Siobhan Murphy and Melissa Ramos offered an incredible array of Australian and international works in a landmark festival for Australian screendance artists.

The 2021 Emerging Choreographers Program (ECP) cohort of artists endured a bumpy year but, as a group, found incredible solidarity and creative energy amplifying the careful design of the ECP program. Culminating in their Inertia presentation of sharings in December was evidence of their shared appreciation and respect for each other and a highlight of the Dancehouse calendar.

An enduring strength has been the self-organising dance communities of practice connecting to Dancehouse through programs like Dancehousing. Street, vogue, contact improv, waacking and performance improv found voice and presence when every other frame was impossible to predict. Improvisational forms met a need for many artists needing to re-discover their tools, their bodies and performing again after extended lockdowns. In this opportunity Now Pieces, following the famous Cecil Street model, found a special place on the Dancehouse monthly calendar and attracted over 60 performers and curators across 2022 in consistently sell-out events. So too the Dancehousing communities' events in Finale in December were a tonic for many including convergences of improvisational performers, jams, all-ladies all-style battles, and Dancehouse's first Ball.

Regionally and interstate, Dancehouse's network of On Residence partnerships hummed with opportunity and were hotly contested by artists wanting to take advantage of time and space away for new projects with dance-loving partners.

Over the year, Dancehouse as a building received some desperately needed love: our downstairs floors were sanded and waxed, the foyer was painted, and some much needed equipment and AV upgrades were installed through support of Creative Victoria's Strategic Investment Fund.

With the postponement of most deliverable activity to 2022 and access to COVID response funds, Dancehouse remained financially robust in 2021 with the expectation that financial pressures, risks, and a doubling of project delivery in 2022 is expected.

My sincere thanks, as always, to the hardworking Dancehouse Board and staff and to the incredible support of our artists and community in a difficult but also surprisingly luminous year.

— Josh Wright, CEO/ Artistic Director

Chairperson's Report

Over the last year Dancehouse has again been under the influence of lockdowns and disruptions and the ensuing effects on organisations, artists and the community within which we all live.

During this period, Josh and the team have managed to maintain the stream of connection through the community maintaining relationships so that, when we were able to resume activities, we have had an enormous blossoming of activity.

Notably also are the structural developments in the actual building and in the organisation that have been undertaken during this last year. Major repairs to the downstairs floor, improvement and purchase of equipment and updating of bathroom facilities and a new and very improved foyer.

The team have established structures that support diversity in real terms through many communities through advisory committees and direct involvement in programming, communications and artistic direction. Josh's role as Artistic Director is one of creating a complex system of activity directly through these modes of consultation and information sharing as the process of creating an artistic programme.

This is reflected in the enormous range of programming outcomes, structured in a way that invites audiences and artists to see work that they may not have been aware even exists in Melbourne in a way I have not seen before.

The Board bids farewell to John Paolacci, Jo White and Jacob Boehme who have all contributed enormously through their particular expertise to the activity and dimension of Dancehouse. An especial thank you to John, who has been the treasurer for nine years and whose assistance through the recent tumultuous period has been invaluable.

We welcome new board members Joey Lehrer as Dancehouse treasurer who is also an artist, and new members Ngioka Bunda-Heath, Melanie Lane and Viviana Sacchero and look forward to sharing their respective knowledge and experience on their roles as board members.

This last year has also seen a shift in the team at Dancehouse allowing adjustments to the structure of the personnel in the new terrain that Josh is negotiating.

In late 2021 and into 2022, longtime members of the Dancehouse team will transition to new lives and roles: Olivia Hutchinson, Jonathan Homsey, Ashley Dyer, Jill Chrisp, Georgia Rann begin new roles and creative adventures and we wish them all the very best and thank them for their incredible work — particularly over these last difficult COVID years.

The large events that have been so much part of Dancehouse's calendar over the last years, Dance Massive and the Keir Choreographic Award are back in circulation in altered, improved form. In partnership with Carriageworks, Dancehouse is now able to present all eight commissioned Keir Choreographic works in both Sydney and Melbourne. And Dance Massive is being reignited as MASSIVE and, though still under construction, this has been a major initiative of Dancehouse with partner Arts House to make this a possibility for the presentation of work in a way that is more appropriate to the times.

As per the shifting conditions of touring and travel, Josh has instigated a number of residences with regional partners both near and far to provide ongoing working situations and support for artists whilst seeding the possibilities of presentation.

I unequivocally congratulate Josh on an extraordinary vision and outcomes with his program, the management of staff in a very difficult year and the unswerving commitment and interest in the artists and their work.

I also thank the board for their support and work through last year through meetings mostly on ZOOM — like everyone else!

— Shelley Lasica, Chairperson

COVID-19

230+ Hours of cleaning (equivalent to 1 person full-time for 6 weeks)
25.5 Number of weeks Dancehouse shutdown

With hindsight, 2021 followed a very similar pattern to 2021 with the same number of weeks in lockdown. Characteristic of the year was the every-changing COVID-Safe conditions and the uncertainty of lockdowns and what activity would be permissible.

As with 2020, Dancehouse was a 'quick responder' prioritising access to studios as soon as feasible for dance artists and has been small enough to re-open for hires, events and productions with restrictions without crippling financial or safety concerns.

Availability for hiring at Dancehouse and the community of teachers who regularly use Dancehouse for classes and workshops was significantly impacted and resulted in significant drop in turnover.

COVID safety requirements demanded Dancehouse spaces were cleaned and sanitised twice daily (minimum) throughout 2021 — a requirement taken on by Dancehouse staff as part of their roles.

A calendar of Dancehouse restrictions and closures is outlined below.

DATES	DURATION	RESTRICTIONS	VIC GOVERNMENT RESPONSE
13 Dec 2020—11 Feb 2021	[2 weeks closed in Summer] [2 weeks closed floor work] 7 weeks	Covid Normal	COVIDSafe Summer
12 Feb—17 Feb 2021	.5 weeks	Closed	Circuit-Breaker Lockdown
18 Feb—27 May 2021	14 weeks >>	Covid Normal	COVIDSafe Settings
28 May—17 Jun 2021	3 weeks	Closed	Circuit-Breaker Lockdown
18 Jun—25 Jun 2021	1 week	Step 2: 10 per studio	COVIDSafe Settings
26 Jun — 15 July	1 week	Step 1: 8–16 per studio	COVIDSafe Settings
16 July–27 July	2 weeks	Closed	Circuit-Breaker Lockdown
28 July – 5 Aug	1.5 week	Step 2: 10 per studio	COVIDSafe Settings
5 August — 3 Nov	13 weeks	Closed	Lockdown
3 Nov–19 Nov	3 weeks	Step 3: DQ4 events and DQ8 for dancing	COVIDSafe Settings
20 Nov >>	3 weeks	Covid Normal	Vax Economy

Key Statistics

7,909	Attendances (including in-person and digital)	↑
5,027	Paid tickets	→
2,882	Free tickets	↓
166	Dancehouse Members	↑

54%	Venue Occupancy	↑
1147	Total artists engaged by Dancehouse	
485	Artists paid directly	

155	Number of works (performances, public programs, online)	
195	Individual shows or sessions	
890	Hours of in-kind space provided for artists	

Unsolicited Feedback

My heart is full after a weekend of many dance & movement workshops taught by wonderful humans and joined by many more lovely humans. I was privileged enough to participate in them FOR FREE because I have received a free pass provided by a generous donor. To Dancehouse, Thank you for providing so many beautiful opportunities for artists of all areas. For connecting people who normally wouldn't meet. For working hard and creating endless inspiration for us. I've come to love and appreciate this place.

— Dancehousing winter workshop participant

Last Monday evening I attended the community event, facilitated by Ashley, bringing together and introducing all the various participating Monday groups to each other and their different forms of expressive dance. It was a glorious fascinating event. Emotionally warmly bonding and inspiring. To hear the origin stories, then to both see and be seen in what and how our passionate creative practices are expressed. It brought together several internally closely bonded (proud) communities giving us all a sense of connection with one another; giving us a sense that we were all part of a Dancehouse community. Big thanks to everyone behind the scenes involved in making it happen.

— Dancehousing participant

I just wanted to say big thank you for amazing 4 days workshop. To be honest I had a lot of fear to join this program. I did not know many people in the group, english is my second language and comes from a different practice. But I felt so included and welcomed. I learned so much, made a lot of friends and I am more confident.

— ECP participant

2021 Program Overview

SEASON ONE

Sangam Commissions

Eyes by Kasi Aysola, *Melbourne Rasa* by Shyama Sasidharan and Divya Shreejit Kumar, *Amma: The Loss of our Motherland* by Rukshikaa Elankumaran, *Sacred Sensuality* by Shriraam Theiventhiran, *Nimbus* by Sooraj Subramaniam, and *Maya (excerpt)* by Raina Peterson.

Here We Are by Such n Such

Bodylex by Rhys Ryan

Memoria del Cuerpo Vivo by Gabriela Green Ola & Oscar Poncell

Colour-Fool by Yumi Umiumare and ButohOUT! Ensemble

MOTH by Aimee Schollum

SEASON TWO

Slow Calm Drama by Deanne Butterworth

100 Haikus by Trevor Santos

That Which was Once Familiar by Zoe Bastin

SEASON FOUR — Melbourne Fringe

Star Spangled Banter by Jonathan Homsey

SEASON FIVE

Inertia – Emerging Choreographers Program

Finalé

Sister Sessions Volume 8

Free Ball Workshops by House of Dévine

Now Pieces curated by Kevin Jeynes & Amaara Raheem

Now Pieces and Make It Up Club

Jamstas' Cl: Dancing, Sharing, Talking

Free Ball by House of Dévine

Cross Styles: Stage Volume 1

DANCEHOUSE SUNDAYS

Now Pieces (March), curated by Amaara Raheem

Now Pieces (April), curated by About Now

Now Pieces (May), curated by Amaara Raheem

Now Pieces (June) curated by Siobhan McKenna and Lilian Steiner

Sister Sessions Volume 7

Move with Me by Jam on Toast

ReConvergence with Peter Trotman and Catherine Magill

ONLINE

Melbourne Fringe Festival

Dance (Lens)

Dance (Lens) public programs

Formscapes by Melissa Ramos

The House These Films Built by Andre Shannon

Loud by Karlee Misipeka

Follow Me with Janice Florence

Follow Me with Victoria Chiu

Dancehouse Action Plan

KEYNOTES

KCA 2022 (Call-Out)

Co-Design: A Festival for Dance in Melbourne

ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT

Emerging Choreographers Program

Dancehousing

On Residence

In Residence

Self-Made

Community Skills for Climate Action

On The Table

Care Dance screening and Q&A

SOURSWEET Australian Premiere screening

In Development

Winter Workshops

Freedance

SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

Industry Partners

First House — First Nations Dance

Sangam — South Asia and Diaspora Dance

Housekeeping — Dancehousing's Council

Insite Arts—Emerging Choreographers Program [ECP]

Alter State, Arts Centre Melbourne — Artists with a disability

Hyperlocal — Touring, Co-Commission and Co-Presentation

Independent workshops and classes

POSTPONED due to COVID-19

Season 3

Sky Blue Mythic by Angela Goh

Castillo by Prue Lang

BeatStorm by Chris Chua

We Are Here by Jenn Ma & Collaborators

Judy and Me by Rachael Wisby

Season 4 / Melbourne Fringe Festival – postponed due to COVID-19

Dancehouse Program Streams

Presenting ...

Presenting... is focussed on the public outcomes and interactions by dance artists. Predominantly, Presenting... is about productions, events, talks, screenings, exhibitions, and publications in both live, digital and hybrid modes. Presenting... is Dancehouse's main task. It creates opportunities and pathways for artists and audiences to meet, reflect, share and interact with dance.

Programs include

- Seasons 1–4
- Season 5–6: Melbourne Fringe, Finalé
- Sundays at Dancehouse
- Dance (Lens)
- Dancehouse Diary
- Public Programs
- Freedance

Artistic Development

Artistic Development is dedicated to strategic initiatives and programs to support artists throughout their careers including activities such as: peer support and network learning, professional development, community self-organising, training, exchange and collaboration.

Programs include

- Emerging Choreographers Program (ECP)
- Dancehousing
- On Residence
- Self-Made
- In Development
- Winter Workshops
- Industry Partnerships: Alter_State, Hyperlocal

Keynotes

Keynote programs are high profile and heavily resourced programs involving multiple partners and stakeholders. Dancehouse proudly hosts two significant biennial programs (KCA and Dance Massive) which must evolve to a changed landscape over 2022 and 2023 but which are an essential part of the dance sector in Australia

Programs include

- KCA Commissions and Presentation
- KCA Public Program
- Co-Design A Dance Festival

Sector Engagement

Dancehouse has the unique capacity to serve multiple communities, voices and mechanisms to best serve our society and the artform. Sector engagement encompasses self-determination models, co-curation, community leadership and sovereignty, resources, and the services Dancehouse can and should provide to the sector.

Programs include

- First House
- Curation and Producing
- Independent Public Classes and Workshops
- Advocacy: Climate Action, City Strategy
- Online Resources
- Your House

➤PRESENTING...

Presenting... is focussed on the public outcomes and interactions by dance artists. Predominantly, Presenting... is about productions, events, talks, screenings, exhibitions, and publications in both live, digital and hybrid modes. Presenting... is Dancehouse's main task. It creates opportunities and pathways for artists and audiences to meet, reflect, share and interact with dance.

Season One

11—28 March

1,203 Tickets

7 Productions

27 Shows

1 Event

11–13 March

Sangam Program 1:

Kasi Aysola, Rukshikaa Elankumaran, Shyama
Sasidharan and Divya Shreejit Kumar

Sangam Program 2:

Shriraam Theivendran, Sooraj Subramaniam and
Raina Peterson

18–21 March

Bodylex by Rhys Ryan

Memoria del Cuerpo Vivo by Gabriella Green Olea
and Oscar Poncell

MOTH by Aimee Schollum

24–27 March

Here We Are by Such n Such

25–28 March

Colour-Fool by Yumi Umiumare and ButohOUT!
Ensemble

28 March

Now Pieces curated by Amaara Raheem

\$24.94 Average Ticket Price
(for productions)

\$17, 596 / \$16,527.7
Box Office Gross / Net

869 (72%) | 334 (28%)
Paid / Comps

Image credit: 'Maya (excerpt)', Raina Peterson (2021). Photo by Arun Muñoz.

Season One

Sangam

11–13 March 2021

Sylvia Staehli Theatre, Dancehouse

— 6 Shows (3 x triple bills)

Program 1: *Eyes* by Kasi Aysola, *Melbourne Rasa* by Shyama Sasidharan and Divya Shreejit Kumar, and *Amma: The Loss of our Motherland* by Rukshikaa Elankumaran

Program 2: *Sacred Sensuality* by Shriram Theiventhiran, *Nimbus* by Sooraj Subramaniam, and *Maya (excerpt)* by Raina Peterson.



Rukshikaa Elankumaran, *Amma: The Loss of our Motherland* (2021). Photo by Arun Muñoz.

In its 3rd year Sangam was a platform for emerging and established South Asian–Australian artists to learn, create and showcase art alongside globally renowned artists from the South Asian Diaspora. The Artistic Directors of the festival Priya Srinivasan, Hari Sivanesan and Uthra Vijay were excited about the opportunity to commission and present 6 short works at Dancehouse in two triple bills each night. Over four jam-packed weekends, from February 20 to March 13 2021, and across four venues, Abbotsford Convent, The Drum Theatre, Bunjil Place and Dancehouse, the 2021 festival features 100+ artists bringing an eclectic array of music, dance, spoken word, comedy, classical and experimental performances to the stage. Sangam was created in partnership with MAV and guided by BlakDance.

The Sangam Commissions featured 6 newly created works by extraordinary South Asian classical–contemporary dancers mentored by renowned dancers Priyadarsini Govind, Mavin Khoo and Dr. Chandrabhanu.

Kasi Aysola's work *Eyes* explored the fragmented and multiple viewpoints and perspectives of the God who falls from grace.

Shyama Sasidharan and Divya Shreejit Kumar's duet *Melbourne Rasa* focused on the migrant's emotional and political struggle to 'belong' by investigating multiple emotional landscapes using both screen and live performance.

Rukshikaa Elankumaran's work *Amma: The Loss of our Motherland* used classical Indian dance and was based on the Tamil Eelam liberation struggles in Sri Lanka exploring the emotions Tamil refugees and migrants experienced when they fled the country fearing persecution and genocide.

Shriram Theiventhiran's work *Sacred Sensuality* navigated the interplay of love, lust and religious sentiment through the classical dance medium. He asked "Is it improper, sinful even, to gaze at the Lord with thoughts of lust?"

Sooraj Subramaniam's work *Nimbus* was a contemporary dance solo journeying into the internal conflicts humans undergo when their expectations, their dreams, their aspirations get broken, where the rain of a nimbus (a dark and amorphous cloud) serves as metaphor.

Raina Peterson's work *Maya (excerpt)* was an experimental solo dance work exploring Hindu conceptions of the self and the cosmos through a trans lens, and vice versa – exploring the trans experience using the frameworks of Hindu philosophy.

Season One

Bodylex by Rhys Ryan

18–21 March 2021

Sylvia Staehli Theatre, Dancehouse

— 4 Shows

Bodylex was a timely new dance work that explored the physical effect of legal systems on the body. Laws are designed to regulate human behaviour. How our bodies are constituted through these superimposed pressures is a complex phenomenon. We must constantly navigate — deliberately or unconsciously — the tension between externally fixed rules and our subjective desires. Do we resist, conform or adapt? The answer is at once choreographic and political. Dance artist and lawyer Rhys Ryan's work forged creative links between legal theory and choreography. It isolated embodied responses to rule-based systems and probed bigger questions about power, agency and authoring our own futures in a world of colliding sovereignties.

Choreographer: Rhys Ryan

Performers: Isabelle Beauverd, Piaera Lauritz, Emma Riches

Voiceover: Zoe Boesen

Sound design: Robert Downie

Lighting design: John Collopy



Image credit: James Lauritz

Memoria del Cuerpo Vivo by Gabriella Green Olea and Oscar Poncell

18–21 March 2021

Upstairs Studio, Dancehouse

— 4 Shows

This work is a duo between two Chilean/Australian artists and their relationship to themselves, each other and the collective experience of an intimate audience. Told through a story of a young Chilean student activist, the work is an intersection of music and dance, history and the present, the personal and the collective, what's here with us now and what's lost and forgotten. The artists are Gabriela Green Olea, a dancer and choreographer, and musician Oscar Poncell. They are both children of parents that fled the Pinochet Dictatorship in Chile in 1973 and their living body memories hold a very similar intergenerational trauma that gives voice, song and movement to their ongoing resistance to the oppressive powers that dominate us all. *Memoria del Cuerpo Vivo* seeks to live within the lives of us all and argues that our stories, no matter how personal, are not something created or experienced behind closed doors. They are a part of (and about) our collective resilience.

Concept, choreography and performer: Gabriela Green Olea

Concept, music direction and performer: Oscar Poncell

Lighting Support: Daniella Olea



Image credit: Gregory Lorenzutti

Season One

MOTH by Aimee Schollum

18–21 March 2021

Sylvia Staehli Theatre, Dancehouse

— 4 Shows

Enter a haunting world woven around a singular axis. Three dancers unfolding, competing, surviving. Moths to a flame. Culturally, moths symbolise transformation, death and rebirth. Moths remind us that endings often precedes growth. Beauty in and despite destruction. Life is cyclical yet ultimately futile. Death is inevitable but necessary. Nature's duality. Unaware of their own mortality, the life trajectory of moths provide a strange reassurance — where there is loss, new opportunity can be found. Combining original sound design (Tamara Violet Partridge) and transformative costume design (Amelia Peace), *MOTH* pays homage to the fleeting beauty of the short life cycle. A contemporary dance with Aimee Schollum's signature looping choreography. A harmony of coded percussion and malleable movement. Walk the line between primal instinct and self-directed patterns. Can you see the cycle? What is your "flame"?

Director & Choreographer: Aimee Schollum

Performers: Emily Shoesmith, Melissa Tan, Aimee Schollum

Dramaturg: Jaala Jensen

Sound Designer: Tamara Violet Partridge

Lighting Designer: Jessica Hutton

Costume Designer: Amelia Peace

Producer: Beth Raywood Cross



Image credit: Gregory Lorenzutti

Here We Are by Such n Such (Debra Batton and Catherine Magill)

24–27 March 2021

Sylvia Staehli Theatre, Dancehouse

— 4 Shows

Here We Are is an open, unscored performance that generates, develops, accumulates or discards emergent material. Framed only by the length of time they have to share the space with their audience, they dance with lighting and sound collaborators who have the freedom to irritate, interrupt, compliment or augment the implausible moment and its constant becoming. Such n Such thrive in uncertain conditions. Their long form duets are spontaneous compositions with dance and social dialogue as they negotiate complex themes ranging from the wildly imaginative to the autobiographical. It is the form of Improvisation-as-Performance that brings this unlikely duo together, a radical and risky way to compose and craft space and time, body and text, in the absolute present, without a safety net. Such n Such have a disarming humour that shifts surprisingly between vulnerable exposure and sharp witted observation.

Concept & Performance: Such n Such (Debra Batton & Catherine Magill)

Lighting & Sound collaborator: Spenser Inwood

Visual Art collaborator: Clara M.Y.Chan



Image credit: Angel Leggas

Season One

Colour-Fool by Such n Such (Debra Batton and Catherine Magill)

25–28 March 2021

Sylvia Staehli Theatre & Upstairs Studio, Dancehouse

— 4 Shows

Colour-Fool was an experimental performance installation work which embraces our colourful acts of 'foolishness' to provoke and challenge our perception of 'what is normal?'

As part of ButohOUT! 2021 (New Ab/Normal), Colour-Fool explores the term 'new normal' which contains the paradoxical nuance that an abnormality can become 'normal'. Colour-Fool brings a smorgasbord of short performances, roving and digital installation works in and around Dancehouse, with a colourful, quirky and illusionary sense of humour.

Colour-Fool will be created by a heterogeneous bunch of established & emerging artists from diverse cultural backgrounds. Drawing on their personal narratives and making use of interdisciplinary practices of poetry, visual arts and body painting — reflecting on interpretations of 'home,' 'connection' and 'flesh' in a post-pandemic Melbourne. Yumi Umiumare, the international Butoh punkess, is directing and also joining in the fusion as a performer, along with new collaborators, Emma Bathgate (voice) and Ai Yamamoto (Sound). Let's celebrate our unique darkness and the contradictions within ourselves as we face these uncertain times!

Director & Choreographer: Yumi Umiumare

Producer: Takashi Takiguchi

Co-creators & Performers: Kiki Ando, Emma Bathgate, David Blom, Jessie Ngaio, Pauline Sherlock, Tomoko Yamasaki, Takashi Takiguchi, Yumi Umiumare.

Lighting Designer & Operator: Rachel Lee

Sound Designer: Ai Yamamoto

Sound Operator: Isao Sano

Graphic Design: Monika Benova

Video works: Justas Pipinis and Yumi Umiumare

Visual arts consultation: Jacqui Stockdale

ACCESS

The Sunday 28 March performance was adapted for wheelchair users.



Image credit: Vikk Shaven

Season Two

21 April—1 May

1,021 Tickets

3 Productions

18 Shows

5 Events

21–24 April

Slow Calm Drama by Deanne Butterworth

22–24 April

100 Haikus by Trevor Santos

28 April – 1 May

That Which Was Once Familiar by Zoe Bastin

\$22.39 Average Ticket Price
(for productions)

\$17,596 / \$16,527.7
Box Office Gross / Net

796 (78%) | 325 (32%)
Paid / Comps

Season Two

Slow Calm Drama by Deanne Butterworth

21–24 April 2021

Sylvia Staehli Theatre, Dancehouse

— 4 Shows

Borrowing techniques from the process of scriptwriting to examine the information transferred between bodies, *Slow Calm Drama* explored the social relations between three people and the role of spectator. Started in late 2019, Deanne Butterworth, Alice Dixon, and Benjamin Hurley continued development of *Slow Calm Drama* together in 2020 in separate locations, exploring different ways to make choreography with a more static body. Driven by a desire for human connection in its absence, *Slow Calm Drama* used the non-linear time-mapping of bodies moving through space and confused dialogue to create a fantastical, dreamlike collage that is constantly searching for ways to transform. In a zone of ambient crisis and unravelings, the performers negotiated the relationship between the individual and the group.

Choreographer: Deanne Butterworth

Performers: Deanne Butterworth, Alice Dixon, Benjamin Hurley

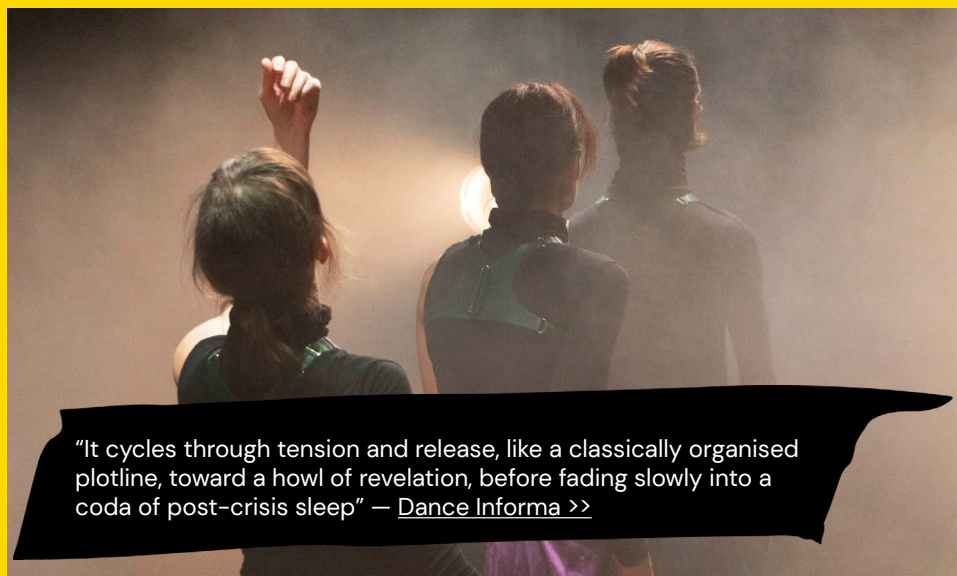
Sound: Michael Munson

Costume Designer: Laura Banfield

Lighting Designer: Govin Ruben

Associate Lighting Designer: Marty Shlansky

Secondment Dancer: Emily Laursen



"It cycles through tension and release, like a classically organised plotline, toward a howl of revelation, before fading slowly into a coda of post-crisis sleep" — [Dance Informa](#) >>

Image credit: Arun Munoz

100 Haikus by Trevor Santos

22–24 April 2021

Upstairs Studio, Dancehouse

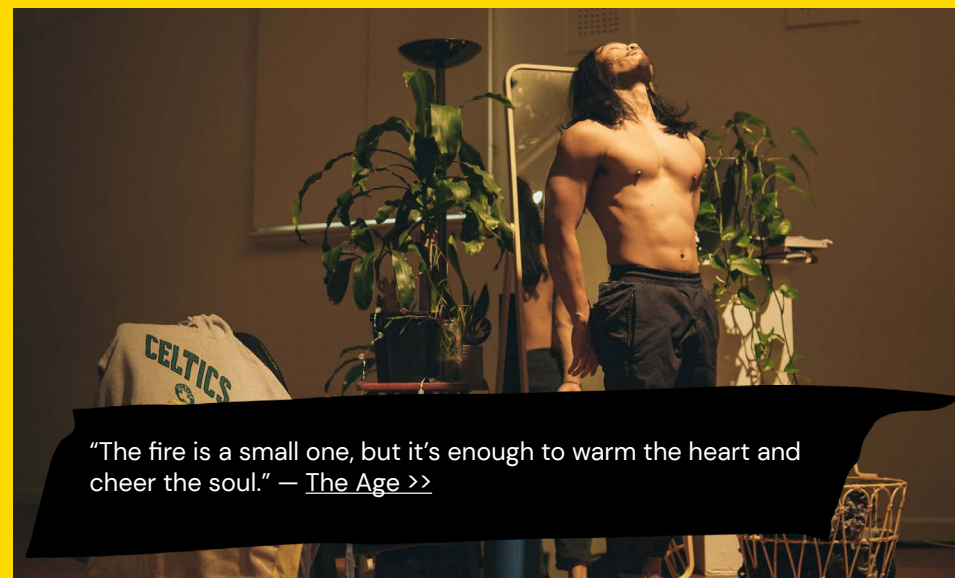
— 6 Shows [SIDE A and SIDE B performed once on 3 nights]

100 Haikus is an autobiographical retelling of an artist reclaiming his self-worth through the exploration of his past.

At the height of a global pandemic, Trevor gets his heart broken. The world he had grown accustomed to has lost all meaning. Alone, in a new apartment and in a lockdown, dance, music and memories consume his days and nights. Filled with his 'feels', he moves with these experiences, diving deep into old memories of the past. Accompanied by the beautiful sounds emitting from his turntable, *100 Haikus* is an evolution of the mindfulness poems he wrote during 2020. This dance is a voyeuristic eye to his healing journey and witness to a heavy heart shifting into an open chest and mind. Welcome to his past, his room and the moments that he survived through the lockdown.

Choreographer/Performer: Trevor Santos

Dramaturg: Jonathan Homsey



"The fire is a small one, but it's enough to warm the heart and cheer the soul." — [The Age](#) >>

Image credit: Cameron Grant, Parenthesy.

Season Two

That Which Was Once Familiar by Zoe Bastin

28 April–1 May 2021

Sylvia Staehli Theatre, Dancehouse

— 4 shows

That Which Was Once Familiar (TWWOF) investigated how culture inscribes gender and sexuality onto the flesh sacks we walk around in... our bodies. Zoë Bastin combined movement with sculpture as dancers explored the abstract, object-like parts of themselves such as the form, weight, scale and shape of how they move. Deviating from the ways they are expected to perform, they found new ways to become bodies that are less familiar.

That Which Was Once Familiar engaged choreography and sculpture to ascribe agency to performing bodies by rebelling against the way society often objectifies women. By focussing on what a body is capable of no matter what orientation, gender, age or ability, the use of scored movement, live and recorded music and improvisation were employed in the pursuit of freedom and autonomy beyond outdated societal constraints.

Choreographer & Dancer: Zoë Bastin

Dancers: Hayley Does, Tizana Saunders, Julia Luby, Al Jefimenko and Sue Hockey

Sound Designer & Composer: Grace Ferguson

Guitar Musician: Byron Meyer

Set & Sculpture Designer: Zoë Bastin

Costume Designer: Kitty Garry

Makeup: Meg McConville

Lighting Designer: Govin Ruben

Producer: Natasha Phillips

Associate Producer & Stage Manager: Josephine Mead

Artist Assistant: Molly Stephenson

'That Which Was Once Familiar' was presented by Dancehouse and Bus Projects in association with Midsumma Festival with support from Yarra City Arts.



Image credit: Darren Gill

Season 3 [Transferred]

August–September 2021

Dancehouse's Season 3 was directly affected by the COVID Delta wave and lockdowns in Melbourne and Sydney in September.

Initially, works were rescheduled and travel contingencies were in place before the Victorian and NSW Government announced extensions to existing lockdowns and the inability to gather in public.

All Season 3 artists were announced on the Dancehouse website as 'COMING SOON' and were offered transfers to 2022 and paid artists fees in line with their agreements.



Image credit: 'We Are Here' rehearsal. Photo by Shutterstock.

Sky Blue Mythic by Angela Goh

Reality has always been augmented—by the limits of our human perception. Sky Blue Mythic stands at a threshold of cascading horizons. An avatar is adrift in an unknowable but familiar setting, where worlds loom, times loop, gestures distill and meanings distort. An interface of flesh searching for new ways of being, Sky Blue Mythic sees the body alienated, and the alien embodied.

Castillo by Prue Lang

Castillo is danced and described via Pointe Shoes, Socks & Sneakers. It explores shoes as the medium between the body and floor – generating diverse choreographic modalities that activate new imagery and perceptions. It is both a conventional performance for seated audience and a companion participatory work that integrates audio description with taxonomies of touch. Through descriptive poetics, textural scores and choreographic thinking, Castillo develops an innovative new structure for blind and sighted audiences to experience dance performance.

Beat Storm by Chris Chua

Inspired by Dance Dance Revolution, Beat Storm is a rhythm game requiring vigorous, sequenced movement to survive and to achieve a high score. The virtual world rarely demands any specific shape or form. It is up to the players to plan or react to the game's geometric offerings in which movements will lead to the players' success.

We Are Here by Jenn Ma & Collaborators

We Are Here interweaves Krump and Contemporary Dance with Hip-Hop and Spoken Word. The project unfolds through a non-linear narrative of danced vignettes that each foreground the Asian diasporic experience of empathy in different ways. The work creates witnesses out of its audience. Focusing on narratives of self-discovery, familial adversity, and what it means to be misunderstood, displaced or pressured, We Are Here uncovers the resilience that comes from being a contemporary Asian-Australian and having to meet expectations that aren't one's own.

Judy and Me by Rachael Wisby

Judy and Me is an experimental psychosexual meditation. This solo was birthed from the interface of the body with faux and real matrilineal histories, in an attempt to liberate the individual from formal structures and systems. This coexists with a skeletal framework of anti-theatre and optical illusions, deluding both audience and performer into a drama of humour, love, triumph and disaster.

Season 4 / Melbourne Fringe — Digital or Transferred October 2021

COVID-AFFECTED

Like Dancehouse's Season 3, Dancehouse's Melbourne Fringe program was impacted by the COVID Delta wave and lockdowns in Melbourne.

The details of COVID restrictions from the Victorian Government were speculative and often not announced until only days before they came into effect. Restrictions were eased but did not permit the presentation of live performance works to audiences. Restrictions at the time permitted the filming or broadcast of performance works from venues.

Digital and broadcast options were offered to Dancehouse's Fringe artists but was only feasible for *Star Spangled Banter* by Jonathan Homsey. Most artists chose to transfer and pursue a live presentation in 2022 (or a forfeit).

Projects transferred to 2022 were announced on the Dancehouse website as 'COMING SOON' and paid artists fees in line with the COVID-clauses in their agreements.

Curation: Melbourne Fringe

Dancehouse's Melbourne Fringe program offers one of the only safe and funded contexts for emerging and established dance artists to take risks with multi-night presentations. Selected by peers through an open EOI process, Dancehouse actively works with the Melbourne Fringe to offer dance artists the best deal in town: a paid — fee upfront — opportunity to mount a small work with significant production, marketing, front of house, and administrative support from Dancehouse.

The 2021 Melbourne Fringe projects were selected by Dancehouse's 2020 Fringe artists Trevor Santos, Rhys Ryan, and Catherine Magill.

"Jonathan Homsey's contortionist self-referencing and absurd playfulness border on permanent subversion. The net result is that *Star Spangled Banter* remains elusive, evading easy labels and defying the norms of criticism (and associated taste making)." — [Dance Informa](#) >>

Star Spangled Banter by Jonathan Homsey

14–17 October 2021

Digital Broadcast and On Demand, Dancehouse and Melbourne Fringe

Star Spangled Banter laments, salutes and magnifies homogenised anthems. Using the national anthems of Australia and U.S.A as a starting point, this solo by Jonathan Homsey creates a vocabulary of somatic oxymorons.

Star Spangled Banter unpacks and negotiates political urgency from his lived experience of the 1997 handover of Hong Kong and American patriotism. Fuelled by the philosophy of Dr. Philipa Rothfield on the corporeal uncanny, this work unravels how cultural and political phenomena sit within our body and how we can expunge them one booty-shake at a time.

Choreographer and Performer: Jonathan Homsey

Outside Eye: Dr. Philipa Rothfield

Dramaturgical Consultant: Anton Rivette



Image credit: 'We Are Here' rehearsal. Photo by Shutterstock.

Season 4 / Melbourne Fringe

TRANSFERRED TO 2022:

Passing by Isabelle Beauverd

Mixed Pickle by Karma Dance

Ionisation by MaggZ

Lucha Bridge, Silent Shift by Ngioka Bunda-Heath

Siren Dance by Lilian Steiner

Passing by Isabelle Beauverd

Passing explores the construct of time as a means of organisation and adherence. Within a multifaceted and complex framework, *Passing* reflects upon our subjective experience of time and our innate sensitivities to it, questioning its linearity and existence. *Passing* sees performers stuck inside a matrix of inertia; at times exploding through synchronised dynamic movement but in other instances fumbling through their own journey of existence. The work hopes to question our individual relationship to time passing and ponder whether our experience of time is personal, subjective and/or an illusion.

Mixed Pickle by Karma Dance

Karma Dance (Govind Pillai and Raina Peterson) offer a degustation of deliciousness. This collection of tasty morsels draws from their five company productions spanning classical Indian dance, experimental theatre and queer performance art — a feast that is saucy enough to disappoint their parents and with enough spice to choke Raina's English paternal ancestors.

Ionisation by MaggZ

Ionisation tells the story of Ion, who opens gateways into the afterworld, entering a portal of volatile human and digital transformation. What seems like a flashback to the precious times before Earth is destroyed turns out to be a chaotic decision making process — surrender to pain or don't. This work examines human volatility by exploring the process of initial decline, rapid deterioration and the return to homeostasis. *Ionisation* prompts interrogation into aliveness and the future relationship between humanity and technology born of the consequences of systemic injustice.

Bridge by Ngioka Bunda-Heath

Lucha Bridge, Silent Shift: Ngioka Bunda-Heath's new dance work, explores the shared and divergent experiences of three minority groups in so-called Australia. The work is made in collaboration: *Lucha* by Gabriela Green Olea, *Bridge* by Ngioka Bunda-Heath, *Silent* by Theodore Cassady and *Shift* by Joshua Twee. It follows the dancers through a series of three simultaneous solos that interweave, connect, and oppose, giving voice to the artists' often overlooked, silenced and underrepresented experiences. The work was commissioned by Melbourne Fringe's Deadly Fringe program which focuses on First Nations voices and perspectives.

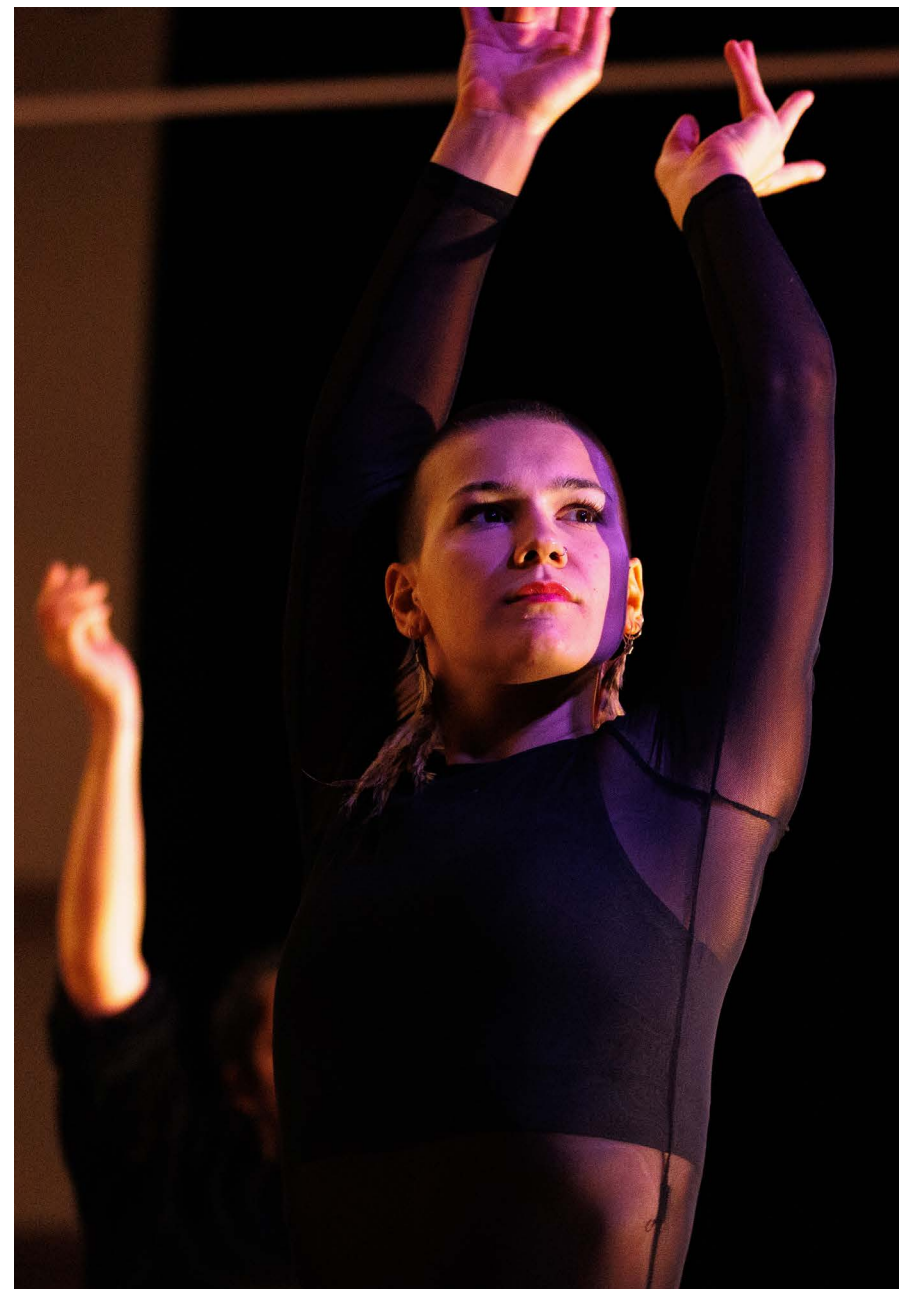


Image credit: 'Bridge' (2022), Ngioka Bunda-Heath. Photo by James Henry.

Season Five / Inertia



Image credit: Alec Katsourakis and Adrien Tucker (Inertia #3)

Inertia

2–4 December 2021

Skylab, Upstairs Studio, Sylvia Staehli Theatre

Inertia was the self-titled name of a program of short works by the participants of Dancehouse's 2021 Emerging Choreographers Program [ECP].

Held over three days at Dancehouse, *Inertia* presented 17 works-in-progress by 19 talented, emerging dance artists.

From contemporary choreographers to contact improvisors, street stylists to classical Indian dancers, these young people with diverse backgrounds introduced their fledgling practices. Featuring performances, research sharings and film installations, *Inertia* shared works-in-progress ranging from the conventional to the unconventional, the familiar to the less familiar.

Over 2 weeks after Victoria reopened, these artists collaborated, experimented and investigated new ideas to develop their own fresh processes and projects.

Inertia invited audiences to experience short works across forms from some of Victoria's most exciting emerging choreographers. Presented in four distinct mixed bills and one stand-alone installation, *Inertia* saw these artists moving against the resistance of the past two years and innovating their practice in a new context.

Inertia #1

Upstairs Studio, Dancehouse

— 3 Shows

A triple bill of works from Michaela Ottone, Alex Dobson with Shannon Toth and Jimmy Nguyen with Anthony Poeung.

Inertia #2

Sylvia Staehli Theatre, Dancehouse

— 3 Shows

A bill of five works from Piaera Lauritz, Rukshikaa Elankumaran, Shelley O'Meara, Zoë Bastin, and Kady Mansour with Michaela Tancheff.

Inertia #3

Upstairs Studio, Dancehouse

— 4 Shows

A bill of four works from Alec Katsourakis, Adrien Tucker, Shriram Theiventhiran, and Ngioka Bunda-Heath.

Inertia #4

Sylvia Staehli Theatre, Dancehouse

— 4 Shows

A bill of four works from Yuiko Masukawa, Alec Pernes, Devika Bilimoria and Shelley O'Meara.

Inertia #5

Skylab, Dancehouse

— 5 Sessions

A collaborative film installation from Emily Bowman and Ebony Muller.



Image credit: Alex Dobson with Shannon Toth (Inertia #1)

Season Five / Finalé

5—12 December

Over 8 days and 9 events Dancehouse presented Finalé to celebrate getting out of the lockdown closet and onto the dancefloor. From 5—12 December, Dancehouse was transformed daily to host a suite of showings, live music, performances, battles and balls.

Finalé did not signal a conclusion so much as a new start for local dance artists who are a part of the Dancehousing program. This was the first of a new annual event centered around improvisation in street and contemporary dance. With over one hundred performers across the season, Finalé celebrated dancers from all over Melbourne for doing what they do best.

1,150 Tickets

12 Productions

5 December
Sister Sessions Volume 8

6 December
Free Ball: Workshops

7–10 December
Now Pieces

9 December
Now Pieces and Make It Up Club

10 December
Jamstas' Cl: Dancing, Sharing, Talking

11 December
Free Ball

12 December
Cross Styles: Stage Volume 1

\$16.68 Average Ticket Price

\$17, 272 / \$10,626.27
Box Office Gross / Net

637 (65%) | 113 (12%)
Paid / Comps

Season Five / Finalé

Sister Sessions Volume 8

5 December 2021

Sylvia Staehli Theatre, Dancehouse

— 1 event

Sister Sessions returned for their second event of 2021, taking it back to their roots with a classic format of Ladies 2v2. The pairs were decided through random selection — allowing the ladies to get down with others outside of their own groups. Supported on the decks by DJ Naru and featuring some of Melbourne's leading ladies on the surprise judging panel, this was a great party.



Image credit: Andrew Liu for Priade Productions

Free Ball: Workshops by House of Dévine

6 December 2021

Skylab, Dancehouse

— 3 workshops

These workshops brought some of Australia's Vogue leaders under one roof. Across three workshops from Houses of Dévine and Iman, participants learnt how to embody their sexual and gender identity, strut it down a catwalk and then get their 10s in the ballroom.

Essence with Jaycee Iman: A performance and character embodiment class to feel your essence. This is a hybrid virtual/physical class with House of Dévine and Aotearoa Vogue icon Jaycee Iman.

Runway with Kiki and Mike Dévine: A runway workshop to get down on the catwalk American and European style.

Vogue OTA with Billy Iman: A class teaching the five elements of vogue with guest Billy Iman.



Carlos Dévine at MFW (2021). Photo by Liana Hardy Long Story Short.

Season Five / Finalé

Now Pieces curated by Kevin Jeynes and Amaara Raheem
7, 8, 9, & 10 December 2021
Upstairs Studio & Sylvia Staehli Theatre, Dancehouse
— 4 events

Now Pieces is a celebratory gathering that runs over four consecutive nights, in December. At the heart of each Now Pieces is the disciplined exploration of improvisation-in-performance. Each performer is invited to play – in whatever way they choose – with the art of spontaneity.

Now Pieces has brought together a range of dancers, choreographers, sound artists and performers from a variety of backgrounds, styles, aesthetics, physical and conceptual training and put them side-by-side. All Now Pieces welcomes artists at any stage of their career, to move from their own practice, and to be part of a wider collective experience. Now Pieces evolved out of improvisation events held regularly at Cecil St Studio, a dance studio in Melbourne for 21 years, that was considered the 'home' of improvisation-in-performance. This lineage of improvisation extends back to dance practices developed in the early 1960's and 70's in US and Europe. Now Pieces, like its predecessors, calls for an urgent reconsideration of the medium of dance encouraging the spirit of playfulness, permissiveness and in general, new uses of time, space, body and voice.

The art of Now Pieces is open, without fixed structure or a central theme. It takes each moment as it comes; navigates uncertainty; drifts in the gaps and margins of knowing. All these artists attempt – through movement, sound and/or speech – to respond to the moment they find themselves in, experiencing and altering the now.

7 December featuring:

Born in a Taxi & Michael Havir, Rosie Fayman, Alice Cummins, Jo Lloyd & Deanne Butterworth, Geoffrey Watson, Amrita Hepi & Mish Grigor, Marnie Newton

8 December featuring:

Janette Hoe & Myfanwy Hunter, Kevin Jeynes, Peter Trotman & Noelle Reese Hatton, Carol Brown & Russell Scoones, Melanie Lane, Melinda Smith, Jennifer Ma & David Prakash

9 December featuring:

Yumi Umimare & Emma Bathgate, Andrew Morrish, Rebecca Jensen, Neil Thomas, Alice Dixon and Will McBride, Efren Pamilacan & Pataphysics, Keke Luik

10 December featuring:

Rosalind Crisp, Emily Bowman & Joey Lehrer, Catherine Magill, Adam Forbes & Ron Reeves, Raina Peterson & Marco Cher-Gibard, Amaara Raheem

Now Pieces and Make It Up Club
9 December 2021
Sylvia Staehli Theatre, Dancehouse
— 1 event

After coexisting for 23 years in Fitzroy, two of Melbourne's improvised performance icons finally met. Together they presented a one-off event in which sound and movement-based artists shared the performance space for one hour. Five musicians and six dancers joined to make an emergent performance for emergent times.

Curators: Make It Up Club, Kevin Jeynes and Amaara Raheem

Collaborators/Artists: Tony Yap, Lillian Steiner, Theo Cassidy, Josie Weise, Devika Bilimoria, Daniel Jenatsch (electronics), Aarti Jadu (voice), Sooji Kim (electronics), Kirri Büchler (double bass), Evelyn Morris (drums)



Image credit: Andrew Liu for Priade Productions

Season Five / Finalé

CI: Dancing, Sharing, Talking by JAMSTAS

11 December 2021

Upstairs Studio, Dancehouse

— 1 workshop

Beginning on a Saturday afternoon with a warmup and physical introduction to Contact Improvisation (CI), the group then launched into open dancing. Following this was a sharing and a discussion of the practice, led by the community group established 25 years ago, Jamstas, in the spirit of “you come, we’ll show you what we do” — referencing CI founder Steve Paxton and others in New York in 1972.

Free Ball by House of Dévine

11 December 2021

Sylvia Staehli Theatre

— 1 event

Free Ball was brought to Dancehouse by Melbourne’s iconic Voguing house, House of Dévine. The prize was equality and equal pay taking the traditional prize culture of ballroom and flipping it on its head. Fifteen voguers competed, but all got equal pay. Across three categories, these QTPOC (Queer and Trans People of Colour) dipped, tag-teamed and embodied ideas of freedom rooted in their lived experience. Featuring guests from Houses of Alexander, Silky and more, this was the Queer event of the year.

Free Ball was supported by Creative Victoria.

Cross Styles: Stage Volume 1 by Burn City Waack and Jam on Toast

12 December 2021

Upstairs Studio & Sylvia Staehli Theatre

— 1 event

Cross Styles: Stage Volume 1 brought together the expertise and experiences of five street dance artists from different cultures and backgrounds within the street dance community. This work-in-progress-showing explored how to transform street dance into an immersive theatre experience, focussing on storytelling and unfurling in real time. Two of Melbourne’s most-loved street dance groups, Burn City Waack and Jam on Toast, evolved their annual Cross Styles event to transform a cross-form street dance battle into a staged work.



Image credit: Free Ball by House of Dévine. Photo by Andrew Liu for Priade Productions.

Dancehouse Sundays

Dancehouse Sundays are the monthly program of Sunday events self-curated and produced by the Dancehousing communities and Now Pieces.

Around the last Sunday of each month, Dancehouse welcomes two dynamic and exciting events run and hosted by local dance curators and communities. In the afternoon, a Dancehousing group runs a special event: all style battles, showcases, balls, and sharings. And in the early evening, improvisational performance event Now Pieces is performed and curated by local dance luminaries.

380 Tickets

17 Events

10 Cancelled Events

28 March 2021

Now Pieces curated by Amaara Raheem

25 April 2021

Sister Sessions Volume 7
Now Pieces curated by About Now

27 June 2021

Now Pieces curated by Siobhan McKenna and
Lilian Steiner

6 November

Move with Me by Jam on Toast

7 November

In Conversation with Axelle 'Ebony' Munzenero by
Burn City Waack

13 November

ReConvergence with Peter Trotman and Catherine
Magill

TRANSFERRED:

Now Pieces curated by Amaara Raheem
Burn City Waack 8 Anniversary Showcase
Toast or be Toasted by Jam on Toast
Now Pieces curated by Tony Yap
Now Pieces curated by Paea Leach

\$14.01 Average Ticket Price

\$5,505 / \$5,101.45
Box Office Gross / Net

364 82% | 25 6%
Paid / Comps

Dancehouse Sundays

Now Pieces curated by Amaara Raheem

28 March 2021

Sylvia Staehli Theatre, Dancehouse

— 1 event

Featuring: Manisha Anjali, Emily Bowman and Amaara Raheem (trio), Deanne Butterworth (solo), Janette Hoe and Ria Soemardjo (duet), Alexander Powers (solo), Rachael Wisby (solo), Antony Hamilton (solo)

Creative Correspondent: Jessie Brooks-Dowsett

Now Pieces curated by About Now

25 April 2021

Upstairs Studio, Dancehouse

— 1 event

April's edition was coordinated by About Now, an improvisation group shaped by the investigation of Authentic Movement in shared space and time. About Now consists of Peter Fraser, Olivia Millard, Jason Marchant and Shaun McLeod. About Now were joined by two improvisation partnerships between artists who have never worked together before. Jonathan Sinatra performed with Naree Vachananda and Ashlee Barton performed with Phoebe Robinson. For this event About Now also invited another, multidisciplinary visual artist and performer Katie Lee. The evening was a culmination of a period of shared practice combining Katie's conceptually driven installation and live-art with About Now's responsive movement-based action as they consider that which is familiar and unfamiliar in an ever-evolving situation.

Featuring: Peter Fraser, Olivia Millard, Jason Marchant, Shaun McLeod, Jonathan Sinatra, Naree Vachananda, Ashlee Barton, Phoebe Robinson

Creative Correspondent: Katie Lee

Sister Sessions Volume 7

25 April 2021

Upstairs Studio, Dancehouse

— 1 event

Sister Sessions returned for their 7th Volume and first for 2021. They presented a 1v1 All Styles, all-female dance battle brought to you with love by an all female crew – from the judges, through to the emcee, DJ and competitors. Sister Sessions Vol. 7 consisted of a round robin style prelim, across 3 circles to allow all female battlers to get multiple chances to test and express themselves. Top scoring dancers were then placed into a

7-to smoke to determine the champion of Volume 7 to the beats of DJ Naru.

Now Pieces curated by Siobhan McKenna and Lilian Steiner

27 June 2021

Upstairs Studio, Dancehouse

— 1 event

Now Pieces (June) was curated by Siobhan McKenna and Lilian Steiner and looked at how the framing of 'rehearsal' vs 'performance' can inform how improvisation is approached, developed, experienced and observed. Through the performers dancing in various combinations, the evening highlighted spontaneity as a way of revealing what already exists and manifesting what has been waiting to actualise.

Featuring: Hillary Goldsmith, Sarah Aiken, Shian Law, William McBride, Luigi Vescio, Shelley Lasica, Siobhan McKenna and Lilian Steiner

Creative Correspondent: Roslyn Helper

Move with Me by Jam on Toast

6–7 November 2021

— 2 events

This two day workshop series was aimed at facilitating a range of movement based classes to equip and challenge anyone from various backgrounds, to move, to shake and to get creative. Most importantly, it gave us an excuse to see people, come together and just have fun. Jam on Toast, Dancehousing residents, welcomed participants with an open heart and open mind to reconnect with one another in a shared space. Each class was a sharing of practices suitable for all adults with some movement experience.

Workshop artists included: Jonathan Sinatra, Maggz, Naddie, Jenn Ma, Damian Meredith

ReConvergence with Peter Trotman and Catherine Magill

13 November

— 1 event

Catherine Magill and Peter Trotman have been presenting Improvised performance for many years in solo, duet and small group. ReConvergence was a day of Improvisation peer practice. This day was an opportunity to reconnect with community, be inspired and nourished, share creative space, see and be seen and enjoy lots of room to move.

ONLINE

Dance (Lens)

•Online

33 Films

8 Shows

3 Curators

\$2,730 / \$2,466.60
Box Office Gross / Net

189 Tickets

155 (30%) | 34 (7%)
Paid / Comps

3 Events

\$15.91 Average Ticket Price

DANCE
(
LENS)

SOURSWEET (2021), RDYSTDY & Victoria Chiu

29 July—29 August 2021 / On Demand
19—21 December 2021 / Sylvia Staehli Theatre, Dancehouse

The inaugural Dance (Lens) Festival, ran from 29 July—29 August 2021, showcasing over 33 outstanding international and national screendance works curated by André Shannon, Melissa Ramos and Siobhan Murphy.

Dance (Lens) was imagined as a hybrid festival; available On Demand worldwide from home, as well as hosting in-person screenings at Dancehouse over one weekend during the festival to celebrate with the artists and filmmakers.

In 2021 Dance (Lens) only achieved its digital delivery ambitions as the Festivals' live screenings were affected by lockdowns. The 33 screendance works, along with free talks, podcasts and film essays by the curators, reached a combined audience of 3,579 (plays) on Dancehouse's Vimeo channel.

Dance (Lens) comprised two streams: the Official Selection program of new works from Australian and New Zealand artists, and the three curated programs from each curator of historical and new, local and international works.

Dancehouse has ambitions to continue Dance (Lens) and to re-establish the only recurrent screendance program in Australia.



Void (2020), Claire Marshall.



The inaugural Dance (Lens) festival in 2021 invited submissions from Australian and New Zealand artists for inclusion in the Festival program. From the 53 submissions of screendance work, the Dance (Lens) curators chose 18 works for Official Selection including:

- *Mimeisthai* (2021), Phoebe Robinson [World Premiere]
- *(like a) Less Dense Brick* (2019), Piaera Lauritz [Australian Premiere]
- *2 of 2* (2021), Kirsty Lee
- *you and i are stood* (2019), Mischa Baka [World Premiere]
- *Play As You Go* (2020), Alec Katsourakis
- *Fathom* (2021), Dave Meagher
- *SOURSWEET* (2021), Hana Miller [World Premiere]
- *Your Time* (2017), Phebe Schmidt
- *Void* (2020), Claire Marshall
- *Countervail* (2017), Lux Eterna & Kathryn Puie [Australian Premiere]
- *Yinarr* (2020), Amelia Jean O'Leary
- *Stuttgart Corner*, Thalia Livingstone [Australian Premiere]
- *Strategic Choreographies* (2021), Leo Tsao
- *Walk With Me (The Series)* (2021), Threading Frames [Australian Premiere]
- *Artifacts from grey skies* (2020), Cobie Orger & Lost Few
- *The Invisibles* (2021), WeiZen Ho
- *A Line Dance* (2020), Alison Currie
- *Caca-Capitalismo* (2020), Jonathan Homsey & Monica Guitti

Dance (Lens)

•Online

"Dance (Lens) is a most exciting festival of screen dance organised by Dancehouse in Melbourne. Thirty-three short works are included, both Australian and international, each running a maximum of approximately 40 minutes. It is an impressive overview of world dance at the moment. There are some gripping, fascinating works, while others are really strange and quite bizarre."

— [Dance Informa](#) >>

Curators

The three curators of Dance (Lens) were selected by Dancehouse from a national call-out. Each curator collectively appraised and selected Australian and New Zealand works for Official Selection, as well as curating short programs of local, national and international works around a theme. Each curator also created a Dance (Lens) FOCUS public program to accompany their curated films.



Alice with black mattress, Riddells Creek, May 2019, Siobhan Murphy (2021).

LIVE: Dance (Lens) — Movie Marathon

19–21 December

Sylvia Staehli Theatre, Dancehouse

— 8 sessions

Over one weekend, Dancehouse screened the full Dance (Lens) Festival program writ large and loud in the Sylvia Staehli Theatre.

***Being Seen: Screendance Portraits* curated by Siobhan Murphy**

Curated by Siobhan Murphy, *Being Seen: Screendance Portraits* gathered together a range of screendance works from the past three decades that engage with portraiture. Groups become a situation for negotiating how selves emerge through their relationship to others. Solo dancers find themselves immersed in environments, water, metal and wood, that craft their movements and self-representations. In a black box studio, a succession of diverse dancers perform spare gestural solos. In a white void, a dancer duets with a mattress. At the heart of these works is an acknowledgement of the ambiguous authorship at work in dance portraiture, and an abiding interest in how people are rendered in movement.

Being Seen: Screendance Portraits included:

- *52 Portraits* (2016), Jonathan Burrows, Matteo Fargion and Hugo Glendinning [International]
- *Mothers and Daughters* (1994), Victoria Marks and Margaret Williams [International]
- *Veterans* (2008), Victoria Marks and Margaret Williams [International]
- *Alice with black mattress, Riddells Creek, May 2019* (2021), Siobhan Murphy [Australian]
- *Kenta Kojiri* (2018), Sue Healey [Australian]
- *Ema Yuasa* (2018), Sue Healey [Australian]
- *Nobuyoshi Asai* (2018), Sue Healey [Australian]

(FOCUS) *Being Seen: Screendance Portraits* included three warm, candid and wide-ranging interviews with the creative teams behind the screendance works in this stream. Curator Siobhan Murphy spoke with choreographer Jonathan Burrows and filmmaker Hugo Glendinning about the motivations, aesthetics and social situatedness of *52 Portraits*. Choreographer and filmmaker Sue Healey discussed her passion for showing the artistry of dancers and how portraits allow dancers to engage with how they're seen. Choreographer Victoria Marks and filmmaker Margaret Williams reflected on more than two decades of collaborations in group situations involving eating, talking, filming and moving together.

Dance (Lens)

•Online

The House These Films Built by André Shannon

Film is the closest medium to the diary, scribbled with the grammar of household documentation. Curated by André Shannon, this selection took viewers through a rebel Soviet kitchen, a dining room of knee padded clowns, into a possessed sleepover, and through a Grindr date for flowers. In the pursuit of autonomy comes obedience, disobedience and a romance of the body. Filmmaking is lowkey pedagogy.

The House These Films Built included:

- *Subjects* (2018), FlucT [International]
- *Scum Ballet is Lost* (2017), Scum Ballet [Australian]
- *Real Real #4, Flora 4 Flora* (2019), Enoch Milangi, Amrita Hepi & Future Method Studio [Australian]
- *I Want to Make a Film about Women* (2019), Dr. Karen Pearlman [Australian]

(FOCUS) The Public Program Me + Time included conversations with Dr. Karen Pearlman (video essay), Justin Shoulder (artwork walk-through) and Bhenji Ra (live interview) on their thinking, priorities and intentions when creating screendance works. This section's (focus) was pedagogy and skill sharing for practitioners and enthusiasts outside of the Academy. At the centre of these talks was the return to materials, grating against forms, redefining filmmaking as something closer to expression, editing as choreography and the unconventional methods through which dance can inform the cinematic process.



Subjects (2018), FlucT

Formscapes by Melissa Ramos

Formscapes curated by Melissa Ramos focused on screendance works that explore themes of past, present and future embodied perspectives, deconstructing fabricated patterns and the auto-poetic narratives of joint ownership between the viewer and the screen. This series of works unravelled narratives that trace the many layers of how we interact, deconstruct, connect and record our geography.

Formscapes included:

- *Mass* (2019), Fu Le [International]
- *Cycle RE* (2016), Ana Marija Marinov [International]
- *pretty UGLY* (2021), Red-Cor (Corina Andrian) [International]
- *Outside In* (2011), Tove Skeidsvoll and Petrus Sjøvik [International]

(FOCUS) Formscapes Interviewed and presented by curator Melissa Ramos, the Formscapes curatorial video essay examined the screendance processes of Corina Andrian aka Red-Cor (Romania), Fu Le (France), Ana Marija Marinov (Croatia) and Tove Skeidsvoll (Sweden) and reflected upon past, present and future embodied perspectives, deconstructing fabricated patterns and the auto-poetic narratives of joint ownership between the viewer and the screen. Reflecting on notions of time and their impetus to making art.



Mass (2019), Fu Le

Online Resources & Public Programs

•Online

Follow Me

Follow Me offered adults of all ages a new access point to the choreographic process. Part dance class, part movement essay the series brought Isabelle Beauverd, Victoria Chiu and Janice Florence of Weave Movement Theatre to screens for a 30–45 minute dance class. Each shared and taught excerpts of their choreography and concepts from their repertory that anyone could learn from their home, within a small space. Deliberately intergenerational, Follow Me offered different pedagogies and reveals a multitude of tools and processes.

Teachers: Isabelle Beauverd, Victoria Chiu and Janice Florence

ACCESS: All works are open captioned. Janice Florence's class is suitable for wheelchair users.



Tioriori (Loud)

Jamaica Moana and Sela Vai in conversation with Karlee Misipeka

Karlee Misipeka's zoomed in to chat with Jamaica Moana and Sela Vai about loudness in Pacific femme communities.



➤KEYNOTES

Keynote programs are high profile and heavily resourced programs involving multiple partners and stakeholders. Dancehouse proudly hosts two significant biennial programs (KCA and Dance Massive) which must evolve to a changed landscape over 2022 and 2023 but which are an essential part of the dance sector in Australia.

Co-Design: A Festival for Dance in Melbourne

From the ashes of Dance Massive, Arts House and Dancehouse have been undertaking a re-imagining of what a festival could be for dance in Melbourne.

The artform festival celebrates and fosters the works of independent dance artists and communities.

In 2020, Arts House and Dancehouse engaged four independent dance artists and leaders — Mariaa Randall, Luke George, Priya Srinivasan and Tam Nguyen — to begin a co-design for a new festival for dance in Melbourne. The artists engaged with 373 people between September and December 2020 using a careful intersectional methodology to unearth a broad range of complex, overlapping challenges and opportunities for our dance community – and the arts sector at large.

The reports and reflections from Luke, Priya and Mariaa are available on the Dancehouse and Arts House website.

This first stage of the Co-Design highlighted deep reflections and many opportunities to change and re-establish a festival. They presented timely, important questions about transparency, shared responsibility and a broader policy for dance sector development involving artists from conception. From the artists reports there was evidence of strong desire for a dance festival in Melbourne from artists, companies, producers and presenters.

But, unsurprisingly, the reflections did not contain a panacea: there is not a magic formula for a dance festival in Melbourne that leverages existing resources, creates a healthy cycle of production for new work, achieves audience development for the artform, acts as a market development site, stimulates and inspires a community and, develops the artform. From 2009–19, Dance Massive did those things, and it was not repeatable or sustainable within current funding or presenter resources.

Arts House and Dancehouse invited organisations to investigate business models for a festival in a secondary stage of the Co-Design. We approached local Melbourne organisations and key industry partners with both resources and interest in contributing to a dance festival to continue the Co-Design work.

Organisations were invited to run a workshop with their dance community (paying artists) to imagine business models for the festival that would work in their context and with their existing resources. Organisations with a national remit were encouraged to engage artists nationally.

The organisations who signed-up for this stage included: Chunky Move, Abbotsford Convent, Multicultural Arts Victoria, BalletLab/ Temperance Hall, Lucy Guerin Inc, The SUBSTATION, Arts Centre Melbourne, BlakDance, City of Darebin/ Northcote Town Hall, Bunjil Place, Arts House and Dancehouse.

Dancehouse undertook 3 business modelling workshops with independent artists:

19 July / Amrita Hepi, Siobhan McKenna, Trevor Santos, Kyall Shanks

21 July / Andy On, Raghav Handa, Lilian Steiner

28 July / Stephanie Lake, James Batchelor, Jo White, Sandra Parker, Shelley Lasica

Following these workshops and the extended 2021 lockdown in Melbourne, organisations along with paid representative independent artists were invited to bring and share their findings at Roundtable.

The Roundtable brought-together over 40 participants on 3 December 2021 at Library on the Dock including organisations, independent artists and the co-design consultants. Dancehouse waged Amrita Hepi to participate in the Roundtable. The 4-hour Roundtable was facilitated by Elizabeth Walsh and Deborah Jeffries to begin to find common ground in the re-establishment of a festival and some directions for shared governance/ leadership.

The Roundtable established common ground and a strong desire to initiate another festival for dance in Melbourne. Participants were invited to participate in Working Groups in early 2022 to refine tasks and language initiated by the roundtable. One working group would refine the Principles of the festival, the other group would begin an advocacy campaign.

A dance festival in March 2023 is imminent.

KCA 2022

The fifth Keir Choreographic Award (KCA) is scheduled for 23 June–3 July 2022 in Melbourne, Sydney and online.

An innovative commissioning partnership between Dancehouse, The Keir Foundation and the Australia Council for the Arts, with presenting partner Carriageworks, the KCA is a prestigious biennial program showcasing new, choreographic short works by eight Australian artists.

In 2022, the KCA will unfold with all eight works presented across two weeks at both Dancehouse, Melbourne, and Carriageworks, Sydney. The full KCA program will also be recorded in-season and made available digitally On Demand Australia-wide on Sunday 3 July in line with the presentation of the KCA prizes: a \$50,000 cash prize awarded by the KCA Jury, and a \$10,000 audience choice award.

The KCA is a premiere event for the Australian dance scene. It is an extraordinary fully paid opportunity for eight independent Australian artists to share works with audiences and an esteemed jury of dance luminaries.

KCA in 2022

Historically, the KCA has been held in March–April in Melbourne and Sydney and is confirmed and developed over an 18 month period. In the winter of 2021, during extended COVID lockdowns in Sydney and Melbourne, and closed international borders, the KCA partners were uncertain if a KCA was possible in 2022. Schedules, and the re-housing of postponed projects, were starting to clutter the calendars of Dancehouse and Carriageworks.

In October 2021, with signs that community and Government responses to the pandemic were changing and borders would open, the KCA partners decided to rapidly pursue a KCA presentation in June–July 2022 in Melbourne and Sydney with a shortened lead time.

An additional evolution of the KCA in 2022 will be that all eight commissioned works will be presented in two cities: at Dancehouse, Melbourne and at Carriageworks, Sydney. In previous KCA editions, only 4 works were invited to the 'Finals' season in Sydney.

How the KCA works

Australian artists with a professional practice propose a choreographic idea for an original live performance work. Artists at any stage of their choreographic career are invited to propose ideas.

Eight artists' ideas are commissioned to develop and present live work in both Melbourne and Sydney in professionally supported conditions. Each work receives a

\$12,000 all-inclusive commission along with 100 hours of free rehearsal space in the city or region in which they reside.

Each KCA work must be between 16 and 20 minutes long and involve no more than five performers. Either the applicant or one of the main collaborators MUST be a choreographer.

The KCA presenters and partners contribute additional presentation fees, travel, accommodation and allowances, and production costs. The KCA is presented in two bills of 4 works each: one bill premieres in Sydney, the other in Melbourne, with both bills touring to the other city in the second week.

An international 5-person KCA Jury announced a \$50,000 Keir Choreographic Award, and the \$10,000 Audience Award at a party at Carriageworks on Sunday 3 July alongside a national online broadcast.

Announcement and Artist Call Out

The KCA partners announced the opening of applications for the 2022 KCA on 9 November 2021 and closing on 13 December 2021.

To enter, applicants make a video (maximum 5 minutes) outlining a new choreographic idea. The 2022 KCA received 64 entries of which:

- Entrants from all states and territories in 2022
- 73% from NSW and Vic — equal number of entrants each state
- 13% were previous participants of KCA
- 52% were mid-career, 21% were senior artists, 27% were emerging (as determined by Dancehouse)
- 5% were First Nations artists (3 entrants)
- 32% were from BIPOC background (as determined by Dancehouse)

In previous editions of the KCA, the international Jury was mostly confirmed and able to commission and appraise the entries. Dancehouse was only able to confirm 2 of 5 Jury members for the commissioning stage due to a shorter lead time, uncertainty of international travel, and the impact of the Omicron wave in December 2021–January 2022.

The KCA 2022 commissioning was a two-step process including shortlisting by Daniel Riley, and previous KCA winners, Angela Goh and Melanie Lane (December 2021–January 2022). A final commissioning meeting of Daniel Riley and Lemi Ponifasio (both confirmed Jury Members) with Angharad Wynne-Jones, Helen Herbertson, and Rosie Dennis will be convened in early 2022 to select the 8 commissioned KCA artists.



➤ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT

Artistic Development is dedicated to strategic initiatives and programs that support artists throughout their careers including activities such as: peer support and network learning, professional development, community self-coordination, training, exchange and collaboration.



Emerging Choreographers Program

Supporting independent choreographic enquiry

In 2021, Dancehouse's Emerging Choreographers Program (ECP) was a year-long capacity building and professional development initiative. It gave 20 young choreographers from diverse cultural and training backgrounds support to develop the skills required for ongoing self-sustaining artistic inquiry, including the concrete tools needed for creating and administering their work. It was our 2nd cohort of people with our 1st one from 2019–2020.

ECP encouraged a dynamic and critically reflective environment by nurturing both the practice and the thinking of the practice in resonance with contemporary society. It encouraged them to better articulate their distinctive interests. It focused on practice over product

2021 cohorts included: Alec Pernes, Anthony Poeung, Jimmy Nguyen, Michaela Ottone, Shelley O'Meara, Adrien Tucker, Alec Katsourakis, Emily Bowman, Shriraam Theiventhiran, Alex Dobson, Ebony Muller, Ngioka Bunda-Heath, Rukshika Elankumaran, Yuiko Masukawa, Devika Bilimoria, Kady Mansour, Piaera Lauritz and Zoe Bastin.

2021 Mentors, Online Talks, Workshop and Masterclass Facilitators were held by:

Antony Hamilton, Shelley Lasica, Sally Chance, Sonny Townsend, Justin Shoulder, Raghav Handa, Philipa Rothfield, Jason Cross, Victoria Raywood, Priya Srivinasan, Stephanie Lake, Dan Koop, Efren Pamilacan, Joel Bray and Ashley Dyer.

The program was coordinated by Insite Arts Emerging Producer Beth Cross with Dancehouse's Program Manager Ashley Dyer.

This program is funded by the Packer Family and Crown Resorts Foundations. The pilot program was proudly supported by Clifton Hill/North Fitzroy Community Bank Branch – Bendigo Bank and the Robert Salzer Foundation.



Image credit: Part of the ECP cohort 2021. Photo by Devika Bilimoria

Dancehousing

In 2021, after a cataclysmic year, Dancehouse welcomed deeper long-term partnerships with local, self-organising dance communities and industry collaborators.

Every Monday night, Dancehousing takes over all spaces and studios of Dancehouse. Dancehousing welcomes a number of self-organising local dance communities: street dancers, voguers, krumpers, waackers and lockers, hip hop dancers; contact improvisation practitioners and dance and physical theatre improvisers, to come to Dancehouse to practice, share and build community.

Foundationally, Dancehousing is a long-form residency, but it also connects each group to Dancehouse, a producing and presenting house. Dancehousing groups also host individual events curated and performed by their participating artists through Dancehouse Sundays and Finalé.

Community Groups:

Cecil Moving Body
Jamstas
Sisters Sessions
Burn City Waack
City Sessions
Jam on Toast
House of Dévine

Community Leaders in 2021 included: Peter Trotman and Bronwen Kamasz; Emily Bowman, Martin Hughes and Joey Lehrer; Marnie Newton and Andy Kuramoto; David Prakash and Oliver Le; and Kiki Dévine.



Image credit: Sister Sessions (Finale 2021). Photo by Andrew Liu for Pride Productions.

On Residence

Dancehouse has developed a unique pilot program of residencies connecting dance artists to regional and outer-metropolitan dance-friendly organisations, hubs and communities.

On Residence invests in the research and creative development of new works by dance artists whilst encouraging a collegiate network of co-producing and co-presenting organisations. Strategically encouraging mobility and circulation, Dancehouse invests in artists and projects away from North Carlton, but hosted by friends.

In 2021, Dancehouse is piloting a new residency program: On Residence, offering Australian independent dance artists time, space and cash to create and connect with Dancehouse's network of dance-loving organisations and their communities in outer-metropolitan and regional Victoria and NSW.

This paid opportunity is flexible and adaptable. It moves with artists, their project or work, and the host partners' specific context. On Residence supports any stage of a dance project or work's development from initial research through to creative development.

On Residence is a direct pathway to future presentation or realisation of projects with Dancehouse from 2022 — this might be on site at Dancehouse or offsite through affiliated partnerships or contexts.

With On Residence Dancehouse will support artists to develop works and projects at any stage, establish relationships and connections with Dancehouse, communities, practices, and partners. The program draws on Dancehouse's experience cultivating similar meaningful alliances internationally.

Locally and globally, our collective experience of COVID and climate emergency demand we connect and form stronger local networks and deeper relationships.

Image credit: Nithya Nagarajan with Wendy Yu On Residence

On Residence Hosts and Artists in 2021–22

- Bundanon | Illaroo, NSW: Nithya Nagarajan and Samara Hersch with Vishakanyas: Poison Maidens
- Burringa Cultural Centre | Upwey, Vic: Callum Mooney with COSMOS
- FLING Physical Theatre | Bega, NSW: Rebecca Jensen with The Effect
- Garambi Baan / Laughing Waters | Eltham, Vic: Deanne Butterworth with Open Effort — Laughing Waters
- Garambi Baan / Laughing Waters | Eltham, Vic: Harrison Hall, Yuiko Masukawa, Sam McGilp, Makoto Uemura and Kazuhiko Hiwa with Running Machine
- Orbest Studio for Dance Research | Orbest, Vic: Alice Dixon and William McBride with Alice and Will
- Punctum | Castlemaine, Vic: Amaara Raheem with The Missing Perfume

All On Residence host organisations have committed significant in-kind resources to the program and have agreed to partner with Dancehouse with On Residence until (at least) 2023.

Through On Residence, Dancehouse has also assisted some partners to host additional residencies for independent artists including:

- Orbest Studio for Dance Research: Tony Osborne with In the Room (at last)
- Orbest Studio for Dance Research: Lizzie Thomson with Extant / Extent
- Garambi Baan / Laughing Waters: Lilian Steiner

On Residence has been supported by the PlayKing Foundation in 2021–22. Dancehouse is seeking further partners for the 2022 financial year.



In Residence

In Residence invites artists and projects from Dancehouse's sister organisations — nationally and interstate — to be hosted by Dancehouse in North Carlton.

Dancehouse believes that nothing can be more inspiring and enriching for an artist than mobility and connectivity to wider contexts/networks/territories and audiences. We seek to develop strategic, sustainable and meaningful partnerships with like-minded organisations, in Australia and overseas. The partnerships are guided by a shared interest in exchange, reciprocity and dialogue. These relationships are vital in order to maintain viability of dance artists and companies, creative vibrancy of the sector, and ultimately to prevent the loss of talent.

In Residence is Dancehouse's in-bound program of national and international artist-exchange and reciprocal residencies. These opportunities stem from long term organisation-to-organisation conversations with similar 'sister' organisations globally. Historically, In Residence has involved international partners sending artists to Dancehouse to develop new work, exchange practice, and experience and meet Australia rich dance communities.



Image credit: 'Care Dance' (2021), Ebony Muller. Photo by Devika Bilimoria.

In 2021:

With international border closures in 2021, Dancehouse's In Residence partnerships have been kept closer to home.

Dance Nucleus Singapore's [CP]3 — Rhiannon Newton

In 2021, Dancehouse supported Rhiannon Newton as the Australian participants in [CP]3.

[CP]3 is an intensive distance learning (digital delivery) program for the development of critical praxes in contemporary choreography and performance making. The main aim of the 4-month programme is to help emerging artists from across Asia and Australia articulate and develop their own artistic practices. Each module is led by 8 established artists across the region (Padmini Chettur, Pichet Klunchun, Arco Renz, Melati Suryodarmo, Xiao Ke x Zi Han, Choy Ka Fai, Eisa Jocson, Luke George) who takes on the role of guest mentor. The mentors host modules from the different Asian and international milieux that they are based in, bringing with them a spectrum of perspectives and experience.

Transferred to 2022:

The Mill, Adelaide — Thomas Fonua with FAFA

In a partnership with The Mill in Adelaide, Thomas Fonua will travel to Melbourne to develop his new work FAFA at Dancehouse.

FAFA is a new physical-theatre work which examines gender, identity and Patriarchy from a Pacific lens. Drawing from the origin stories of the Samoan Fa'afafine and Tongan Fakaleiti, 'FAFA' is commentary from this generational perspective of the labour division which validated the act of pre-colonial gender fluidity in accordance with a patriarchal society. It also examines the differences in the rite of passage of a boy becoming a man from the past traditional landscape to a present western/urban environment.

Self-Made

Self-Made is a program of events and activities conceived and convened by local dance artists, curators and thinkers and hosted by Dancehouse. Self-Made invites dance artists to leverage Dancehouse resources and to participate and discover, share and evolve their own practices, solutions, networks and ideas.

Community Skills for Climate Action

— May–September 2021

Dancehouse was successful in securing two places for dance artists in the inaugural Community Skills for Climate Action program supported through City of Yarra, City of Darebin and City of Moreland.

Dancehouse did a call out for interested artists and selected and invited Caitlin Dear and Rebecca Jensen to participate in the program.

The program was an opportunity to build strong relationships with people outside of the arts who are committed to taking climate action; hear from others who are active in climate action; and explore what collective local action and advocacy can look like in our cities. It has been an opportunity to learn skills in campaigning, networking and having the most impact. Inspired by the program the artists have programmed a series of labs and programs in 2022 at Dancehouse for the local community to connect with creativity and climate action locally.

Following participation in the program, Rebecca and Caitlin will work with Dancehouse on a public program to connect artists and activists in climate action in 2022.

On The Table

— Year-round

On the Table is a weekly lab for artistic exchange and collaboration coordinated by Caitlin Dear and Ebony Muller. Each week a different artist or collective are invited to put something 'on the table' for everyone to examine together. The program is transdisciplinary and features not only artists working with different styles of dance, approaches to choreography, methods of bodily practice and relationships to movement but also experts working outside conventional dance disciplines: gaming, science, therapy and visual art.

Sessions range from workshops and in-progress performance showings to open artistic explorations. Artists might share choreographic material, a practice, an idea, a framework, a question, a score, a reading or any manner of provocation. Everyone is invited to take part in the tasks at hand. Participation can be as little or as much as desired and all are welcome to attend.

Care Dance screening and Q&A

— 21 November 2021

CARE DANCE (2021) was a solo improvised screendance work that considered an experimental relationship between a performer and care. It was shot in one take with a single camera. This work was a direct retaliation to widespread ideas in dance and art-making surrounding violence as power and currency that is indicative of artistic rigour in art-making environments. In CARE DANCE, the self is the primary source of all activities, as the performer follows their present changing state(s) to initiate movement, sound, touch and their relationship to the others in and of the space — embodying caring ideas such as listening, attentiveness, responsiveness and reflexivity in the present moment of improvising. Caring is the attitude through which they approach, interact, attend, respond, create space and engage. In CARE DANCE, the performer wears clothes in three alternating colours: red, yellow and green. These 'traffic light' colours denote different modes of attention and relationality as they move throughout the stages of the work.

Direction, choreography and performance: Ebony Muller

Videographer: Cohen Medson

Production assistant: Olivia Fisher

SOURSWEET Australian Premiere screening

— 19 November 2021

A collaboration between artists RDYSTDY and choreographer Victoria Chiu, this experimental short film illuminates three generations of conflicting attitudes to assimilation as seen from a contemporary perspective. It is a mindscape of memories and stereotypes, exploring the tension between wanting to challenge culture, but not wanting to erase it; wanting to break from history but not wanting to forget it.

Director & Dramaturgy: Hana Miller

Choreographer & Dancer: Victoria Chiu

Cinematographer & Editing: Jacob Perkins

Producer: RDYSTDY & Victoria Chiu

Movement Cinematographer: Gregory Lorenzutti

Sound Design & Mix: Daniel Jenatsch

Set Design: Cate Consandine

Supported by Australia Council for the Arts, Creative Victoria, and Dancehouse.

Winter Workshops

With the potential to expand over time into a workshop festival that rivals Camping in Paris and ImPulTanz in Vienna, in 2021 Dancehouse clustered together a series of dance workshops, talks, masterclasses to create three weekends of workshops for artists.

Weekend 1 | MASTERCLASSES

26–27 June

Stephanie Lake (Full-day) — 26 June
Shelley Lasica (Full-day) — 27 June

Weekend 2 | NEXT STAGES

3–4 July

How to Manage Your First Season with Beth Cross and Dan Koop — 3 July
So You Want to Start a Dance Company with Insite Arts — 3 July
Budgets for Beginners with Josh Wright — 4 July
Grants and Writing About Your Practice with Ashley Dyer — 4 July

Weekend 3 | FREESTYLE & IMPROVISATION

10–11 July

Breakdancing Basic with DJ Naru — 10 July
Contact Improvisation with Martin Hughes — 10 July
Locking and Freestyle with Kerrtu “Keke” Luik — 10 July
Waacking/ Bollywaack Choreography with Madfox and Sahmita — 10 July
Street and Contemporary with Jenn & Nak — 11 July
Dancing and Talking with Peter Trotman — 11 July
Vogue Femme and Chanting with Aniyah & Carlos Devine — 11 July
Street Freestyle and Contemporary Improvisation Collisions with Jonathan Homsey — 11 July



In Development

Dancehouse's artform development opportunities are hotly contested and there's often many more valuable projects or artists than we can support.

In Development is Dancehouse's way to support artists and projects with free space (and sometimes cash) at Dancehouse.

Many In Development projects have been directly programmed by Dancehouse in 2022–23 including *We Are Here* by Jenn Ma, *Rinse* by Amrita Hepi and *The Eleventh Hour* by Sarah Aiken and Rebecca Jensen.

In Development in 2021 at Dancehouse included:

- *Arrang(Eh!)tram* by Nithya Nagarajan and Samara Hersch
- *Colossus* by Stephanie Lake
- *We Are Here* by Jenn Ma & Collaborators + showing

Incomplete — partially COVID affected:

- *After Party* by Yuiko Masukawa — Partially COVID-Affected
- *Conquest of the Garden* by Nebahat Erpoplat — Partially COVID-Affected
- *The Eleventh Hour* by Sarah Aiken and Rebecca Jensen — Partially COVID-Affected

Transferred due to COVID:

- *Loigis* by Rhys Ryan
- *Maloya Moshpit* by Muriel Hillier Toulcano, Justin Marshall & Punctu
- *FAFA* by Thomas Fonua

Image credit: (LEFT) Winter Workshops (Vogue Femme and Chanting with Aniyah and Carlos Devine. Photo by Alec Pernes. (RIGHT) *We Are Here* Rehearsals (2021), Jennifer Ma & Collaborators. Photo by Shutterstock.



Freedance

Coming out of lockdown in 2020–21, Dancehouse and Abbotsford Convent partnered to offer COVIDSafe dance classes for the community to come together over summer. Freedance was born — a summer dance class series aiming to connect families and households to dance together again.

Across the summer, over 20 dance educators taught free 60 minute classes across three streams: family, street and contemporary action lab. Dancehouse produced the event and appointed local artists to curate the streams and be the lead teachers for each stream.

Freedance has also offered outdoor classes at Federation Square in Street Dance and Queer Dance in Autumn.

FREEDANCE in partnership with Abbotsford Convent

13 January–6 March 2021

Abbotsford Convent

— 22 workshops

Contemporary Action Lab (Ages 18+)

Aimed for the professional mover yearning to travel in space, Monday night's Contemporary Action Lab was open to all contemporary dancers. Classes ranged from a movement to facilitating an 'express' choreographic exploration or action. Curated and led by Keir Choreographic Award 2018 winner Melanie Lane and Yellow Wheel Artistic Director Kyall Shanks, this sunset dance class helped us find the freedom in our body as we liberated ourselves from dancing in our homes.

Curators:	Melanie Lane and Kyall Shanks
18 January	Jo Lloyd
25 January	Israel Aloni **Cancelled due to extreme heat**
1 February	Rebecca Jensen
8 February	Paea Leach
15 February	Shelley Lasica **Cancelled in line with Covid-19 restrictions**
22 February	Sarah Aiken



Street Dance series (Ages 16+)

Suited for beginner to intermediate street dancers, Wednesday night's Street Dance series was led by choreographer Trevor Santos and Sister Sessions co-founder and waacker, Marnie Newton. They brought the flavour and energy to get everybody moving again—from foundations, to grooves and choreography.

Curators:	Trevor Santos Marnie Newton
13 January	Briana Cohen
20 January	Kiki Devine
27 January	Martijn Sedgfield
3 February	Arisa K Herbert
10 February	Christian Francisco (Nonoy)
17 February	Alec Pernes **Cancelled in line with Covid-19 restrictions**
24 February	Hëna Memishi
3 March	Alec Pernes [Rescheduled]

Family Freedance series (Ages 7+)

Family Freedance classes were specially designed for children aged 7+ and their accompanying adults to get bodies a-movin' and those endorphins flowing! The classes were for everyone and no dance experience was necessary. Incorporating movement, rhythm, creative dance and body awareness—we were led by Josh Lowe, founder of Drill Youth Dance Company and former Artistic Director of Yellow Wheel; and Shamita Sivabalan, one of Australia's leading Bollywood educators.

Curators:	Josh Lowe and Shamita Sivabalan
16 January	Ida Ghatge
23 January	Rachel Mackie
30 January	Ida Ghatge
6 February	Zoe & Aaron (Team Dream)
13 February	Beth Lane **Cancelled in line with Covid-19 restrictions**
2 February	Ngioka Bunda Heath
27 February	Shamita Sivabalan
6 March	Beth Lane [Rescheduled]

Image credit: Alec Pernes for FREEDANCE. Photo by Mathew Lynn.

Freedance

Federation Square

23 June–7 July 2021: Street Dance

5–19 May 2021: Queer Dance

— 6 workshops

Street Dance

June 23 Litefeet — Arisa Herbert

Litefeet is a new street dance founded in New York City in the 2000s. We learnt the Tone Wop and other foundations of this innovative footwork straight from the cyphers of Harlem. Led by Arisa Herbert, one of Melbourne's leading street dance teachers, we got to know the basics of this form and got lite.

Jun 30 House — Alec Pernes

House Dance is a style of dance that originated in the late 70's and early 80's from underground clubs in Chicago and New York. The style was influenced by several types of movement, including Tap, African and Latin dance. House Dance is about freedom, improvisation and feeling the music. We got to jack, slide and groove with Alec Pernes.

July 7 Jamaican Dancehall — Cat Pwiti & Chuby Dice

Dancehall is both the adjective describing the place and the name of the culture lived by Jamaica's underprivileged communities who find meaning, purpose, status and a means of survival through being part of the Dancehall fraternity, both past and present. We learnt from this ever evolving culture with Dancehall juggernaut Chuby Dice and founder of Jungle City, Cat Pwiti.

Queer Dance

May 5 Kiki Targe — Vogue

Voguing is a style that transcends dance, representing inclusivity, respect and community based in ballroom culture from the 1980s. We learnt how to spin, dip and duckwalk with the mother of Melbourne's original voguing house, Kiki from the House of Dévine.

May 12 Marnie Newton — Waacking

Waacking is a queer expression founded by Black and Latinx people in 1970s Los Angeles. Burn City Waack co-founder Marnie Newton showed us the ropes to get the poses, character and performance down to waack just like the pioneers on the iconic American television show Soul Train.

May 19 Queer Expression and Drag Culture — Valerie Hex

Drag is a way of life and quintessential in queer performance. We immersed ourselves in the finer points of how to walk, perform and embody your best drag self with Valerie Hex, the drag persona of James Welsby. It was about finding yourself and expressing it in a class that explored what it means to be Queer and perform it as a drag persona.

➤ SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

As a hub for independent dance artists, Dancehouse has the unique capacity to support multiple communities, voices and mechanisms to best serve our society and the artform. Sector engagement encompasses advocacy, self-determination models, cocuration, community leadership and sovereignty, some online resources – including COVIDSafety plans, hosting and participating in industry discussions, and the services Dancehouse can and should provide to the sector.

Industry Partners

First House — First Nations Dance

Dancehouse convened two consultation meetings in November–December 2021 to begin and develop a terms of reference for a self-determined forum of First People's dance artists to allocate resources, and direct Dancehouse work and focus.

Joel Bray, Merindah Donnelly, and Ngioka Bunda Heath were waged and participated in 2 forums with Dancehouse CEO/ Artistic Director to draft and discuss the framework to be implemented in 2022.

First House's strategic development has been an ongoing consultation with BlakDance.

Sangam — South Asia and Diaspora Dance

Dancehouse has been proudly working with Sangam co-curated by Priya Srinivasan, Hari Sivanesan and Uthra Vijay since 2019. The Sangam and Dancehouse relationship has grown and we are excited to now work together in an evolved, year-round way to further our shared ambitions to celebrate, build and expand the opportunities and contexts for South Asian and diaspora dance artists and their works at Dancehouse.

Sangam and Dancehouse are in partnership to commission, produce and present South Asian work throughout 2022 and beyond following the success of the Season 1 2021 commissions. Dancehouse also works with Sangam to offer 3–4 places for emerging artists in Dancehouse's annual Emerging Choreographers Program (ECP).

Housekeeping — Dancehousing's Council

Established in 2021, Housekeeping is the representational group of Dancehousing comprising 1–2 participants from each community.

Housekeeping serves cultural and administrative functions for Dancehousing. It is a way for groups to collaborate, contribute and discuss resources available for the program at Dancehouse. It gives each community a platform to offer suggestions to Dancehouse's broader mission.

Housekeeping offered two informal Dancehousing-wide sharings for all participants of Dancehousing to come together:

- Dancehousing 'Breaking Bread' Event — Monday 19 April
- Dancehousing 'Houseparty' event — Friday 10 December

With investment secured for 2022–23, Dancehouse engaged with three leaders of the Dancehousing community; Peter Trotman, Maggie Fox, Marnie Newton, to engage a Dancehousing Producer commencing in 2022: Carolyn Ooi.

Insite Arts—Emerging Choreographers Program [ECP]

In 2021 and in 2022, Insite Arts are financially supporting an Emerging Producer — Beth Cross — to work one day a week with Dancehouse to coordinate their Emerging Choreographers Program (ECP).

As a leading producer for Australian arts locally and internationally, Insite offers incredible access to producing knowledge, networks and skills for ECP participants.

For ECP, Insite Arts contributes mentoring, online discussions and workshops for the participants in the basics of producing, pitching and arts management.

Alter State, Arts Centre Melbourne — Artists with a diasability

Dancehouse has been in conversations with Arts Centre Melbourne about a program partnership for Alter State in 2022. Alter State is a new program collaboration between Arts Access Victoria and Arts Centre Melbourne and is led by Foundation artists Joshua Pether, Rodney Bell and Carly Finlay OAM.

The Alter State partners engaged with Dancehouse to begin planning and partnership to contribute to the festival in 2022.

Hyperlocal — Touring, Co-Commission and Co-Presentation

HYPERLOCAL is a collaborative program between an artist or collective and four presenting partners across Melbourne — Abbotsford Convent (Abbotsford), Dancehouse (Carlton North), Darebin Arts (Northcote) and The Substation (Newport) — coordinated and produced by Performing Lines.

Hyperlocal invites artists to respond to the opportunity to work "hyperlocally" with the presenting partners. The response could be a work which is new, re-imagined, physical, and/or virtual, developed in some spaces and presented in others — and everything beyond or in between.

The partners hosted a call-out for expressions of interest closing on 20 September 2021. The successful Hyperlocal artist, Samara Hersch will develop It's Going to Get Dark in 2022.

Hyperlocal is supported by the Besen Family Foundation, and Creative Victoria.

Independent Public Classes & Workshops

Public dance classes and workshops are run and taught by independent artists and teachers who hire Dancehouse to host their classes and are available to the general public. There is a huge variety of classes on offer that is always changing depending on who is currently in the 'House, and it's a great way to engage with dance, stay fit, meet people and learn new techniques. In 2021, many independent teachers were affected by the lockdowns, both losing space and then following strict capacities and COVID Marshal requirements. A total of 113 individual sessions were cancelled in 2021.

Weekly and Term-based classes in 2021:

Mind-Body Centering
Alice Cummins

Alchemy Dance Improvisation
Anne O'Keeffe

Body Weather
Gretel Taylor

Afro Latin Groove
Irina de Loche

Grow Through Dance
Irina de Loche

Contortion
Jacinta Rohan

Fine Lines for Mature Bodies
Katrina Rank

Odissi Indian Classical
Monica Singh

Improvisation
Nick Papas

Beginners Ballet (Adults)
Shay Reeves

Embodied Anatomy
Wendy Smith

Workshops in 2021:

Action Theatre Workshops
Danielle Cresp

Contact Jam Improvisation
Emily Bowman, Josef Lehrer

Clams Get Hunky (Drag Workshop)
Francis van Beek

Crois Massage
Giovanni de La Rocca

Actors Studio
Julia Grace

Tai Chi
Lily Sun

Captivate Action — Stage Fighting
Lyndall Grant

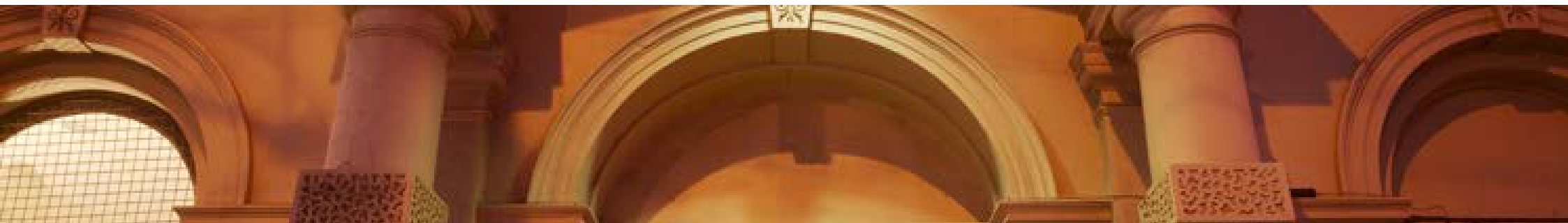
Clowning at 1.5m
The Joyful School



Action Theater — Danielle Cresp. Photo by Sarah Walker Photos.



›OPERATIONAL



Management and Staffing Structure

ONGOING STAFF	ROLE	DATES	EFT
Josh Wright	Artistic Director/CEO		Full-time 1.0 EFT
Ashley Dyer	Program Manager		Part-time 1.8 EFT
Olivia Hutchinson	Operations Manager		Full-time 1.0 EFT
Audrey Schmidt	Marketing and Communications Manager		Part-time 0.6 EFT
Georgia Rann	Production Manager		Part-time 0.6 EFT & 0.8 EFT
Jonathan Homsey	Partnerships Manager		Part-time 0.4 EFT
Jill Chrisp	Venue Manager	Jan-Jul	Part-time 0.4 EFT

NON-ONGOING STAFF	ROLE	DATES	EFT
Varsha Ramesh	Front of House Manager		
Carolyn Ooi	Usher		
Andy On	Freedance Producer		
James O'Donoghue	Venue Supervisor		
Philipa Rothfield	Artistic advisor		
Beth Raywood Cross	ECP Producer		

BOARD	ROLE	DATES	EFT
Shelley Lasica	Chair / Artistic Member		
Nick Hays	Deputy Chair		
John Paolacci	Treasurer		
Josef Lehrer	Treasurer / Artist Member		
Tiffany Lucas	Secretary		
Sandra Parker	Artist Member		
Jo White	Artist Member		
Jacob Boehme	Artist Member		
Veronica Bolzon	Ordinary Member		
Dean Hampel	Ordinary Member		



From left to right:

Joshua Wright, Ashley Dyer, Olivia Hutchinson, Audrey Schmidt, Georgia Rann, Jonathan Homsey, Jill Chrisp, Varsha Ramesh, Carolyn Ooi, Andy On, James O'Donoghue, Philipa Rothfield, Beth Raywood Cross

Management and Staffing Structure

CONTRACT STAFF	ROLE
Pia Lauritz, Luke Fryer, Angela Dexter, Rebekah Claridge, Jacqueline Aylward, Michaela Ottone, Alison Tong, Tessa Leong	Front of House
Alison Graham, Andy de On, Angela Butler, Ash Koek, Beth Weatherly, Emily Managan, Daniel Freeman, Gabriel Bethune, Geogrina Wolfe, Jacob Shears, Jacob Trethowan, James O'Donoghue,, Marty Shlansky, Olivia Borghesan, Rebecca Etchell, Samuel Barnes, Tom Dent	Technical & Production staff
Leora Hester, Paula Tucker	Bookkeepers



Image credit: Dancehouse Staff and contractors producing Houseparty (2020). Photo by Andrew J. Liu of Pride Productions.

Venue & Operations

Venue Upgrades

- Floor re-sanded and waxed in Foyer, Sylvia Staehli Theatre and Skylab
- AV system installed in Sylvia Staehli Theatre and Skylab
- Foyer improvements

Key Operational Updates

- Rolling COVIDSafety Policies and processes
- Rolling Dancehouse policy audit and implementation plan
- Box Office Reporting
- Dancehouse Memberships now renewed on the Dancehouse website

Space Hire

COVID continued to significantly impact Dancehouse's venue hire earned income stream. Regular classes and teaching weren't possible, and rolling lockdowns made hire risky and costly. Throughout 2021, Dancehouse used 2 sessional booking blocks for hiring: 9am-5pm, and 6pm-10pm and made the minimum booking 2 hours.

Image credit: Foyer during *Finalé* (2021). Photo by Andrew Liu for Pride Productions.



Development Report

Dancehouse faced both challenges and opportunities during 2021 to generate donations. The organisation focussed on leveraging donations for On Residence, with aims to create more residencies. This decade has shown how looking inward and connecting local audiences to local artists can create meaningful connections. The campaign generated over \$5,000 across 20 donors.

From July 2021, the role of Development Manager was changed to Partnerships Manager. This was to reflect the full spectrum of Audience and Sector Development occurring at Dancehouse. This expanded the role and helped Dancehouse receive new funds through foundations and trusts. This fuelled programs like Dancehousing to expand its support, create the Finalé performance season and employ new staff members in 2022.

Dancehouse acknowledges the complex funding and philanthropic landscape in the arts this decade and in turn, engages with donations and audience development in new ways that intersect community, industry and audiences more holistically. This includes bespoke events that celebrate the artists that make Dancehouse home and wider audiences to connect with them in an informal and relaxed environment. This in turn leads to wider benefits that can connect independent artists directly to new potential donors; it creates an independent dance sector that is less segmented and promotes grassroots community funds and donations. Dancehouse also auspiced projects to partner with the artists from the inception of their project which totaled to \$60,000 in funds.

Funds secured from philanthropic trusts and foundations for Dancehouse programs:

2021 Programs: \$135,000

2022 Programs: \$192,000

2023 Programs: \$70,000



Development Manager, Jonathan Homsey with Kiki Devine for Finalé (2021). Photo by Andrew Liu for Pride Productions.

Marketing Report

In 2020 Dancehouse noticed a huge drop in the effectiveness of online marketing due to screen fatigue reported during the COVID-19 pandemic in addition to the waning popularity of Facebook. With audiences disengaged on Facebook, our ability to build targeted and cost-effective promotions was heavily impacted. In 2021, we recovered much of the traffic we lost in 2020, seeing huge improvements in website visitors and social referrals.

Website:

With one year since the 2020 website updates, we are now seeing clearer website analytics.

In 2021 we saw:

27,337 unique visitors

In 2020 this number was 17,178 and in 2019 it was 25,931. Therefore, we saw an overall increase of 5.42% since 2019 and a 59.14% increase since 2020.

136,923 page views

In 2020 this number was 93,103 and in 2019 it was 120,896. Therefore, we saw an overall increase of 13.26% since 2019 and a 47.07% increase since 2020.

32.64% bounce rate

Our bounce rate improved dramatically, taking us into the desired range (25–40%). We saw a 40% improvement from 2020 (from 54.61%) and a 37% improvement since 2019 (from 51.78%). This shows us that our new website has made a huge difference in the amount of time people spend on our website.

Website referrals

Direct referrals continued to increase (80% in 2021) and although organic searches increased by 30% since 2020, they have seen an overall decrease of 28% since 2019. This means we need to improve our overall SEO — this will primarily involve artist names and generic “contemporary dance melbourne” type keywords.

Our top referrer remained Facebook (4,224 users), a 61% increase from 2020 and an -11.47% decrease since 2019. This shows that 2020 was an odd year for Facebook referrals and that we’ve made up much of what was lost.

Instagram saw a 362.37% increase in referrals with a 1,514.29% increase in Instagram story referrals.

Twitter saw a 135.90% increase in referrals since 2020.



In 2021 we saw a 25% decrease in Impressions, a 26% decrease in Engagement and a 52% decrease in url clicks on **Twitter**. Overall our Twitter presence has been steadily decreasing but comparing 2021 to 2019 we see a smaller gap (20% decrease in impressions, 12% decrease in engagement and we actually see a 6% increase in url clicks since 2019).

2,174 Followers ↑



With 3,627 followers by the close of 2021, we grew our **Instagram** audience by 626 followers in 2021. We consistently see a 20–30% increase in followers each year (20% in 2021 and 27% in 2020).

3,627 Followers ↑



Of 50,948 successful deliveries, we saw 17,253 total opens and 3,923 total clicks on **Mailchimp**. Although we had fewer deliveries and opens in 2021 than 2020, the total clicks still increased by 12%. This means our engagement is improving.

Our average open rate was 19.72% which is below the Arts and Artists average of 26.27%. However, our average click rate is 3.3% which is above the industry average of 2.95%. Overall we see above average engagement but below average opens.

50,948 Deliveries in 2021 ↓

Marketing Report



We had a total 13,7434 Impressions on **Facebook** in 2021, with 166 new likes since 2020 and 172 new follows.

Although we are seeing improvements in web referrals, we have continued to see a sharp decrease in annual audience growth on Facebook since 2019 (an overall reduction of 66% with 35% decrease from 2020-2021 and 48% decrease from 2019-2020).

We saw a 15% decrease in Impressions in 2021 and 30% decrease in reach. The biggest decrease we saw was in 2020 with a 74% decrease in Impressions and a 72% decrease in Reach on Facebook. So although we've seen the rate at which our engagement is decreasing slow, it continues to decrease.

These significant decreases are likely due to general screen fatigue as well as the platform's increasing unpopularity. These concerns were only exacerbated in 2021 when the tech giant briefly cut off access to some parts of the web through its platform in response to a proposed law that would force it to pay for linking to news stories. Further, Facebook Ad Centre tightened audience reach and targeting in 2020, and continues to roll back data sharing across platforms such as Mailchimp. As a result, investing in socials advertising became less of a viable option for reaching audiences.

4,549 Likes ↑

13,7434 Impressions ↓

Viral viability: Is theatre sustainable at 75% capacity?



VICTORIAN STATE

f SHARE t TWEET p SHARE e EMAIL c COMMENTS

Walk into Theatreworks in St Kilda, and you can see what COVID has done. The foyer has been turned into a café, and the old seating bank has been replaced by 12 self-contained viewing booths. The new 'TW Glasshouse' looks less like viral devastation and more like a superbly creative solution — a cross between corporate box and theatre-in-the-round that factors in safety and honours idea of the live performance.

"When we came back, we came back with a unique experience," says Theatreworks' GM, Di Toulson. "It wasn't just, here's a row of seats and every second one is empty; we reimaged the whole experience."

Indeed, reimagining the whole experience is something that the Australian performing arts sector has had to do since last March. Closures, capacity limits, deep cleaning procedures and the continuing on/off uncertainties of theatre in a pandemic have stretched resources and tested the resilience of an entire industry. Even now, a year on, the ground is shaky. Open today, closed tomorrow. In a room, stuck on Zoom. 50 percent, 75 percent, who knows?



Victorian State Ballet in 'The Little Mermaid'.



Although many will be mired in corona-anxiety and foretelling all manner of doom, the history of the arts shows us that theatre has always been precarious. Artists have always relied on patrons, private or public. Viewed from above, the present drama is simply another call to evolutionary action. Adapt or die.

Photo by En Pointe Productions.

Placing this in its current context, Toulson notes, "Theatre has always had viability issues, but COVID probably made a lot of people look again at their financial models. If you're relying entirely on box office, especially in the independent sector, you're almost certainly going to have issues. That was true even before COVID."



Alec Pernes for FREEDANCE (10 weeks of energetic dance classes in the open air at Abbotsford Convent, led by local artists from Dancehouse). Photo by Mathew Lynn.

Across town, the new CEO of Melbourne's Dancehouse, Josh Wright, ponders the impact of the virus. "Across the sector, it has called to account a lot of inefficient ways of doing things, or, if you like, the imbalances in the industry."

In an industry where creative and commercial impulses often clash, and where the vogue-ish politics of public funding can have a distorting effect, the viability question is notoriously touchy.

"There's no way I would put on a show without budgeting for a minimum 50 percent capacity," Wright states plainly. "So, if it can't work financially based on that, it's not something I could currently entertain."

For Dancehouse, which is ground zero for much of Melbourne's independent dance community, COVID has meant reduced fees for artists, a doubling of labour cost around cleaning and ushering, and a collapse in bar sales.

"Whatever the reality was for Dancehouse beforehand has already foundationally changed," Wright elaborates. "Luckily, I'm a producer, and I think about these things all the time, and I think about models and how we work. To be completely honest, as soon as we stopped producing shows, we knew we had to work with artists to set the minimum conditions in which we would be able to create and present work. And that was stuff like the size of audiences, the number of shows we could get in and whether or not performers had to wear masks."



Sydney Dance Company in 'Impermanence'. Photo by Pedro Greig.

Meanwhile, at Theatreworks, Toulson reveals that her organisation works on the assumption of "a 20 percent house." This underscores the tough reality of the performing arts, especially in the independent sector.

Yet, it is precisely this kind of risk taking that allows venues like Theatreworks and Dancehouse to present new and experimental work from artists who don't yet have star power or critical cachet.

On the other side of the box office split, performing arts companies are also adjusting to the realpolitik of the post-viral bottom line. In an ecosystem that includes everything from big state funded brands to oily rag indies, the rippling uncertainties of snap lockdowns, hotel quarantine breaches and audience jitters have forced root and branch reviews and driven many into the

Media Highlights

algorithmic arms of the internet.

"We learnt that performing to a theatre with no audience was very hard indeed," says Michelle Sierra, director of the Victorian State Ballet (VSB). Recalling 2020, she adds, "Considering the possibility of needing to move into digital seasons long-term was not going to be enough to sustain us."



Rukshikaa Elankumaran, *Amma: The Loss of our Motherland* (2021, Sangam at Dancehouse). Photo by Arun Muñoz.

As restrictions have eased and theatres opened, VSB has returned to in-person performance. "This year, we have performed already three weeks running to full houses at 75 percent capacity," Sierra explains. "We are so grateful to have good houses. However, the loss of income due to capped audiences is not something that can see our industry viable in the long-term."

While her company is relatively secure, Sierra acknowledges that for smaller organisations, ongoing COVID disruptions are more likely to be existential. "Although most of our productions are in venue partnership arrangements, in general, venues are not in a great position to financially accommodate the capped numbers to production companies across the board," she contends. "This does place a strain on independent companies, schools and groups who are themselves struggling to re-build their businesses without financial support from the government."

Even at the top end, capacity limits and other regulatory uncertainties continue to impact operational models. As Anne Dunn, executive director of Sydney Dance Company, observes, "The uncertainty around border closures and international travel restrictions is still causing disruption and making medium term planning difficult; and I think there are some elements of the business that have shifted permanently."

Looking forward, she suggests, "Like music and literature before us, the performing arts are now grappling to find a financially sustainable model in a digital delivery world. I think the sector needs to be very open to continued change, and not assume that things will go back to 'normal' in order to find a new model of sustainability and viability."

For all of the diverse opinions and differing realities of those in sector, there seems to be one clear universal. Zoom is not a room, and virtual doesn't cut it.

Back in St Kilda, Toulson sits in the newly revamped Theatreworks foyer and explains. "It's like people went, 'Oh, we get it now,' and have been prepared to come along, to pay a little more because they get why theatre, why the arts, are important."

At Dancehouse, Wright talks about "being respectful" of the live dance experience. "There's this beautiful thing that we expect from live performance, which is the socialising and the experiential aspects. Coming together and congregating in foyers beforehand, having a drink



Sydney Dance Company
Executive Director Anne Dunn.

afterward, meeting the artists, the critical dialogue about work. We can't do that in COVID, or we're severely limited."

While the bottom line is critical, the psycho-social and ceremonial aspects of performance are perhaps even more salient. For some of us, dancing like no one is watching is not the point, and for others, watching 2D dance from a bedroom somewhere is not quite what we want from the theatre.

As for the venues, empty seats and unsold bar stock are not simply a matter of taste.

By Paul Ransom of *Dance Informa*.

[Read More >>](#)

Media Highlights

26/04/2021

This intimate, earnest dance was inspired by a lockdown breakup

THE AGE

★★★★ Culture Dance [Performing arts](#)

This intimate, earnest dance was inspired by a lockdown breakup

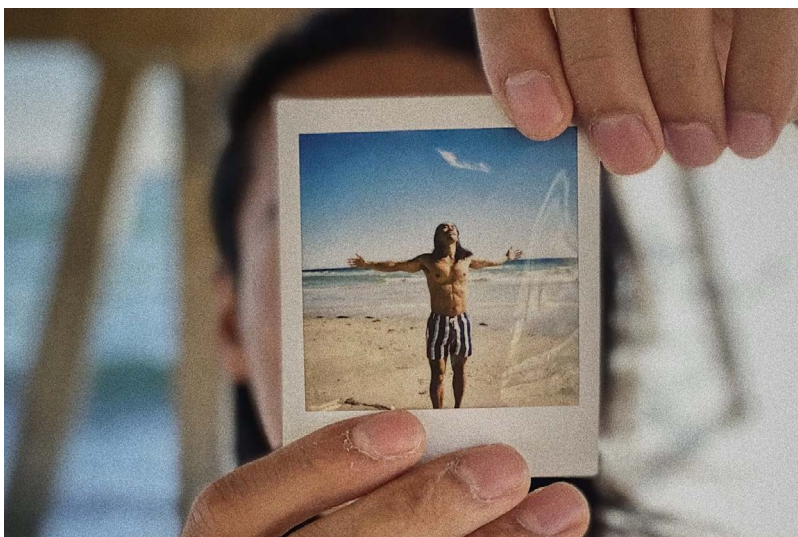
By **Andrew Fuhrmann**

April 25, 2021 — 1.38pm

DANCE

100 Haikus ★★★★★**Dancehouse, Carlton, April 22-24**

Trevor Santos appears to have relocated the complete contents of his bedroom to the Sylvia Staehli Theatre for this new and wonderfully earnest solo inspired by the breakup of a relationship during last year's lockdown.



Trevor Santos in the wonderfully earnest 100 Haikus. TREVOR SANTOS AND LIAM ROODHOUSE

100 Haikus is an intimate and engaging piece about learning to love yourself again. It's also about the way life's little disasters can, with time and patience, become the raw material for

new and uplifting works of art.

Yes, this sounds a little corny. Santos is a talented commercial street dancer, but this project could easily have been an embarrassing misadventure in mawkishness. Together with dramaturg Jonathan Homsey, however, he has made it work.

His solution is to embrace the fragmentary, the intentionally provisional and the incomplete. He gives us the bedroom sketches, muddled with false starts, corrections and interruptions, rather than a final polished version.

Santos does not perform in the space. He inhabits it.

In one scene, he glides across the room, arms undulating, shoulders dipping and rising. Then, as if falling from a cloud, he suddenly slumps against the end of his bed. And there he lies, staring and panting and remembering.

Santos does not perform in the space. He inhabits it. He munches on vitamins and dances for his mirror. The stage is lit with bedroom lamps, which he controls with his phone. And he cues his own music on a record player.

In another scene, we watch him working out an idea. Three times he stops, lifts the needle and restarts the song. We hear the scratch of the vinyl and we see the body hesitating, feeling its way into the shape of the phrase.

The show ends with a gesture of moving on: an auto-da-fe of love letters. The fire is a small one, but it's enough to warm the heart and cheer the soul.

[Read More >>](#)

Media Highlights



Jonathan Homsey's 'Star Spangled Banter': A delightfully discomforting space



Dancehouse/Melbourne Fringe.
14 October 2021.

If called upon to boil it down to a single word, it would be...post.

Post-dance, post-theatre, post-modern...post pretty well anything you could reasonably take at face value. However, this is not quite the calamity it seems. (I daresay it's post-calamitous.) Rather, Jonathan Homsey's contortionist self-referencing and absurd playfulness border on permanent subversion. The net result is that *Star Spangled Banter* remains elusive, evading easy labels and defying the norms of criticism (and associated taste making).

Perhaps Homsey's most rebellious act is to openly defy the received standards of dance – aesthetic, theoretic and historic. At points, his latest solo is (deliberately?) ugly. He often appears clumsy, even uninspired. The 'choreography' borders on non-existent, a drabness amplified by the sterility of the online video platform. Both the work and the artist are distant. It is as if we are watching someone whirl around their loungeroom and we soon we find ourselves asking: *why are we watching this?*

Although Homsey is not the first to play this card, he does so with great dexterity. In a way, he is a trickster, a nomad in a world of enforced stillness. He brings numerous identities to his work, at once insider and outsider. As a dancemaker, he is comfortable thumbing his nose at dance. In fact, there are moments in *Star Spangled Banter* when you wonder if he is goading us to dislike it. To log off. Ask for a refund.

The central absurdity of the work is revealed through the glaring juxtaposition of the US national anthem and the words of philosopher Dr Philipa Rothfield. Here, we smash nationalist kitsch against the frequently arcane body of 'dance theory'. I use this term advisedly, but the point is that the collision of the highly intellectualised with the stadium ritual of flag waving serves to highlight the catechistic qualities of both. Somewhere between the hollow orthodoxies, we find Homsey – not quite in the middle but hovering just beyond our grasp.

It is not possible to say whether *Star Spangled Banter* would have been a qualitatively different experience live, but as an on-demand stream, it leveraged the innate disposability of online video. Somehow, it is even more ephemeral than ephemeral. Mirage. Chimera.

In other words, it can't be boxed up. No theory or genre or identity narrative will pin it down. Even our attempts to 'understand' it will fall foul of its slippery shapeshifting skin.

Oops, blinked...over.

As such, this work exists in a delightfully discomforting space. Are we being conned? Is Homsey laughing out loud right now? Or, perhaps more subversively, did he flip this out with barely a care, as if to say, *in the end you'll accept anything if I call it dance*. Like all the constructions we salute in the name of those fluttering flags.

By Paul Ransom of [Dance Informa](#).

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PARTNERS

Dancehouse wishes to gratefully acknowledge the generous support of our partners for 2021

GOVERNMENT



PROJECT



PARTNERSHIPS, BUSINESS



PROGRAM



MEDIA



A silhouette of a person in a dynamic dance pose, standing on a light-colored floor against a teal background. The person is facing away from the camera, with their right leg extended forward and their left leg bent. Their arms are outstretched, with the right arm slightly higher than the left. The overall mood is artistic and graceful.

DANCEHOUSE

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Dancehouse is assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding advisory body, and is supported by the Victorian Government through Arts Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet and by the City of Yarra through the use of the Dancehouse facility.

Dancehouse stands on what always was and always will be Aboriginal land. We pay our respects to the traditional owners of this land, the Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin Nation, to their elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

Image credit: Zoe Bastin, *That Which Was Once Familiar* (2021). Photo by Darren Gill.