

# FIELD NOTES



## ***This and That***

by Philipa Rothfield

reflecting on

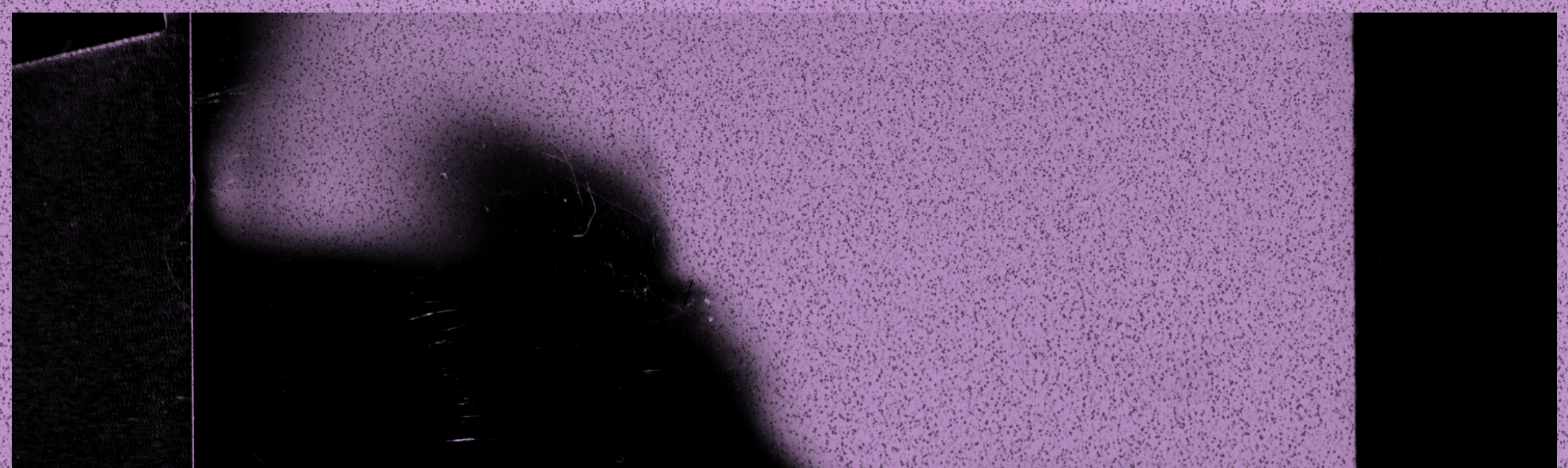
## ***That Day,***

## ***This Body, That Time***

by Jonathan Sinatra

*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.

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This and that.

This is here, now, what we see in performance – dancing, spoken word, lighting, music, video – a rich mosaic to look at, listen to, feel or consider. Then there is that, the trace of the past, rendered twice over: firstly through video footage, and secondly in the body.

Video: Having already spent many years dancing, most notably under the wing of Russell Dumas, Jonathan Sinatra embarked upon a daily practice of movement, recorded and posted online. What might have felt like a foible in 2019 continues today with more than 2000 daily postings.

Now that is something. Beguiling clips of everyday, weird, witty fragments are offered in serial form, open to enjoyment in the now, but also as a reminder, virtual evidence, of an extensive and ongoing project. Art and life together.

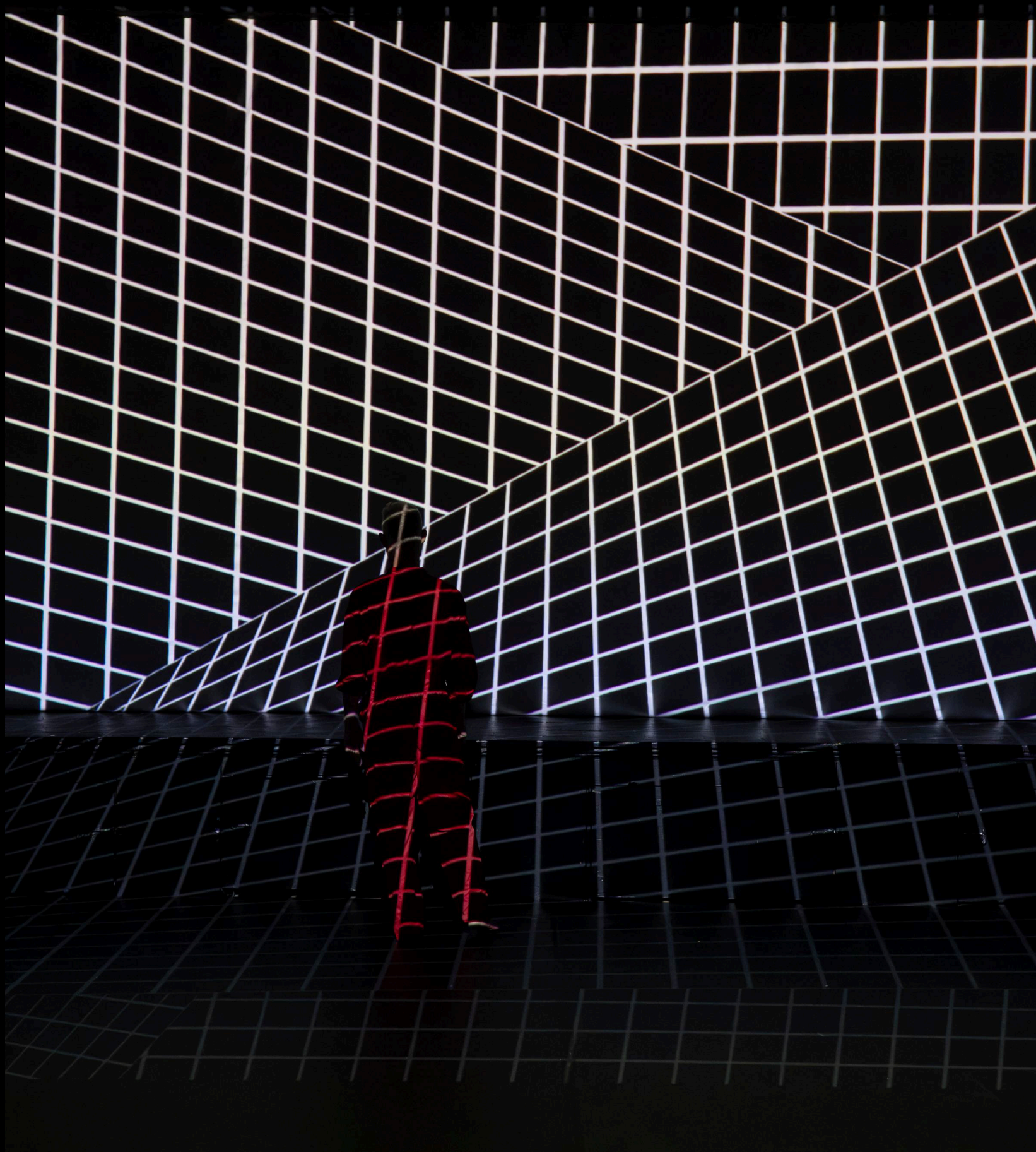


Body: Surely those years of daily practice are carried into the present, informing Sinatra's movement choices, his movement qualities? Equally so, Russell Dumas' influence, not merely in the few excerpts of Dumas' choreography, but in Sinatra's manner. This is a big deal.

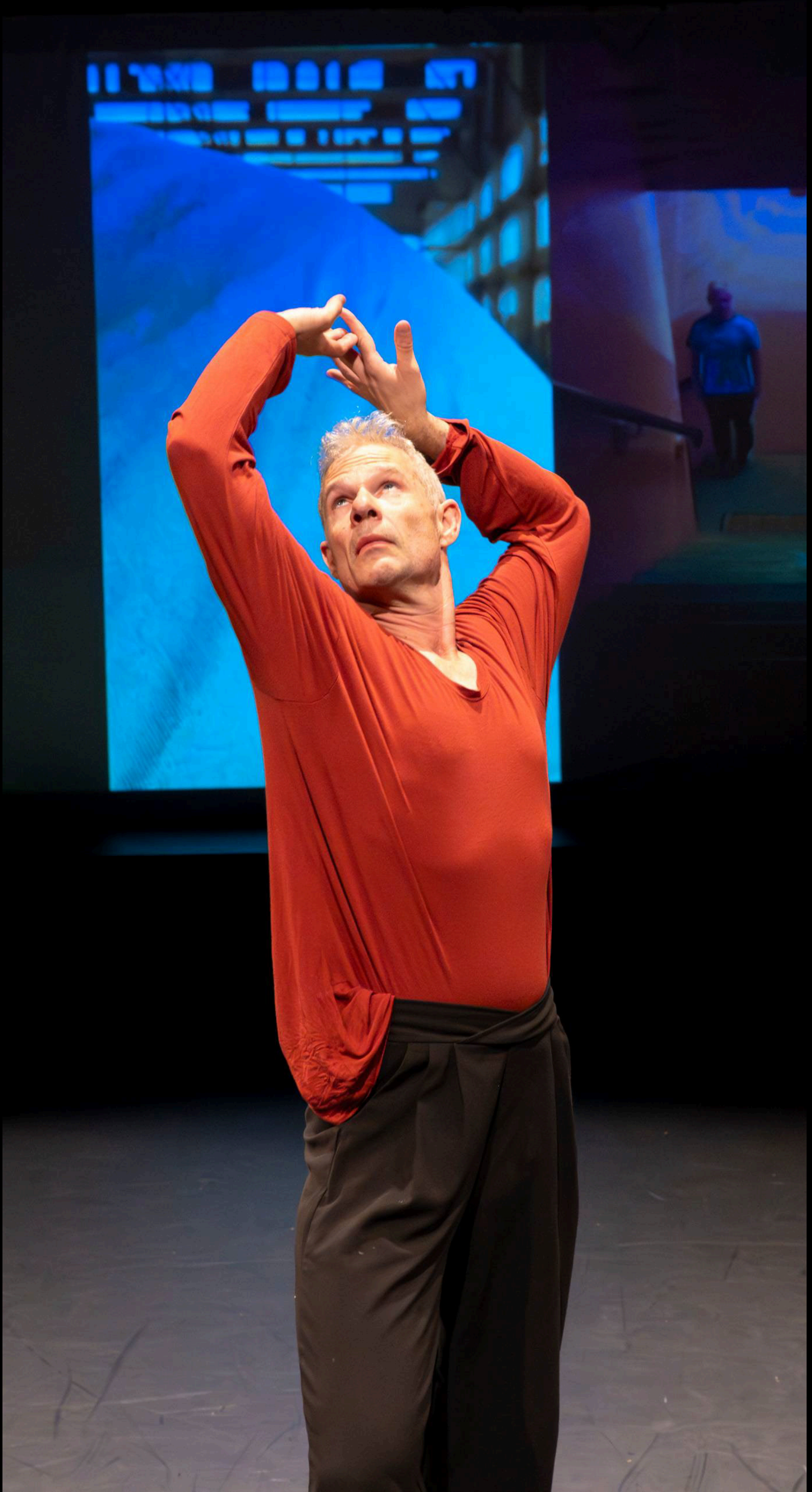
Movement values – in this case, an apparently casual yet skillful deployment of weight, sensation and gravity – arise through practice over the course of many years. Dancing bodies do not spring from nowhere. They have a history, perhaps several. Movement habits are a reflection of the way we have been dancing over time. Sinatra's dancing is familiar, playful, soft, gently weighted.

The video material of Sinatra's daily dances is incredibly rich, alluring, enticing, charming, and surprising in their variety and imagination. Bringing the project to our attention early on in this piece, through narration and video material, offers an historical perspective on the present moment. We are reminded that the dancing we see has longstanding origins.

People like to extol the virtues of live performance. Liveness is a form of risk-taking on the part of the performer(s). It is also a mode of community on the part of the audience. Dancehouse enables the ritual formation of dance community. The warmth in the room on opening nights is a mode of reception, acknowledgment and appreciation, of the work it takes to make a work. It has been said (by Peggy Phelan) that performance is ephemeral. Life is ephemeral for that matter. What endures is the passage between things. From one body to another, from body, to camera, to social media, towards memory, through narration, repetition, people, places, traversing a performance season towards a future of further articulation, passing from one's past self, into the present and beyond.



*That Day, This Body, That Time* (2026), by Jonathan Sinatra. Photo by Gregory Lorenzutti.



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The variety of settings for Sinatra's daily dances offers a multiplicity of answers to the notion of site-specific dance. Crouching in a roadside puddle, ready for a giant splash; dodging a worker wielding a hose; rolling naked on the beach... when we see images of these locations and their associated actions our notion of the place for dance is expanded. So too our perceptions of the dancer we see in this space, a work of art, a slice of history, moving through a series of present moments.



*That Day, This Body, That Time* (2026), by Jonathan Sinatra. Photo by Gregory Lorenzutti.

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*Philipa Rothfield works between dance and philosophy,  
writing and dancing.*

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