

FOUND IN SPACE



BY BEN ZIPPER
DANCE REVIEW

MELT
Ngargee, at Chunky Move studios, Southbank
Until September 29

IN THE past few years Lucy Guerin has developed a choreographic sensibility that has frequently spun webs around superficial fashions in contemporary dance. While her works have at times been as stark and hybrid as an ear genetically morphed on a mouse, in the public eye she has been a quiet achiever.

Her company's last major work, *The Ends of Things*, presented at the 2000 Melbourne Festival, was an exceptional piece with a deeply sad and emotionally engaging choreography. It is set to tour the US and Canada in early 2003, along with her new work *Melt*.

For a choreographer of great inven-

tion, Guerin is fortunate to have Ngargee - the new arts house next door to the CUB Malthouse Theatre - as a stage for her new production. From the outer, Ngargee feels like Darth

Vader's helmet given a Mark Rothko rust treatment in 3D. Inside, the dance space is a giant orange cube. With seemingly limitless walls, it is both foreboding and enticing.

dance applies both pencil-thin broad and brushstrokes to these notions, often simultaneously - which is why Guerin's work is

so good.

Defining large spaces through its occupation and desertion, the five dancers swiftly develop relationships of trust and vulnerability, intimacy and loss. Occupying a corner, a huddle of dancers are framed by giant squares of orange light. Very much the linchpin of the dancers, Ros Warby oscillates in quick succession from intricate hand gestures to sweeping, stage-crossing voyages.

While some will spot a sure winner in Guerin's talent for handling emotive variance, for me this is not her best work. The price of the fragmented parts is the loss of singular voice or persona. In a longer work it may have worked. But in two halves totalling around 50 minutes, more time is needed to develop a carbon core.

