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New Breed review: Emerging choreographers push the boundaries

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NEW BREED

★★★★



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Cass Mortimer Eipper and Nelson Earl tackle mental instability in *Bell Jar*. Photo: Pedro Greig

Carriageworks, October 30

Until December 9

This fourth annual instalment of New Breed, showcasing work by emerging choreographers set on members of the Sydney Dance Company, is well worth seeing. Each of the four pieces is distinctive and pushing boundaries in different ways.

Cass Mortimer Eipper and Nelson Earl tackle mental instability through fractured movement in a disturbing way. They have taken the title, *Bell Jar*, from Sylvia Plath, and play out the struggle with their characters' demons as performers in encounters that verge on violence.



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They are extraordinary in the gymnastically demanding choreography they have created: intimate, almost affectionate at times as though they are bonded by their horrors, yet ultimately confrontational. It is a powerful, memorable duet, theatrically moulded and presented.

Petros Treklis is also concerned with the mind in *The Art of Letting Go*, for seven dancers, representing one person's efforts to forget and move on. A beautifully crafted piece, it is reminiscent of mid-20th century European choreography with its elegantly shaped ensemble, fluid communication between dancers and standout duets and solos, starting with a notable performance by Sam Young-Wright.



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While it pushes the dancers into this century's less conventional partnering, it is let down by some repetition. But overall it is a pleasure to watch, enhanced by Verity Hampton's sensitive lighting design – a major plus for all four works.

Tyrone Earl Lrae Robinson pushes the boundaries of taste in *[bio]Curious*, which he describes as questioning the relationship we have with the natural world. I would describe it as the sex you have when you are not having sex.

At least it gives Nelson Earl another opportunity to show his exciting flexibility and focus as a dancer – in this case seeking sexual satisfaction with a token woman in flower guise, actual plants of certain symbolic appearance, any hard surface at hand as it were, and a male figure in what appeared to be a floral mask.

Melanie Lane has all kinds of physical and intellectual ideas at play in *WOOF*. Looking towards "the fantasy of a post-human collective spirit", she has 12 dancers remaking a community with references to past dance, pop and art styles that they work into a slowly developing contemporary pastiche. It is good to look at, an interesting challenge to follow in terms of the mind-changing on view and probably a little too long. But a glimpse of a promising choreographer, nonetheless.

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