

seeing through darkness

by Michelle Ryan



restless
DANCE THEATRE

♥ Hackett Foundation presents
WOMADelaide
THE WORLD'S FESTIVAL

seeing through darkness

A response from **James Darling** 2020,
premiere performance at the Art Gallery of South Australia

“ The stage was a circle, not that much higher than the floor, with a circular track for the lights – which, we were to discover, moved, changed colour, lit the bodies of the dancers in subtle, mesmerizing shadows. Ten chairs for the covid-19 separated audience.

... **Six dancers arise from crumpled darkness. The work is 17 minutes. It is rare in any world, rare in the critical incision of art, that what is achieved has the poise, the cutting to the quick, the fluidity and beyond-darkness sparkle of perfection.**

I don't say this lightly. **There was depth of knowledge about marrying concept so thoroughly to performance that was uncanny, as if effortless, the height of the dancers, their shapes, their movements, faultless, so close, touching, not a foot wrong, every gesture, movements that came together then separated, forming tableaux at specific times like giants shadowed on the wall behind.** All I can say is that we were very lucky to be there. The dancers performed beautifully, from one to another without fail, that concentrated conviction that finds and holds and moves as rhythmically as our earth moves from day to night and back to day again. **Michelle Ryan, former dancer with Meryl Tankard, with ADT, now wheelchair-bound with MS. Thin as a whippet, hair pulled back, a laugh which gurgles up from her chest and sets the world to rights. It is both her conception, its range and boundless trajectory, as well as her long-standing intimate relationship with her dancers, that underpin the ridiculously rare sense of perfection that was achieved.** Like a poem. **I think of Keats, his odes. *Ode to a Nightingale. Ode to Autumn. Ode to a Grecian Urn.*** A work unto itself. Replete. ***Seeing Through Darkness*, a gift to rise above the lockdown of our covid-19 world, an experience to carry to the end of our days, quiet in its way, searing and tender, a masterpiece.”**

**This dance work,
directed by
Michelle Ryan,
is a response
to the work of
Expressionist artist
Georges Rouault.**

Michelle explains that the imperfect form of the body and the troubled soul represented in his work resonate with how people with disability can feel and be perceived. *Seeing through Darkness* is an immersive experience, one that is both a participatory exhibition and a 17-minute performance, in which elements of dance, music, lighting design and moving image are combined.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the creative visionaries, **Roz Hervey** and **James Darling**, whose brilliance inspires boundless possibilities.

CREATIVE TEAM

director	Michelle Ryan
assistant director	Larissa McGowan
composers	Hilary Kleinig + Emily Tulloch
lighting designer	Geoff Cobham
costume designer	Meg Wilson
creative producer	Roz Hervey
rehearsal director	Larissa McGowan
production manager	James Oborn
performers	Sidney Debba Jianna Georgiou Michael Hodyl Bhodi Hudson Charlie Wilkins Poppy Anthonye Hilary Kleinig Emily Tulloch Darcy Carpenter (understudy)

RESTLESS TEAM

CEO	Julie Moralee
artistic director	Michelle Ryan
artistic associate	Larissa McGowan
finance manager	Theresa Williams
marketing manager	Radh� Osborn
office + project manager	Paula Beckett
program executive public classes	Lina Limosani

restless dance theatre

Australia's leading creator of dance theatre by dancers with and without disability.

Our artistic voice is loud, strong and original.

Restless brings artists with diverse minds, bodies and imaginations together to create contemporary dance theatre from everyday lived experiences; manifested into beautiful art, embedding inclusion into our screens, on our stages and in unexpected places. Restless Dance Theatre is a place where diversity is celebrated, and all artists thrive creatively.

Restless Dance Theatre is more than a dance company—it's a movement for change. Grounded in Australia and reaching the world, we create bold, evocative works that dismantle barriers and challenge perceptions. Our artists, many of whom began in our programs, now perform on national and international stages, redefining what is possible. As we look toward 2025 and beyond, we are committed to pushing boundaries, amplifying diverse voices, and expanding our reach.

The future starts with a dream—but it's the people who turn it into reality. Your support will make all the difference.

Support the dream. **Be part of the journey.**

restless
DANCE THEATRE

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scan to
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journey



Australian Government



Government of South Australia
Arts South Australia