

# awestruck by dance

## john bailey: dance in the melbourne festival

### chunky move's two faced bastard

Chunky Move's Two Faced Bastard explores similar territory to far more sophisticated effect. A large playing space is bisected by a curtain of vertical blinds; the audience is split in two, one half on either side. The work we see depends on our placement—on one side an abstract, contemporary dance begins while on the other a panel discussion on performance occurs.

There's a certain bleed between the two from the outset. The gently swaying blinds allow infrequent glimpses of "the other side" while the microphoned forum can be heard in both halves of the space. And soon enough, the collision of worlds becomes more obvious, as performers enter one another's space and influence their new surroundings. Brian Lipson interrupts dancers to question the meaning of their movements; a relationship begins between dancer Stephanie Lake—who is situated on the "dance" side throughout the performance—and actor/dancer Vincent Crowley, who begins as a pivotal figure on the discussion side.

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As things proceed, the engagement becomes more hysterical. At one point performers suit up in robotic battle outfits fashioned from boxes and polystyrene and charge through the curtain to wage war on their counterparts. At another, the audience is offered the chance to cross the stage and see what effect a new perspective will provide. And at no point are the performers able to step offstage; with no wings to speak of leaving the playing space simply means moving into another.

What all of this results in is a wonderfully dialectical form of performance. It is the presentation of conflict—between action and interpretation, dance and theatre, body and mind—which creates a third space of meaning. For much of the work we are acutely aware that we're missing out on something, that our position only affords access to half of a work. But when, finally, the curtain pulls aside and all of the performers are made visible across the space, we realise that this concealment is itself an integral part of theatre, and that what we have been watching all along has been a single, coherent work, not two distinct productions which intersect at vital points.

Two Faced Bastard's duality is probably due to the differing interests of its creators—it feels at times to be an exchange between Lucy Guerin's focus on the moment of dance, on dance as a form of presence, and Gideon Obarzanek's more conceptual explorations of the framing of works. It's a deeply intriguing, and often very funny exchange, and it's also apparent that the performers themselves have been crucial to the formation of the work.