



MORTAL ENGINE

By Chunky Move. CUB Malthouse. Season ended.

You never know what Chunky Move helmsman Gideon Obarzanek is going to come up with next. Unless, in the case of *Mortal Engine*, you've seen his previous work *Glow*, in which case you'll have a pretty good idea. In both cases, motion-tracking sensors and digital light projection create unearthly scenes of unsettling, post-human luminescence.

Mortal Engine doesn't seem to make too many advances on *Glow's* achievements, though. It's an ensemble piece, as opposed to *Glow's* solo, but for much of the work any actual choreography is lost in pixelated chaos or fractal shadow. One spectator likened it to ballerinas lost at a rave. I'm not damning the work: it's still unlike anything else this country is currently producing, and proof that Chunky Move is miles ahead of any other major dance company in Australia. It challenges some of dance's most basic foundations: the primacy of the body, physical integrity, and the distinction between digital media and the individual. *Mortal Engine* positions dancers as swarms, bacteria, contagions. Who knows where Obarzanek will go next?