

# Applying barometric pressure

Ice skirts or not, choreographer Lucy Guerin's follow-up work to her award-winning *The Ends of Things*, is an exercise in extremes, reports **Jo Roberts**.

**B**udgets and creativity are often uncomfortable bedfellows. Especially when there's ice skirts involved. Choreographer Lucy Guerin had a vision for her new show, *Melt*. Melting ice sculptures. And even more tantalising, a free-standing skirt made of ice that dancers would step in and out of, and which would gradually melt as the show progressed.

But a \$55,000 Arts Victoria grant can only go so far. "We didn't get some of our funding, so unfortunately the ice skirt was the first thing to go, which was a bit sad," says Guerin.

"But now, it's become much more about the choreography, which is the much more interesting part for me, anyway."

And it is for the choreography, after all, that the widely toured Guerin has earned such acclaim. *Melt* is the Melbourne choreographer's first full-length work since her 2000 Melbourne Festival piece, *The Ends of Things*, which won three Green Room awards in 2001 for best dance theatre, best female dancer (Ros Warby) and best male dancer (Trevor Patrick).

At the awards that night, a beaming Guerin rose repeatedly from her seat at the Arts Centre to accept her awards, her partner and fellow choreographer, Chunky Move's Gideon Obarzanek, sitting next to her in support.

"Oh yeah, that was exciting!" recalls Guerin, a face-splitting smile making her look girlishly nowhere near her 41 years of age.

*Melt: From Freezing to Boiling — Movement by Degrees* has its world premiere tonight. And as part of Chunky Move's Maximised program, which

offers in-kind support to other dancers and choreographers, it will be the Lucy Guerin Company christening the new saffron-walled Chunky Move Studios in Sturt Street rather than its occupants (Chunky Move's most recent work, *Wanted*, was performed in the new Playbox workshop space). Fortunately for Guerin, Obarzanek doesn't seem to mind. "He's really good with that sort of stuff; doesn't seem to be too possessive," she grins.

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LUCY GUERIN

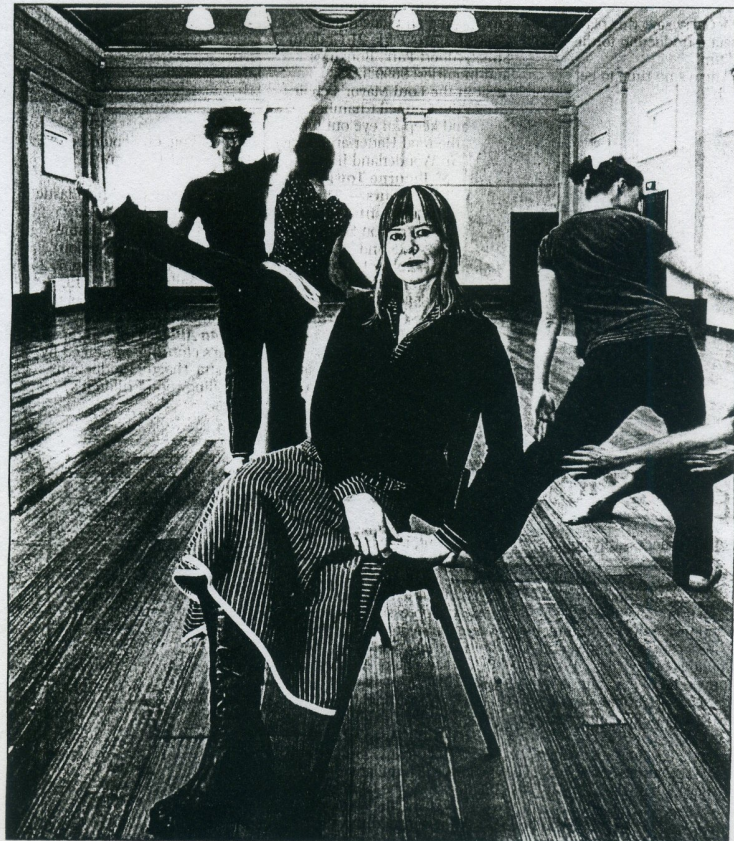
*Melt* is a work of two halves, featuring five dancers. Stephanie Lake and Ros Warby, two of Melbourne's most in-demand artists (and Green Room award winners), perform the first half in a duet that moves through extremes in temperature.

Beginning with freezing, Lake and Warby move the piece gradually through to boiling and, eventually, to evaporation, aided by a soundtrack from Franc Tetaz, projections by Michaela French and lighting by John Dutton.

The second half, says Guerin, features Lake, Warby, Toby Mills, Kyle Kremerskothen and Phoebe Robinson in a more emotional exploration of "temperatures and temperament".

"There are references to giving someone the cold shoulder, or being aloof, or getting hot under the collar," she says.

"It's a pretty abstract work, but it's been a great motivation to make movement, and it's interesting thinking about what



Lucy Guerin pictured during rehearsals for *Melt* at Hordt Hall.

PICTURE: MARINA OLIPHANT

sort of movement is generated by heat or cold."

The idea for the show stemmed from a \$60,000 grant Guerin received from the United States' National Dance Project to develop and tour a new work.

The NDP has funded the *Melt* duet, along with a reworked version, and tour of *The Ends of Things*. The only Aus-

tralian dance company to be selected in the 2003 program, Guerin and her dancers will spend seven weeks touring *Melt* and *The Ends of Things* through the US and Canada in March and April next year. "It's quite a long tour, certainly the biggest I've undertaken," says Guerin.

"So I don't know what to expect."

One thing she can expect — and also look forward to — next year is financial security, with the Australia Council funding Guerin for a year. Maybe audiences will see those ice skirts yet ...

*Melt* is at the Chunky Move Studios, 111 Sturt Street, Southbank, until September 29.