



BALLET AT THE QUARRY

***Ballet at the Quarry* is now showing at the Quarry Amphitheatre until Saturday, February 28. Gates open at 7pm with performances starting at 8.30pm. Tickets are available through BOCS Ticketing.**

West Australian Ballet's *Ballet at the Quarry* season has become a celebrated annual event for Perth dance lovers. It's a time to pack a delicious picnic dinner (and the mozzie spray) and embark on a journey to the hauntingly beautiful Quarry Amphitheatre for a night of inspiring Australian and international choreography beneath a blanket of stars. This year's season has something for everyone with six pieces including the clever and comical *It Is* by choreographer Cass Mortimer-Eipper and Natalie Weir's dark, emotionally powerful *Lacrimosa*.

Also on the program is *Fractal Joy* by ex Australian Ballet dancer Timothy Harbour. Harbour retired in 2007 and has since been making a name for himself in choreography circles, securing a commission on this season's bill from WA Ballet's artistic director Ivan Cavallari. The joyful work is a delightful, playful, glowing piece that captivates from start to finish.

"The main inspiration for it was finding out that my wife and I were expecting our first child. That was right around the same time that I found out for sure I'd be choreographing for the Quarry. We're really excited about it and when the news came that she was pregnant, I was just so elated by it that I gravitated to very optimistic percussion pieces of music," Harbour says.

"I suppose the style uses a classical template but I've tried to make it quite quirky and idiosyncratic. I do enjoy designing that type of content because I think it projects the movement of contemporary dance well and because the dancers here have got such a strong technique. But at the same time I wanted to throw a lot of that all out the window and just be inventive and light-hearted."

Harbour says that it's been such a pleasure to work with the dancers and hopes they feel the same way despite what he's given them to perform.

"It's been hard work because it's quite a big stamina 20-minute piece and they really go quite hard for the whole time they're on stage. In

that sense it's like a theatre of energy. It's such a challenging program with the five other works that are all so different to one another, so the dancers have to adapt very quickly to each piece," he explains.

The Melbourne-based choreographer has also had to do some adapting of his own since finishing his career on the stage. However, he says the process hasn't been as difficult as it could have been.

"I was dancing and choreographing for about three years which was a great time because I got the opportunity to choreograph for The Australian Ballet while I was still dancing with them. It was wonderful because you know the dancers so well that it's a safe environment to experiment with your choreography style," he says.

"Since then I've gone out and worked with people that I haven't known so well on various projects. You start off as strangers but it doesn't take long to become close. They're exposing themselves just as much as you're exposing yourself to them, so there's a certain amount of understanding and affection that develops which is a really lovely part but also one of the greatest challenges."

TANYA MACNAUGHTON

