

# The Oregonian

## Entertainment News

### Choreographer goes to extremes

03/17/03 – By Catherine Thomas

Australia's hottest export of postmodern dance, Lucy Guerin, returned Friday evening to the Portland stage, and audiences expecting the cool abstraction for which she's known were treated to that and more.

Presented by Portland Institute for Contemporary Art at the Newmark Theatre, the two-part program mirrored the acclaimed choreographer's fascination with extremes.

"Melt," a duet for two women, is quintessential Guerin: deliciously detached and saturated with sophisticated optical illusions. "The Ends of Things" is similarly savvy in its technological tricks, but it's also a dance play, a glimpse into the life of a creature of habit.

In "Melt," video technology becomes a third partner to dancers Ros Warby and Stephanie Lake, who move in intricate degrees from frozen statuary to lurching physical stammers to liquid caresses, finally evaporating in ecstatic, calisthenic shimmies.

Squiggling neon lines, huge shadow play and a wash of color collages inscribe their bodies, making them appear to recede in the distance or magnifying them to larger-than-life proportions.

Warby and Lake are impeccably focused, embodying efficient androids in twitching paroxysms and generating chemical heat when shrugs turn to shoves.

Technology takes a back seat to drama in "The Ends of Things," a stark work of theater that portrays an ordinary life with blistering pathos.

Trevor Patrick portrays a frail, knock-kneed man whose days are a black hole of mundane routine. This is a man who sleeps with his pants around his ankles and his shirt around his neck, to simplify getting dressed in the morning. The details cement him as a pathetic figure. You can feel the oppressive crush of his isolated world, a life eternally on hold.

His only interest is a collection of butterflies, which he pins to display boards with detached dispassion. This becomes the central subtext in the drama that ensues, when three free spirits (Warby and Lake, joined by dancer Byron Perry) appear beyond the door of his cramped apartment.

They're a lively trio, engaging in daring combat games that stand in sharp contrast to Patrick's timid sad sack of a man. They mirror him, too, writhing as though they were butterflies stuck and straining for flight.