

THE AUSTRALIAN

Sydney Dance Company gives stage to new breed of choreographers

DEBORAH JONES THE AUSTRALIAN 12:00AM December 4, 2017

What a great night of dance: all of it brand spanking new, performed by some of the best movers on the planet and offered at \$35 a ticket. Even when the quality is uneven, *New Breed*, now in its fourth iteration, offers a lot of bang for your buck. This year's quartet of works is exhilarating.

Sydney Dance Company artistic director Rafael Bonachela curates *New Breed* cannily. He gives opportunities to some of his own dancers and includes interesting independent choreographers who can benefit from SDC resources and exposure.

Take Melanie Lane. Her *WOOF*, the night's highlight, uses 12 dancers. She is a highly experienced choreographer who works internationally but rarely with a group of that size.

I have no idea what her title means but the piece itself is quite clear. The work begins in silence and with an evocation of the past. The company composes itself into tableaux that mimic the formality of Renaissance paintings on classical subjects but not their extravagance. The dancers are dressed simply in flesh tones, leaching the picture of all colour except for one intriguing touch. Their hands are sooty.

The dancers lean against one another or recline gracefully for a few moments and then reform. The entrance of music encourages a fracturing of the whole into subsets, whose dancefloor moves bring them into today's world. Towards the end of the taut 20-minute piece, an alien, futuristic quality emerges, mashed up with the irresistible image of a corps de ballet at work.

As Lane's concern is with the way societies organise themselves there's little in the way of emotional intimacy. There is, nevertheless, a welcome touch of human messiness as those sooty hands lay themselves on initially pristine costumes and her final image is one of transcendence.

SDC dancer Petros Treklis's *The Art of Letting Go* comes a close second to *WOOF* for beauty of composition and he adds a jolt to the heart. Seven dancers are seen as aspects of one mind as Treklis repeats touching motifs of falling, rising, spinning and reaching to the music of Rachmaninov. The movement is often very fast but always splendidly structured and never less than lyrical and deeply felt. A huge success.

Cass Mortimer Eipper and Nelson Earl, also SDC members, collaborated on the fierce duo *Bell Jar* (which they perform) that has the theme of dancing with one's demons. To thundery music by Marc Cher-Gibard they fight, grapple and butt heads, both looking sensational.

Tyrone Earl Lrae Robinson's *[Bio]Curious* is a surreal, sensual and witty ode to the environment, here seen as a viable sexual partner. This is nature seen in quite a different light. The piece is the program's wildcard and a beguiling one.

Tickets: \$35. Bookings: online. Duration: 1hr 40min including interval. Ends December 9.