

FIELD NOTES



A Ribbon, Loose, Not Tied

by Martin Hughes

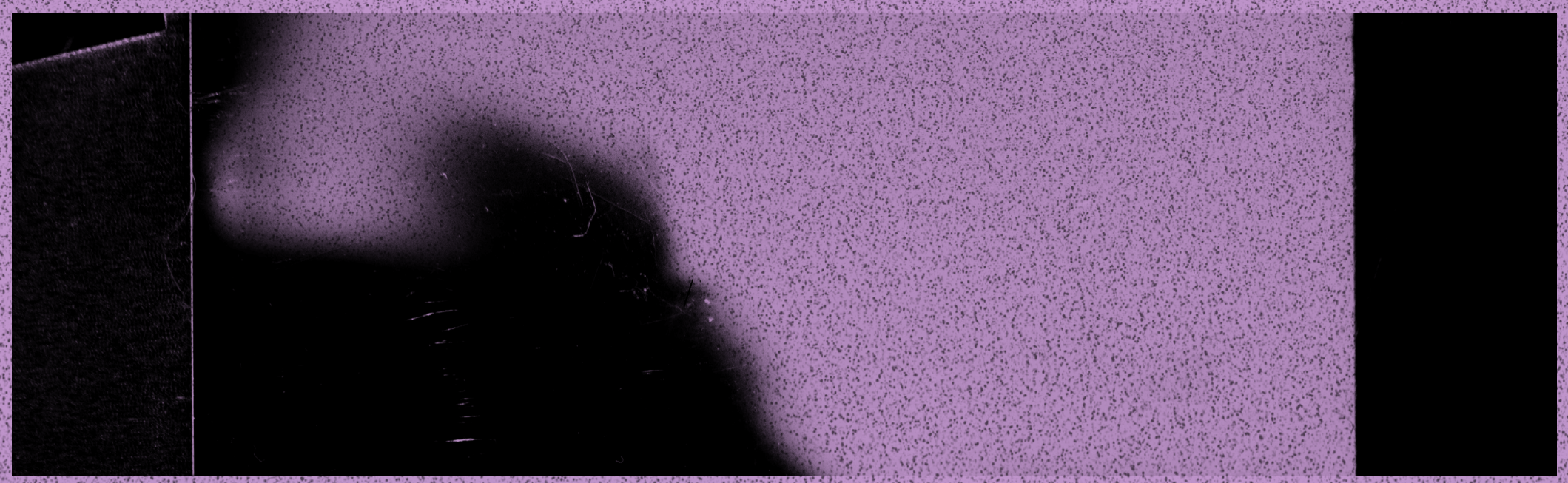
reflecting on

Solarpunk

by Jonathan Homsey

Presented as part of Dancehouse

Season 1, 18–21 Feb, 2026



Field Notes is a Dancehouse initiative that commissions writers, academics, and artists to produce in-depth reflections on works within the Dancehouse program. Moving beyond conventional reviews, these texts aim to extend the life of each performance and contribute to a broader conversation about contemporary dance and choreographic practice.

DANCEHOUSE D/

The Great Petition, Burston Reserve, in the heart of Naarm, nudging the State Parliament Building. What a site!

I love site-specific work, and this is a very specific site!

You need to work with the site or the site works you.

An exercise in what you can't control.

You are competing, complementing, contrasting but not controlling.

Sitting on the grass.

Warm evening.

How lucky with the weather! What was the wet/bad weather plan?

Layers and layers of input.

Three twilights – Civil, Nautical, Astronomical (*ah, my inner nerd is thrilled*).

Grass, Lawn, Lights, Poles, Trees, Benches, Park, Buildings.

Movement, Dancers, Words, Speakers, Songs, Singers, Clarinet, Sponge.

Seven limbs (*crown, tail, two arms, two legs, vision*).

Skin, Fascia, Muscle, Bone.



Solarpunk (2026), by Jonathan Homsey. Photo by Shannon May Powell.



!!TRRRRRRAAAAAMMMMM!! – Ah yes, the site-specific. **“DING! DING!”**

The bone colour of the sculpture. I love this sculpture, the story behind it, the view through its folds and rolls and spirals. How it dives into the footpath and flies out the other side. A ribbon. Loose, not tied. Connectivity to be made.

All those women. All those signatures. All that struggle. Women's Suffrage. The sculpture is so physical. Soft and pliable looking. So much volume. Weighted and yet light (like paper).

!!CAR DOORS SLAM!! – the people who just got out loudly ask each other, **“What's happening here? Do you know what's happening here? I don't know what's happening here. We can't walk through it”**.

Lots of words. Language I know well. All that lovely Skinner Releasing Technique[®], and then lots I don't. Words in other languages that I don't understand. **“Touch is the first language”**... before our brains conceive of words and imagine those words came first. Dance language.
Listening is feeling.

Hold/pause, listen, move ...

!!SCREEEEEEEEEEEECH!! !!SCREEEEEEEEEEEECH!!
Cockatoos flocking overhead.

The ribbon of the sculpture connects through space but also divides. It frames the performers but also separates them and hides what is behind.

It highlights too. All the verticals and horizontals of the city are in such contrast to its curves. Light poles, telephone and tram poles. Vertical green lights. What are they? Rows of lights in line with the road, tram stop, and the base of the sculpture.

The trees. Surrounding and providing a compromise between the city's straight edges and the sculpture's curves. Vertical trunks. Plane trees dotted, almost fluffy/puffy. Palm trees radiating from the top with green young leaves, gradually drooping to the bottom, getting yellower and browner as they age.

!!BUUUUUUUUSSSSS GROWWWWLING!! – diesel engine idling behind me for ages, then finally takes off.



Solarpunk (2026), by Jonathan Homsey. Photo by Shannon May Powell.

Crown = the invisible
Vision = the visible

Two shows = two opportunities.
"See it once – get an impression"
"See it twice – get a comparison"

My first impression was that each solo was improvised – "guided through movement studies and images [drawn] from Skinner Releasing Technique®" (from the program notes). From the comparison I see how choreographed it is but so fresh and in the moment.

Moving around – wanting to see all the angles.
The sculpture divides.
Staying in one place – right in the centre, up the front. The sculpture frames, focuses.

Oh, the sculpture is a stage! No, it's an altar!
(alter?) It's a triptych on an altar. With the solos all happening in the centre panel.

Wait, I'm not sure about the religious overtones. The "Joan of (the) Arc" story? Too many triggers for this old Catholic altar boy. Not sure how Joan Skinner would have felt about it. What do you think Wendy (Smith)?



Solarpunk (2026), by Jonathan Homsey. Photo by Shannon May Powell.



“The suffering of humanity in a digital age”,
“The ignorant ...”, “The people staring at their
phones”, “I will be with you”, “Go and assemble
the people”. But it’s an allegory, and a play on
words and their meanings and importance.

“Do you know what is Punk?” Ah, I’m being
shown/taught/told. I’m learning. It’s
uncomfortable sometimes.

Hmm, the sculpture also traps. As the
performance moves off the stage and
roams/rages around the park we (the audience)
are stuck. We need instruction/permission. We
want to be guided through movement studies
and images too.

Slide, roll, squeeze – surfaces to play
with/on/as.

Spirals on the soft costumes.

Resting, reclining like lions in the other loops of
the sculpture.

Falling along the pathway between the two sides of the sculpture. Crown and vision, shoulder blades fanning out to arms, tail dropping radiating to legs. Strutting, Sauntering. How is he turning like that on grass, in boots?! "Filling the Touch". Suddenly Grace Jones's "Island Life" album cover (a memory from the 80s). The sharpness of street dance stylings cutting throughout along the way.

Fading sunlight. Growing streetlight. Surprisingly bright.

Ooh, I WANT to slide, roll, climb, hang and rest in the folds of The Great Partition.

Hey Jono, upload the text to Soundcloud! I'm ready for my "portable practice". ([here it is!](#))



Solarpunk (2026), by Jonathan Homsey. Photo by Shannon May Powell.

Martin Hughes is a Melbourne/Naarm-based dancer and teacher who has spent over 30 years exploring and sharing Contact Improvisation across Australia.

DANCEHOUSE DA