

Delight in surprises of the everyday

MELT THE ENDS OF THINGS

Lucy Guerin Inc.
The Studio, Opera House,
November 18

Jill Sykes

Lucy Guerin has a fine eye for detail and the ability to convey minutiae in movement to build a larger picture.

With the help of an unusually sensitive interpreter like Trevor Patrick, she looks inwardly to the mind as well as offering an outward view of the body.

The Ends of Things was created in 2000, the much touted millennium year in which everything eventually went on as usual. Reflecting this aspect of that event, she explores small endings in everyday lives – one life in particular.

Trevor Patrick plays that Everyman, one in a long line which includes M. Hulot and Mr

Bean. His character is less comic but just as touching in his curious mannerisms, concerns and small triumphs. He is presented as a loser in appearance and attitude, yet as the piece develops, the three metaphoric beings on the perimeter of his world get a hands-on grip of his mind and body, revealing hidden desires and surprising possibilities.

The dancerly qualities that have stamped Patrick's long career are bravely submerged in vile, ill-fitting clothes and clumsy gestures. Occasional glimpses remind you they are still there. His character's little life of getting up and dressed, cleaning his teeth, greedily drinking his over-sugared tea, sets the context with humour and sympathy, conveyed through subtle inflections of body language.

Most of the action happens around his tiny "home" furnished with projected images (a witty set by Dorotka Sapinska).

Kirstie McCracken, Stephanie Lake and Byron Perry mix and match in physical and social relationships that work within a narrow choreographic range of fragmented, often jagged, angular action: the narrowness is interesting for the intensity of focus it gives to Guerin's characteristic concentration on detail.

This also applies to her recent work *Melt*, which teams McCracken and the proudly, conspicuously pregnant Lake in a finely crafted duet. A program note explains the choreography came first, and that the music and projected imagery were made to support it. This may account for the holistic result, which was much more interesting than most components of Guerin's image-and-dance venture for the Melbourne Festival last month.

Melt is essentially an essay on temperature, from freezing to boiling, with obvious references

Intense focus
... Stephanie
Lake in a finely
crafted
performance.



to these extremes and temperature changes. But the choreography develops its themes into a strong and graceful sequence of abstract danced images that are enhanced by projections on the bodies of the dancers and the screen behind them.

The relationship between Guerin's choreography and Michaela French's motion graphic design is sometimes so close that an image can frame

the mouth of a dancer as a focal point. But mostly it is more expansive. Franc Tetaz's musical partnership in both pieces is also keenly wrought to enhance the choreographic content.

The result is a satisfying and thought-provoking double bill, very well performed and presented, a must-see for anyone interested in contemporary dance.

Until November 23