

# Shaun Parker & Company

Production Histories and Critical Reviews

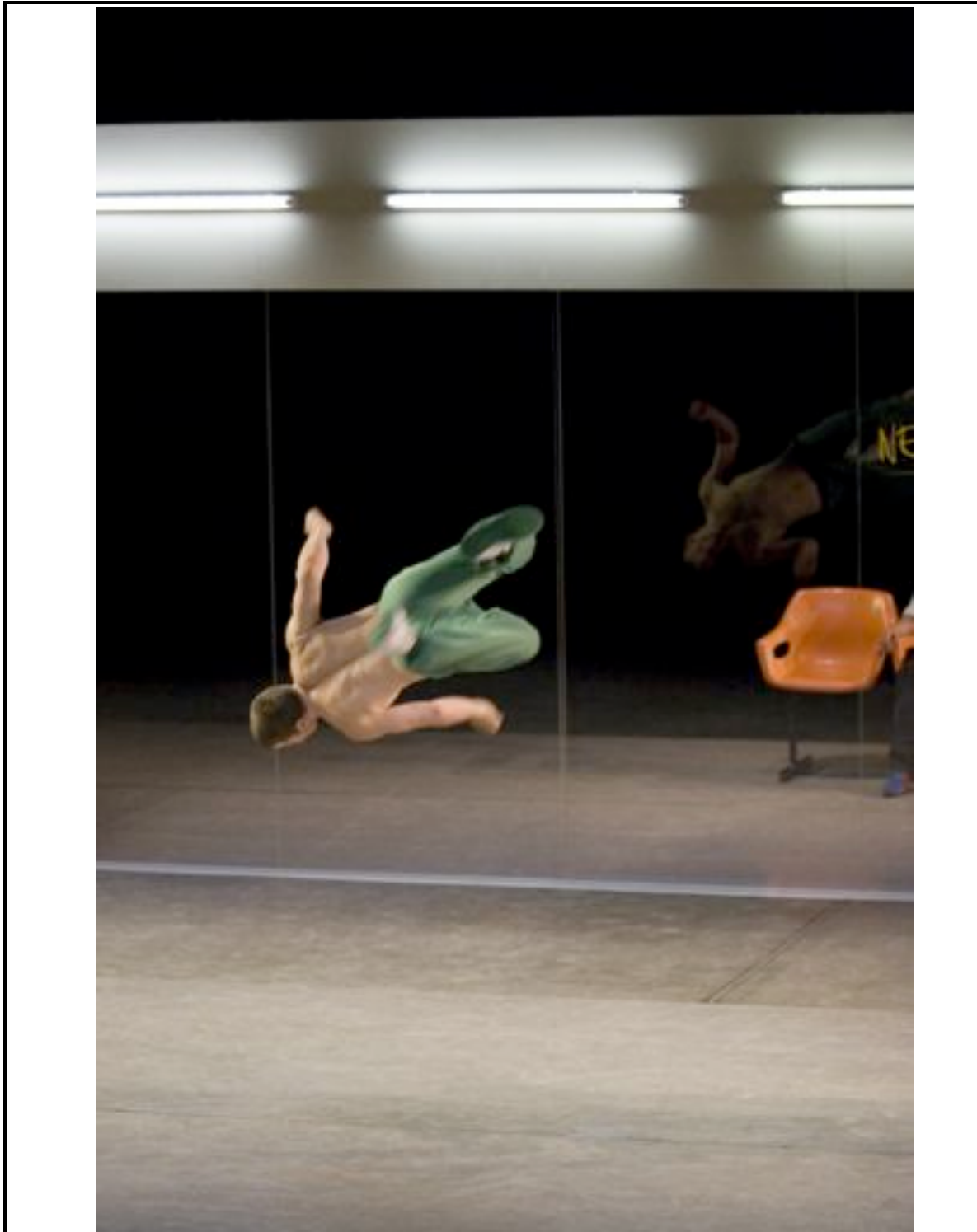


Image: This Show is About People

# AM I (Working Title)

## NEW WORK IN DEVELOPMENT

READY FOR PREMIERE IN 2013

Choreographer: Shaun Parker

Composer: Nick Wales



Image: Boatpeople.org

**AM I** (working title) will be a true integration of live music, voice and dance in collaboration with award winning composer Nick Wales.

# HAPPY AS LARRY

## History

### Tours

- 2011 Total Danse Festival, Teat Champ Fleuri, La Reunion
- 2011 Dance Touring Partnership United Kingdom – a UK tour of ten cities including:

- Northern Stage, Newcastle
- The Lowry, Salford
- Sadler's Wells Theatre (the Peacock Theatre)
- Brighton Dome
- Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry
- Lighthouse, Poole
- Hall for Cornwall, Turo
- Nottingham Playhouse
- Royal & Derngate, Northampton
- Oxford Playhouse

- 2011 Dance Massive Festival, Melbourne
- 2010 Brisbane Festival
- 2010 New Zealand International Arts Festival
- 2010 Perth Festival
- 2010 Sydney Festival

### Awards

Winner of 12 Children's Jury Awards, Perth Festival  
Winner of the Banksy Award, New Zealand Critics Awards.

### Selected for:

Spotlight at APAM, Adelaide, 2010

## Critical Reviews

### Reunion Island

*"Happy as Larry, the creation of the Australian Shaun Parker, was undeniably a highlight of the festival....his work revolves around the world [that] we see little [of] in Europe, except [for] England. No wonder, then we think he has a humor and sensitivity that go perfectly with the Anglo-Saxon world that fears neither artful blend - we tend to think almost unclean to us - or what tightrope [we] walk between laughter and tears when taken across the Channel ... and apparently overseas because, the public made him a veritable triumph!" – **Danser Magazine***

*"The spectacle immediately immerses you in the universal poetic contemporary...On a technical level Shaun Parker combined a variety of dance disciplines: from the classic basketball, rollerblading [and] all forms of hip hop you can think of, without falling into a sequence of*

numbers where each would appear for what it can do...Questioning happiness seems to be crucial for Parker and [through that he] weaves a poignant spectacle of agile movements and serious moments, games, aerial and a delicate grace.” -- **Danser Magazine**

**The UK**

“[A] highly enjoyable production...Parker always has something up his sleeve” – **The Times**

“...the whole piece was extremely powerful and expressive” – **Thepublicreviews.com**

“Through a judicious combination of street dance, contemporary dance and acrobatics with a bit of ballet thrown in, Parker delivers a constantly-evolving set of vignettes...expressing loneliness and hesitant friendship, some playfully raucous, to a lively electro-score written by Nick Wales and Bree Van Reyk. The precision of the ensemble work is breathtaking, coordinated to within a hairsbreadth of the music” – **The Stage UK**

“Refreshingly, this is solid, analogue stagecraft; there is no digital trickery or video screen projections. Synott’s accelerated scrawls of coloured chalk are just as effective as lasers, the sound of laughter erupting from a stone-faced Ghenoa Gela is a brilliant exercise in ventriloquism, Anton’s slipping and sliding turn on Rollerblades disguises his true mastery of balance. And when the balloons that have been hovering above the wall finally descend around the lone Synott, a little voice cried out behind me: “Is he happy now?”

I think we all were.” -- **The Stage UK**

**Local Press (in Australia):**

“Happy as Larry is brilliantly choreographed, flawlessly and joyously performed, and thoroughly entertaining from start to finish. I literally sat on the edge of my seat.” -- **Australian Stage**

“It’s smiles all round – on stage and in the audience. You have to welcome a dance piece about happiness...delightful.” -- **Sydney Morning Herald**

“As long as we have people like Shaun Parker creating shows, there is no need to fear for the future of arts in Australia. His work possesses a confidence and ingenuity that make him one of the most interesting artists in his field, level of experience notwithstanding...Parker has created a spectacularly funny, playful, poignant, unpretentious piece of theatre that is so much more than dance...It is witty, at times deliciously nostalgic and such a fascinating examination of human behaviour, it is hard to leave feeling anything other than happy as Larry.” -- **The Daily Telegraph**

‘Delivered with such accomplishment and ease, the company are given extended applause and make this a feast for the senses. Shaun Parker’s background in music, choreography, physical theatre and dance make this work a must see in the future. The contemporariness is riveting, but the emotional tenure of this work is unique and inspiring – a joy to behold!’ -- **Arts Hub**



Images: Branco Gacia



# THE YARD

## History

### Tours

- 2011 Seymour Centre, Sydney
- 2012 Illawarra Performing Arts Centre, Wollongong
- 2012 Northern Rivers Performing Arts Centre, Lismore
- 2012 Glasshouse, Port Macquarie
- 2012 Riverside Theatre

### Critical Reviews

*"The Yard is both joyful and poignant, expressing a living contemporary dance language...a standout performance"* – **Dance Informa**

*"Talented students dance to...an electro-acoustic score by Nick Wales...dance movements such as locking and popping, tutting, krumping and jerking – forms of dance found on the streets and school yards of Western Sydney"* – **Penrith Press**



Image: Heidrun Lohr

# This Show Is About People

## History

### Tours

- 2008 Sydney Festival
- 2007 Melbourne International Arts Festival

### Awards

Winner 2008 Australian Dance Award

### Selected for:

- APAP, New York, 2008
- APAM, Adelaide, 2008

## Critical Reviews

*"This Show is About People* by the choreographer and performer Shaun Parker explores transitory lives and the weird and wonderful moments when paths cross, blur and repel. It's an intricate and expressive work manipulated by music and machinery, and features movements that are both sensuous and hard-edged. When the dancers hurl themselves against the floor or arch their bodies as though lifted by meat hooks, the fluorescent-lit spectacle is dangerous and daring. *This Show Is About People* is stylistically refreshing in the way it marries humour, lyricism and urban grit to examine themes of isolation and belonging." -- **Sydney Morning Herald**

"The dance style comes from the street and is frequently tough and dangerous. But there is also some exquisitely delicate, liquid use of arms and hands. *This Show* asserts that life is full of complexities, connections, disjunctions and oppositions and that desolation and great beauty can walk hand in hand." -- The **Australian**

"... from the reaction of the audience I would say they certainly felt it was for them... it was a privilege to have experienced what Parker and his collaborators made. Totally full of wit and devastating in its clarity." -- **Kristy Edmunds, Artistic Director, Melbourne International Festival 2007**

"...beautiful and often gesturing toward the profound...Shaun Parker's *This Show is About People* is entirely unique and utterly wonderful." -- **Real Time**

*"This Show Is About People* plays beautifully with perception. Parker is a master of the art of directing your attention, which can make it seem like magic is happening at the other end of the stage, where things have changed completely while you weren't looking. The choreography is sharp, witty, precise, full of violence and desire and longing." -- **Theatre Notes**



Image: John Sones



# Divine Harmonies

## History

### Tours

- 2007 Riverside Theatre, Parramatta
- 2007 Victorian tour (Mildura, Swan Hill, Colac and Portland)
- 2007 Devonport, Tasmania
- 2005 Hobart, Launceston

### Awards

Nominated for a 2006 Australian Dance Award

### Selected for:

APAM, Adelaide, 2006

## Critical Reviews

*"Divine Harmonies* does fly. But it is not showy, not flashy. Rather, its flight is painful, majestic, ecstatic, and compassionate." --**The Mercury**

"When the three men eventually entered the stage dressed in suits, dancing in unison, I was moved to tears. Their counter-balancing expositions of masculinities and passion were tremendous, and ever so powerful. It ended in a manly duo to match the cosmic connectedness of the two women. This was the muscular, sweaty, aching and determined love of the warrior carrying his fallen brother home. The heaviness of death is the weight of the earth, the paradoxes of time exposed. I left the theatre that night truly inspired, and yes, moved to move." -- **Colac Otways Live**

"Two people speak in unison, hesitating from time to time but never failing to restart the story at exactly the same moment and to use identical rhythms. Their arms and hands describe graceful patterns, moving tightly within each other's orbit as if the two bodies have become one entity, joined by an invisible but powerful force. At the end, a man carries the inert body of another in a different and more intimate coupling: the living tending to the dead, perhaps." -- ??

"There is a deep sense of connectedness, not just with the here and now but with the larger world of ideas, emotions and the spirit...*Divine Harmonies* brings balm to the ears with its use of music by Meredith Monk and 12th-century composer and theologian Hildegard of Bingen, in whose writings Parker also found inspiration. -- **The Australian**

# Blue Love

## History

### Tours

- 2009 La Boite Theatre, Brisbane
- 2008 Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne  
Casula Powerhouse, Sydney
- 2007 Parramatta Riverside Theatres, Sydney  
Water Water Festival, Sale  
Mildura Wentworth Arts Festival, Mildura  
Singapore International Arts Festival and Singapore Arts Mart, Singapore
- 2006 Nelson Arts Festival, New Zealand
- 2005 Sydney Opera House

## Critical Reviews

This is a performance that splashes the trials and triumphs of true love all over the stage ... these are two very accomplished performers. Neave delivers her dialogue with wit and a great sense of timing. The subject matter trawls across Renaissance love songs, beautifully sung by Parker in his superb countertenor voice.

**Hilary Crampton. The Age**

Shaun Parker's "dance" hit is so cutting edge it actually wanders off the edge of any single-word definition. It's a tight package of snappy acting, super-smooth relevant dance, superb singing and a fat dose of funny. Parker calls it "multi media physical theatre". This reviewer will settle for a single word label after all: "brilliant". A funny, inspiring, heart-wrenching journey that turns an hour into a long exciting moment. Parker is a genius".

**Daily Telegraph**

BLUE LOVE is so much fun it can't possibly be good for you. Shaun Parker and Veronica Neave apply their well-honed dance skills to a movement-based parody of an upwardly mobile young couple who trip over their pretensions and their relationship with hilarious unpredictability.

**Jill Sykes, Sydney Morning Herald**

'An evening of amusement and also overwhelming poetic moments...Everything maintains an absurd, wonderful and amusing swing" -- **Berliner Zeitung**

'BLUE LOVE is funny, lyrical, surprising and mischievous – an elevating work, vivid with ideas and shimmering with skill. It's dance, it's film, it's satire, it's absurdist – a zephyr of cool cleverness...Shaun Parker is a creative force to be reckoned with.'

**Samela Harris, The Advertiser**



# My Little Garden

## History

### Tours

Barossa International Music Festival, Peter Lehmann Winery  
Adelaide, ADT Balcony Theatre

### Awards

Most Significant Production, Critic's Survey, Dance Australia  
Most Promising Choreographer, Critic's Survey, Dance Australia  
Emerging Artist of the Year Award, Arts SA  
Queen's Trust Achiever Award, For Direction, Choreography & Performance

## Critical Reviews

"There is a raw energy present at every level in this work, revealed most powerfully in the final sequence as one by one the dancers emerge from one of the water tanks. Amid violent rhythm, their physicality is forceful in such a small space, demanding on both themselves and the audience, but very real and ultimately empowering by its honesty. This is emotionally intelligent theatre without pretension and therein lies its success." -- **The Australian**

"Shaun Parker has a lot of experience at combining dance and song, but he also has a fresh bright counter tenor admirably suited to the medieval songs in this performance." --

**DB Magazine**

"Intelligent humour...powerful and uplifting theatre that never loses sight of fun." -- **Dance Australia**

# Sydney Dance Company Overture Series

## 'Love Installment'

### History

#### Season

2008 Sydney Dance Company CarriageWorks, Sydney

### Critical Reviews

"Shaun Parker has grabbed the amazing opportunity offered by the vast arena of the CarriageWorks foyer to devise a terrific piece entitled Love Installment. Around the foyer area are a series of raised scaffolding platforms. At some unseen sign pairs of dancers suddenly appear on the platforms, surrounded by puzzled, casually-gathered folk who are sipping their drinks and having a bit of a chat with mates while waiting to go in to the theatre. Viola player Nick Wales and drummer Bree van Reyk are on one platform and supply most of the soundtrack to what happens: a series of discrete duets that finally synchronise into harmonious signs of relationships forming. Love Installment is a delightful curtain raiser to the main event ... amazing concept." -- **Stage Noise**

"...but the evening starts with a gem, *Love Installment*, by Shaun Parker. As guests mill about with drinks, the lights dim, the spotlights go up, the musicians start, and a pair of dancers appears in each of the mini-boxing rings placed at eye level around the huge foyer space at CarriageWorks. *Love Installment* is a kind of dance expo. It's fun to be able to wander freely, sip your drinks, and check out each couple at close range as they perform simultaneously in each ring." -- **Emma Bladen**

"The couples' body language conveys both disconnection and attraction. United by original music from Nick Wales and Bree Van Reyk, which they perform live, there is a similar ethos among the couples, even though their dress suggests different generations and walks of life. The work builds until all five couples execute the same frenetic duet in unison... it's a friendly appetizer that whets the dance taste buds." -- **AUSTRALIAN ONLINE, Stephanie Glickman**

# SHORT DANCE FILMS by SHAUN PARKER

## **'NO' – A short dance film**

### **Screened**

Videodance Film Festival, Athens  
Video Danza de Buenos Aires, Argentina  
Auburn International Film Festival, Sydney  
Dance Moments, Krakow, Poland  
IMZ Dance Screen, Monte Carlo  
Dance Screen, San Francisco, USA  
Dance Briefs, Omeo Dance Space  
Short Trips, Melbourne  
Napolidanza, Napoli, Italy  
Scratch 'n Sniff Dance Shorts, New Zealand  
Dance Flicks, Dancehouse, Melbourne

## **'The Love Trilogy'**

**3 short dance films including Blue Love.**

### **Screened**

Constellation Film Festival, London  
Videodance Film Festival, Athens  
Bodyworks Film Festival, Melbourne  
Verona Film Festival, Verona, Italy

### **Awards**

Best Dance Film Nomination, Australian Dance Awards  
Best of Videodance Film Festival, Athens



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