

Lucy Guerin Inc



Weather

An informal showing of excerpts from Weather

Friday, November 1

4:30pm

Holden Theater, Amherst College

Free and open to the public

Director: Lucy Guerin

Choreography: Lucy Guerin with the Dancers from the premiere season

Set Design: Robert Cousins

Lighting Design: Benjamin Cisterne

Composer: Oren Ambarchi

Costume Design: Shio Otani

Dancers: Amber Haines, Talitha Maslin, Alisdair Macindoe, Kirstie McCracken, Kyle Page and Lilian Steiner

From Lucy Guerin, one of Australia's most renowned choreographic talents, comes an atmospheric new dance work that embodies the breathtaking dynamics of the elements. An immersive experience inspired by the weather that surrounds and defines us, it employs the visceral sensations and dynamic flow of weather systems to generate an intense choreographic exploration of the physical body's connection to the natural world.

This performance was made possible by the Arts at Amherst, the Theater and Dance Department at Amherst, the Five College Dance Department, Mount Holyoke College, and Smith College



Lucy Guerin

Choreographer & Director

Born in Adelaide, Australia, Lucy Guerin graduated from the Centre for Performing Arts in 1982 before joining the companies of Russell Dumas (Dance Exchange) and Nanette Hassall (Danceworks). She moved to New York in 1989 for seven years, where she danced with Tere O'Connor Dance, the Bebe Miller Company and Sara Rudner, and began to produce her first choreographic works.

She returned to Australia in 1996 and worked as an independent artist, creating new dance works including *Two Lies*, *Robbery Waitress on Bail*, *Heavy* and *The Ends of Things*. In 2002 she established Lucy Guerin Inc in Melbourne to support the development, creation and touring of new works with a focus on challenging and extending the concepts and practice of contemporary dance.

Recent works include *Weather*, *Untrained*, *Human Interest Story* and *Conversation Piece*. Guerin has toured her work extensively in Europe, Asia and North America as well as to most of Australia's major festivals and venues. Lucy Guerin has had works commissioned by Chunky Move, Dance Works Rotterdam, Ricochet (UK), Mikhail Baryshnikov's White Oak Dance Project (USA) and Lyon Opera Ballet (France) among many others. Her many awards include the Sidney Myer Performing Arts Award, a New York Dance and Performance Award (a 'Bessie'), several Green Room Awards, a Helpmann Award and an Australian Dance Award.

Artistic Director's Program Note

The ideas underpinning this work stem from a desire to explore the possibilities of the human body's connection to the elemental forces of weather. The range of this subject is limitless and universal, but for me, weather has a natural expression through dance and movement. It can be defined as the 'state of the air', and in this work, this invisible drama is made visible through movement and design. The cause and effect of moving air to create pressure systems informs the choreographic structure of the work, and defines the dynamics and performance of the movement material. Weather affects our mood, dress, food, activities, sports, conversations, architecture and our identity. Many works of art and literature have used the idea of a drought, a storm, the tropics or the icy outreaches of the poles to speak about the psychology of individuals, relationships or societies.

Making *Weather* has been for me a visceral immersion into choreographed movement and the body on stage. The motivation for the material has stemmed from the physical sensation and impact of the elements on the body, abstract representations of weather through maps and diagrams and our identification of human emotions with different weather phenomena. It occurred to me many times throughout the process that the human body shares with weather the qualities of moving air, water, mist and heat, and that the air we breathe in and out becomes part of the weather at some stage.

In today's world, weather is acting like a barometer for our environmental disasters. As the polar ice caps melt and the holes widen in the ozone layer, we have to accept that humans are now a factor in the creation and alteration of weather. Our actions have tipped the balance resulting in uncertainty in the 'natural' order of things. The attempt by scientists to understand, record and predict the weather is only partially successful, and I think it is this ability to defy our logic and to overwhelm us with its force that ultimately draws me to this subject.

This aspect of nature cannot be controlled or subdued and is a poetic reminder that we are not the masters of the universe. Dance shares with the weather a resistance to easy interpretation. It is about force, direction, dynamics and form. But once the body stops dancing, nothing remains, and once the cyclone is still, we are left with only air. It is motion that brings them both into being.

This work has been a return for me to a focus on pure movement and the fascination I have for choreographing the human body. These exceptional dancers have contributed to both the choreographed and the improvised movement in *Weather* and without their willingness, superlative talents and belief in what we do, I could not have made this work. The stimulating dialogue I have had with my design and music collaborators has also impacted strongly on the creation of this piece and I owe much to their having strong visions within their own practices to bring to this work. – Lucy Guerin



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