A blaze of imaginative brilliance in ‘Flash’

The Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts opens its dance season for 2010 with a collection of imaginative and compelling new contemporary works by four international and national choreographers.

*Flash*, featuring eclectic dance works by Amaury Lebrun, Dean Walsh, Andries Weidemann and Sue Peacock, opens on Saturday 1 May for six performances in the Geoff Gibbs Theatre.

Headlining the *Flash* program is the premiere of ‘In Praise of Shade’, a new work created for the WAAPA dance students by French choreographer Amaury Lebrun.

Lebrun, who had garnered an international reputation as a soloist before embarking on his award-winning choreographic career, has taken his inspiration for ‘In Praise of Shade’ from the writings of renowned Japanese author, Jun’ichir Tanizaki.

For his dance piece entitled *In-habit*, Sydney-based choreographer Dean Walsh has invited the WAAPA Dance students to use different forms of movement to investigate and interpret environmental issues, such as climate change, global warming and questions of nature versus nurture.

“In the last few years, since becoming a scuba diver and a member of various environmental organisations, I’ve become fascinated by our connections and disconnections with the environment,” says Walsh, who has worked with England’s highly-regarded DV8 Physical Theatre. “*In-habit* is both a lament and an uplifting celebration that we are an amazing species capable of communicating through movement the stories of the world around us.”

WAAPA Dance Lecturer Andries Weidemann brings his irresistible sense of humour to his new work ‘All Looking for Love, Dear...’ which takes a quirky look at the expectations and disappointments in the quest to find love.

“From dreaming of discovering our soul-mate to placing an ad in the classifieds, this piece explores the delightfully surprising and sometimes disturbing consequences of our search for love,” says Weidemann. “In addition to the dance students, there will also be a guest appearance by Rusty the mutt!”

Before joining WAAPA’s teaching staff two years ago, South African born Weidemann enjoyed an international career in classical ballet and founded the South African Ballet Theatre School, providing ballet tuition to children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The final piece on the *Flash* program is a new contemporary dance work by local choreographer Sue Peacock, who last year won AusDance WA’s award for Outstanding Achievement in Choreography.

‘Any Given Moment’ is a movement piece for 10 dancers that explores notions of life being a series of never-ending beginnings and endings.

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**Media Release**

*Flash*, with its four new dance works by highly-respected choreographers performed by WAAPA’s 2nd and 3rd Year dance students, promises a richly varied and exciting evening of contemporary dance.

**Performance Information: Flash**
Saturday 1 May – Friday 7 May at 7.30pm.
The Geoff Gibbs Theatre, WAAPA, Edith Cowan University, 2 Bradford St, Mt Lawley.
Tickets are $22 full/$17 concession. Bookings through WAAPA Box Office on 9370 6636.

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**Amaury Lebrun**
French-born Amaury Lebrun began his dance studies at the school of Ballet du Nord before moving to New York to train at the School of American Ballet, where he was chosen by Jerome Robbins for a creation. Since then, Lebrun has worked as a soloist with European companies including the Jeune Ballet de France, the Ballet du Rhin, the Deutsche Staatsoper in Berlin and the Ballet de l’Opéra de Nice. Throughout these years, Lebrun gained international acclaim for his interpretations of works by choreographers such as Maurice Béjart, Georges Balanchine, Nils Christie, Carolyn Carlson, Roland Petit, Hans van Manen, John Cranko, Jose Limon, Maryse Delente and Myriam Naisy, among many others.

In 2000, he joined the Compañia Nacional de Danza as a soloist, performing works by the company’s Artistic Director Nacho Duato and other renowned choreographers such as Jiri Kylian, Ohad Naharin, William Forsythe, Jacopo Godani, Órjan Andersson, Mats Ek and Wim Vandekeybus. In 2002, LeBrun won first prize at the International Choreographic Competition in Burgos for his choreography of the piece, *Kenmey*. Since then, he has choreographed works for the Purchase College in New York, and in Spain for the Teatro Principal in Burgos and the Compañía Nacional de Danza in Madrid. In 2006 and 2008 he was a choreographer at the Summer Dance International in Burgos, creating works for students from New York’s Juilliard School and Alvin Ailey School.

Since 2009, LeBrun has been Artistic Director of his own company, the Amaury Dance Company, which performs at festivals around the world. LeBrun also continues to work as a guest choreographer, and runs courses, workshops and masterclasses.

**Dean Walsh**
Since completing his training at Sydney’s Bodenwieser Dance Centre in 1991, Dean Walsh has been an influential member of the Australian contemporary dance and queer performance communities as a performer, choreographer, director and teacher.

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Most recently, Walsh was choreographic assistant and movement advisor on with the highly acclaimed Stockholm, a co-production between London’s Frantic Assembly and Sydney Theatre Company.

Walsh has devised 25 solo works, many of which have toured nationally and/or internationally. In 2002 he was awarded the prestigious Robert Helpmann Scholarship which enabled collaborations in the UK with Lloyd Newson of DV8 Physical Theatre – leading to a two-year engagement – and in the Netherlands with Amsterdam-based choreographer, Paul Selwyn Norton.

Other highlights of Walsh’s career include touring and conducting workshops in Japan as part of the 2006 Australia/Japan Year of Cultural Exchange; choreographing the Australian Opera’s premiere season of Andrea Chenier, directed by Elke Neidhardt; and winning the 2002 Australian Dance Award for Most Outstanding Performance by a Male Dancer for his role in Australian Dance Theatre’s Age Of Unbeauty.

Walsh currently teaches at Sydney Dance Company, AusdanceNSW and NIDA, and regularly holds workshops in Sydney. He has also tutored at many of Australia’s leading universities and the New Dance Development Centre in Holland. Walsh is a member of the board of directors at AusdanceNSW.

Andries Weidemann

Andries Weidemann was born in South Africa, where he danced for PACT Ballet, the Cape Town City Ballet and the South African Ballet Theatre (SABT). With SABT Weidemann danced principal roles in all the major classical ballets with many of the world’s greatest choreographers. He has also danced with The Royal Danish Ballet, MTB Dansteater, The Fantastic Flying Fish Dance Company, The National Ballet of Zimbabwe, and in many galas and corporate events.

In 2001 Weidemann founded The SABT School in Pretoria, becoming actively involved in teaching ballet to children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The school, which grew to include a satellite training centre in Johannesburg, was renamed The School of Classical Ballet, South Africa, in 2008.

Sue Peacock

Peacock has danced with the Australian Dance Theatre, Limbs Dace Co, Helen Herbertson, One Extra Dance Company, Fieldworks Performance Group, Chrissie Parrott, ID339 Dancegroup and Co.Loaded. She received Best Female Dancer in Ausdance WA’s 2005 inaugural dance awards, in 2006 was awarded for ‘Services to Dance’ and in 2009 for Outstanding Achievement in Choreography for her latest work Questions Without Notice.

Peacock has made commissioned works for ADT, the One Extra Company, 2-Dance Plus, Chrissie Parrott Dance Co, WAAPA, Steps, Deckchair Theatre Co, Extensions, Dance North, Co.Loaded, LINK, AIT Arts Adelaide and Expressions Dance Company. Her independent work Give up the Ghost was performed in the 2004 Perth International Arts Festival.

Peacock lectures at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, is a founding member of STRUTdance and is currently their Artistic Program Manager. Peacock was a 2002/03 Churchill Fellow and received a 2004 ArtsWA Creative Development Fellowship.