



Melting moments: Pure dance and theatricality meet in *Melt*

## Starts off like ice, ends in a puddle

### Dance

#### *Melt*

Lucy Guerin Company.  
Chunky Move Studio,  
Southbank, Melbourne.  
Ends Sunday. Tickets:  
\$14-\$25. Bookings: (03)  
9527 4876. Tours the US in  
March 2003.

It is a shock to see Lucy Guerin's *Melt* after being blown away by her highly theatrical *Heavy* (1998), about sleep and dreams, and *The Ends of Things*, a 2000 Melbourne Festival hit about dementia and death. Then last year a deliciously comic solo, *Living with Surfaces*, for the highly nuanced and occasionally subversive dance artist Ros Warby, seemed to consolidate a shift away from her earlier, almost pure dance works.

Theatricality and pure dance meet in *Melt*, a work about the effects of temperature change, actual and metaphorical, on relationships, bodies and moods. *Melt* begins with Warby, small, lean and dark, and Stephanie Lake, tall, statuesque and fair, dressed in long white gowns. They progress from a frozen, statuesque state, outlined against a screen of projected patterns, to heat-induced fractiousness.

Quirkiness flickers across Warby's face until she stares, gimlet-eyed, pushing us always towards a laugh. Images accumulate — undulating limbs on top of static legs, and twisting, exploring faces — as projec-

tions dapple the dancers' appearance and the space they occupy. Lake glows with energy, a neat contrast to the image she affects, rather like Man Ray's photos of his lover Lee Miller, or cooler, blonde movie goddesses.

What follows begins promisingly. Kyle Kremerskothen, Toby Mills and Phoebe Robinson enter in neat, orange and green costumes to take up repetitive pattern-making dances loaded with social point-scoring, couplings and exclusions, leaving a lone Warby backed into a corner for long periods. The dances between couples are articulated lucidly, but the thematic construct becomes limiting, rather baroque and ultimately predictable in its minimally graded repetitions. And like a flawlessly but blandly executed baroque concerto, it pulses along until it loses impact.

Infused with John Dutton's subtle lighting moods and Franc Tetaz's multi-layered, wrap-around sounds, the large studio in Chunky Move's new home becomes a living force in *Melt*, all deep orange timber inside the rusted metal shafts that envelope Chunky Move and the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art. Simply traversing the plaza between these buildings and entering the studio's lofty volumes is a singular aesthetic experience that sets up unavoidably high expectations, which part one of *Melt* certainly delivers but part two cannot.

Lee Christofis

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