THE LEISURE MISTRESS DANCES:
an investigation of a practice
where fact and fiction collide

Julie-Anne Long

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of the requirements for the degree of
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PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
ABSTRACT

It began as: A dancer struggling with the dilemma of where to locate her performance and her confusion with how others identified it. Perversely she chose to make a dance performance about leisure and some dance videos with a non-dancer to support her belief that her work is dance. Inspired by Martha Graham’s dictum “All theatre is dance” she launched herself off into this dance challenge.

Along the way it became: A dancer struggling with the dilemma of her life overwhelming her art. She fantasised about a life of leisure but the reality of living in a big city, earning a living, family and personal responsibilities, all impinged on her aspirations. She was challenged by the relationship between her “real life” and performance. So she surrendered to it and now makes work about her life, although she hopes no one will guess.

The LEISURE MISTRESS project is a perverse contemporary burlesque about leisure and inactivity investigated through a low-key style of dance performance, in an age where leisure pursuits are exhausting business. Julie-Anne questions her notions of dance, its place in her life and her work and challenges others ideas about what dance is. The concerns of the work include social, political, cultural and aesthetic issues. The core theme of leisure facilitates cultural investigation via performance with social critique being implicit. The process and the product are private, personal, idiosyncratic but have wider resonances and ramifications.
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My thanks and respect to my husband Rohan who is strangely absent from this story and to my son Buster who is delightfully omnipresent in this telling. I am indebted to my parents Pamela and Kevin who many years ago encouraged me to do what I had to do even though I know they would have preferred me to “get a real job”. Also Mama and Pa for the childcare and the camera. Special thanks, along with many cups of tea, to my friends and faithful babysitters; Paola and Ariel, Maggie, John, Fabian and Amelia, Sue-ellen and Minna, Nelly and Marlo. For those I have forgotten. I thank you all.
For Kai Tai Chan looking out from his restaurant on the mountain.

and

For Anne Woolliams (1926 - 1999) who inspired me through thick and thin.
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HER/STORY

Never trust the teller, trust the tale.

D. H. Lawrence
INTRODUCTION

I have written this book about my career as a ballerina, the hardships that I suffered and the happiness that I received in return, are all written about in this book. Some of the other ballet students that I attend ballet school with and myself help to unravel a mysterious mystery. The book starts off as it is at the moment (I am Italy's prima ballerina) then I will start from the very beginning of my ballet career.

When you have read this book I hope you will be a bit more

Introduction from TO DANCE YOUR LIFE AWAY Julie-Anne Long, 1972 (p. 1).
In Dance Your Life Away

interested in ballet, and realize that it isn't as easy as it looks, and that it takes practice to make anything perfect.

Ballet Shoes

Introduction from TO DANCE YOUR LIFE AWAY Julie-Anne Long, 1972 (p. 2).
HISTORY OF A DANCER

Julie-Anne Long was born in Auckland in 1961 and from the tender age of seven and a half, learnt ballet at The Jill Proudfoot School of Dancing. (Proud Foot. No kidding!) This should be understood as the initial clue on her path of obstructions. From the first humiliating lesson in silver bridesmaid slippers to her triumphant tutu-bottomed Solo Seal examination, she was in love! In retrospect, this was an emotional attachment to be viewed with much caution.

In 1980 she crossed the Tasman to study at the Victorian College of the Arts, School of Dance. While some girls held onto their dreams of swanning it the romantic way, Julie-Anne was consumed by a new way of moving and living! A merging of life and art which definitely didn’t fit the classical ballet mould! A merging of life and art that was to shadow her life and art.

Having stuck-out the institution till the bitter end, she was fortunate to walk away with her first professional dancing “gig”- a two year contract with Human Veins Dance Theatre. Unfortunately the challenge of fitting into the unitard-ed mould of the contemporary dancer was too too much. Contract expired and eager to be leaving Canberra, Julie-Anne was invited to Sydney, to work with Kai Tai Chan and the One Extra Company. On seeing her a couple of weeks before she started work Kai Tai exclaimed “Oh no, you’ve lost weight!” She knew she was home! Three years passed with stimulating dance/theatre roles, opportunities to choreograph and a busy international, national (and regional) touring schedule. JA was happy to be “getting paid for something she loved doing”, as many people were often telling her. But ... her body was weary of dancing five/six days a week, tired of getting up to a morning dance class. She wanted and needed a breather!
In 1988 having been gainfully employed as a dancer for (5 x 52) 270 weeks she slipped comfortably into the life of a student, relaxed in body if not in finances; a worker at the NIDA factory! After a year of slave labour and back in the "real world", with the Directors Course tucked under her steadily expanding belt, this ex-dancer bumped into the life of the freelance artist. Dancer, performer, choreographer, movement consultant-designer-advisor... For years it bode her well including her appointment as Associate Artistic Director of The One Extra Company. In 1995 she conceived and performed her first solo show CLEAVAGE at The Performance Space in downtown Redfern. It wasn't the only thing she conceived during this time, but more of that later. While performing in the dark recesses of CLEAVAGE Julie-Anne found home again. Here she could be herself.

Four years later, Ms Long is still alive, although one would hardly look at her these days and pick her for the "Betty Bun Head" she once was. Michelle Potter writes, in her review of Julie-Anne's work BODY OF EVIDENCE (Dance Australia, September, 1996.) "I wish the company would put the skills of its dancers to better use. Why employ dancers when they are so rarely asked to realise their potential?" JA asks herself this question also, but her answers are confident though problematic when compared to this critic's opinion and some others. Julie-Anne muses that if her practice, informed by 20+ years of rigorous dance training, is not embedded in or not informed by her inherent dance knowledge, then what the hell is it that she does? She believes that her thinking and performance making is heavily indebted to her identity as a dancer. She wonders at the narrowness of the definition of dance in Australia but can't help worrying that maybe she is a deluded old has been!

So, she has set out on a quest, a talent quest of strange sorts, a research
project. *The Princess Tina Ballet Book No. 4* tells us that dance is "... all that poetry of motion, all that graceful elegant athleticism, breathtaking, beautiful, a magical world ..." (1971, p. 21). Is it? Well, Julie-Anne's work is not blatantly graceful or elegant or athletic, is rarely breathtaking, not necessarily beautiful and seldom "poetry in motion." However to perform Julie-Anne's work, she believes you need to be a dancer. Your body must have a muscle memory that thinks/without thinking, like a dancer. A knowledge and control that is second nature, not affected or contrived. Julie-Anne does not demonstrate the layers and years of dance training in her performances. Why would she?

**LEISURE MISTRESS** is Julie-Anne's latest solo work, she finds herself back in the studio with ... herself! Not a pretty site! It's been a long time between battements and she's keen to be doing something about doing nothing. A wayward attitude to dance! Ms Long confided in me:

I am interested in a dance style which is grounded in the aesthetics of transgression, inversion, and the grotesque; a contemporary burlesque. My concerns in movement over the past years have been heading towards the minuscule, the particular, the pedestrian, the qualities of dance that you have to scan closely for. The content of my solo work inevitably reflects my life and it is the content that I am most consumed by. I am wanting to explore the area between pure self-revelation and carefully constructed artifice and the examination of personal, often domestic, issues. The dancing is necessary but often incidental.

The other arm to this research is **THE BUSTER PROJECT**: a body of work which frames these questions and ideas about dance. A series of dance video episodes made over two years, at intervals of six months employing the lowly paid Buster Wilson as primary subject and object. Buster is a 3 year old boy whose mother is a choreographer. Julie-Anne is that choreographing mother. Buster is a non-dancer, a natural-pedestrian-mover, untrained in finer dance techniques but none the less he willingly and unknowingly features in these
dance videos. The choreography and dance making occurs in the editing of
the footage and is highly constructed through the rhythm and editing choices.

LEISURE MISTRESS, THE BUSTER PROJECT and an EXEGESIS.

GOOD LUCK TO HER!


All names remain unchanged.
Fact or fiction?
You decide!

When Julie-Anne asked me to write this introduction
I knew it would be difficult to encapsulate the ideas and influences of this enterprise.
But as I stand here with my tongue firmly in my cheek
I trust that she has put her best foot forward
and rolled with the punches as they presented themselves.
In the 37 years 9 months and 22 days that I have known Ms Long
she has always hung-in-there
despite the odds.

JL
Favouring the demi-character: "Tail of a Mouse" Julie-Anne Long, 1970.
TO DANCE YOUR LIFE AWAY

In early 1999 my Mum delivered a pile of old school work and childhood memorabilia with the comment, "I'm going to throw all this stuff out but thought you might want to sort through it yourself." I remembered the long forgotten book immediately. A magenta cellophane covered book filled with dreams and aspirations, pig faced drawings and a Cuban hijacking! Much to my horror it was just the thing I needed to propel me off on another trail of detection.

Picture this: It's 1972, Miss Brainer's Standard 4 class at St Thomas's Primary School have just been given the biggest assignment of their sweet little lives - to write a novel. One eager beaver is immediately inspired to combine her greatest loves; ballet and flying in big aeroplanes. In the tradition of Veronica at the Wells and Arthur Halley's Airport the bright eyed young thing crams an exercise book full with TO DANCE YOUR LIFE AWAY.

In Women and Dance: Sylphs and Sirens Christy Adair refers to the young girls' dream of becoming a ballerina which is a predominant fantasy in western culture "... the many ballet stories which contribute to this fantasy offer girls a career option, an escape from women's domestic roles. These stories present an encouraging role model to girls with the message that hard work and talent will provide success." (1992, p. 82). At the age of ten, and for some years after, I was consumed by ballet and a romanticised vision of "life on the boards". For me it was not so much the notion of "escape from women's domestic roles" but rather the outlet that dancing provided for communication. I was a shy child and dancing fostered my self confidence and provided a platform for me to express myself freely through a disciplined experience of my body. I know many tales of young girls being "crushed" by overbearing ballet teachers, but
fortunately it was not my early experience.

TO DANCE YOUR LIFE AWAY was in small part real and in greater slices vividly imagined. Here I am eighteen years later pursuing a project with a similar collision between fact and fiction. How can it be that I still find this interest compelling? The personal nature of my dance making process makes the use of autobiographic sources unavoidable ... “in writing about ourselves we also construct ourselves as somebody different from the person who routinely and unproblematically inhabits and moves through social space and time” (Stanley, 1992). In making solo work, utilising myself as the raw material, I inevitably construct a character which is larger-than-life. The persona is a composite of reality and artifice.

From my contemporary perspective it is difficult for me to transport myself back to an innocent age where a night at “the ballet” was a truly magical experience. While I am often impressed by the technical display of the dancers, the lack of any relevance to my daily life, the twee scenarios and portrayal of women often embarrasses me. I have too much of myself invested in dance to relax and enjoy it as entertainment.

Furthermore ballet is powerful in it’s effects upon the dancer. It marks deeply not only the neuromusculature but also the perceptual disposition of the dancer. As Russell Dumas has remarked; “Techniques like ballet put railway tracks through the sensibility...’ (1998:7). Dumas’ point is that there is an intimate connection between perception and practice. “How you see movement is how you learned it’, he observes. Ballet is not unique in its formative effect upon perception, but it is a particularly powerful technology of the body. Begun in childhood, it’s effects are thoroughgoing and long lasting.

Elizabeth Dempster "Ballet and Its Other: Modern Dance in Australia" paper MAP (Movement and Performance Symposium) (p.16).
"Thank you, Madame," I said quickly because I wanted to hurry home and tell my family about the unexpected news.

I was to dance the part of one of the village maidens....
In between periods of extreme exhaustion, frenzied activity and passive surrender, I embrace the notion of once-a-dancer-always-a-dancer and attempt to understand this life that I dance. The writings for this research are part autobiographical, part biographical, part self-revelation, part self help, part art object, part and parcel of who I am. I have assembled them using the rigorously academic principle of “that feels right.” There is no denying the fact that omnipresent in this body of work is an idiosyncratic sensibility. My voice. A voice that narrates, backtracks, jumps ahead of itself, remembers, records and reports, tells anecdotes, attempts to describe, embellishes truths and nags and praises. A female voice within a female form. There are no striking climaxes, no earth shattering revelations. Instead these writings are an accumulation of experience which reveals itself in a less extravagant way. Interspersed through the main narrative, are LINKS #1, #2, #3, #4. These interruptions relate to other work that I have been involved with during this time. They are writings from projects which have intersected and inspired the concerns of this research.

THE LEISURE MISTRESS DANCES:

an investigation of a practice where fact and fiction collide.

The Collins Australian Dictionary tells me an investigation should be “a careful search or examination in order to discover facts”. I don’t deal purely in facts. I am interested in what doesn’t make the page as much as what does. I ask myself how can I include the stillness’ and silences? What about the Ideas discarded and unrecorded? The slippages, unsystematic tangents, the forgotten bits, the experiences I cannot / do not need to find words for? How should I deal with these things in the written form? I have accepted that they are not part of this particular exegesis but I have not resolved this dilemma for future work. However, these omissions are all stored and imprinted
somewhere in my body. Some of them make an appearance in the LiNKS.

TO DANCE YOUR LIFE AWAY was about dancing and “the dance”. In LEISURE MISTRESS the dance is not an end in itself, but a way of opening up my world, an ordinary everyday world where my body is the central player. It is through dance that I can most succinctly express myself.
LEISURE MISTRESS

To exercise is human. Not to is divine.

Robert Orben
SYNOPSIS

In the faded splendour of the Lounge, the Leisure Mistress iolters. She is a former dancer forced to give up work when the child care payments exceeded her income. Following years of stressful rest, her body only momentarily remembers the previously rigorous demands she once made of it. Instead it has begun to invent a new range of movements - some supported with her own line of prostheses. She is a performer whose work fell out of favour in a time of extreme physicality. Here in the Lounge, she awaits the next wave of economy of energy, and in a personal protest, performs her own set of idiosyncratic movements. Leisure Mistress remembers her days as a former mover and shaker and participant in uplifting art, unfortunately in recent years she has been overtaken by fears of gravity. As she falls from favour in an up-decade, her movement still struggles to its former heights but more often, haphazardly and soulfully free falls.

This tawdry, tragic performer now nightly drags herself to the stage to perform her burlesque for the new millennium. What is it that keeps her coming back to perform again? Perhaps the knowledge that each night she will momentarily restore the lustre of her former life of full employment and for a brief moment, cast a glimmer of light on the dilemma of the new age here in the luxurious languor of the Leisure Lounge.

What is the dilemma of the new age? Well, like many others, Leisure Mistress had been looking forward to the new Age of Leisure prophesied to come at the end of the greedy 80s. Inclining towards looseness, she longed for escape from life where personal value was tied only to work. But alas, the fears of a return to the decadent Victorian culture of indolence, when fainting ladies were revived by smelling salts, have replaced hopes for an era of pure pleasure. What slowly began to seep in was an even more rigorous work ethic, meaner business, a new set of employment options in the leisure industries - guided tours of a threatened species - an arts industry! In her former glory she lifted her skirts stepping over the unemployed like puddles. Fighting diseases of stress, Leisure Mistress had sex only on Saturdays. As an artist she pursued the corporate dollar. Eventually, reeling from the race, she was noticed falling
down in the street, leaning against walls of public buildings, sinking into chairs now provided in greater quantities by department stores and banks. Leisure Mistress wandered aimlessly from the city, lying down on public roadways. Until now, she comes to ground, as she slowly remembers that she is 98% water, she begins to let herself go....

“My Favourite Shot of Me” Bunny Yeager, c. 1950's
SWEET MISS / MISS STRESS

In August 1985 I stripped in front of an audience for the first time. I can't claim to be a stripper but it was a very exposing experience. It was at The Performance Space in Sydney, in the middle of winter in a show called DINOSAUR. [1] I stood in the centre of the stage in a bare spotlight and methodically took my costume off piece by piece. I had nothing to hide behind; no gold lame cape, no feathers, no stilettos... It was just me and my body in bare feet, under the light, on the stage, with an audience. I wasn't in character, I was just myself. I then had to proceed down the stairs, full frontal and walk across the floor space very slowly, to be hung up by my ankles... but that's another story!

Leisure Mistress is sitting on a couch in a lounge room with a magazine on her lap, naked. Covered in bubbles from head to toe, fresh from the bath. She sees us, puts the magazine aside and gets up immediately. She stands square on to the camera and begins to put her clothes on piece by piece. First some lacy black panties (and I choose that word very carefully) and a rather matronly white over-shoulder-boulder-holder, with sensible thick shoulder straps. The panties suggest a very different type of woman to the brassiere. The bra has connotations of the maternal breast, the domestic, while the panties are exquisitely erotic and exotic. A double edged femininity - the virgin and the whore perhaps?

Her eyes dart to the right, a smile flickers across her face and she giggles. Leisure Mistress is self conscious. She continues dressing in a matter of fact manner. On goes the garter belt, on goes the stockings, on goes the shoes.

[1] DINOSAUR was a dance theatre piece directed by Rhys Martin, an expatriate living and working in Germany. He had returned to Australia for an intensive rehearsal period, to work with a gaggle of performers in and around The One Extra Company. (The core of the DINOSAUR cast went on to form The Sydney Front the following year.)
There are no embellishments, no strippers tricks to hide behind, even though she knows we are watching. On goes the skivvy, followed closely by the double breasted dress. The words “End of Part One” come up on the screen against a fake wood veneer background. Now she is ready for the main event and we’re only one minute twenty eight seconds into the act.

John Berger’s comment on women as both the surveyor and the surveyed from *Ways of Seeing* comes to mind at the end of Part One.

A woman must continually watch herself... From earliest childhood she has been taught and persuaded to survey herself continually. And so she comes to consider the surveyed and the surveyor within her as the two constituent yet always distinct elements of her identity as a woman. (1972, p. 46).

_Leisure Mistress_ is outside herself, looking at herself. She wears a slightly embarrassed “how do I look?” expression, but appears to be enjoying the experience. The camera zooms into a mid shot on her breasts, her head is decapitated. We observe a subtle rocking movement of her torso from side to side with the enclosed breasts shimmying. It is a “little dance.” From there the camera scans up to her face and the music changes to Tchaikovsky.

_Leisure Mistress_ plumps up the cushion to her right and lies in profile along the lounge. Now we switch to an aerial shot closing in on the torso and face. Her body undulates gently in a random body roll and she appears to be chewing the inside of her cheek - another “little dance.” She smiles and fidgets around on the lounge, curling in to the wall, rolling onto her other side and finally fluffing with the cushion and lying out on her back. “End of Part Two.”

Part Three: She stands, arching her back as if it is aching, this conveniently pushes her breasts outwards and upwards, she smiles. Then as if following a
prompt, she turns from one profile to the other. Her body is central in the frame and she shifts from side to side to display herself.

This reminds me of the 19th century ethnological photography where the naked subject was posed standing and sitting, full frontal or in profile. William A. Ewing in his book *The Body: Photoworks of the Human Form* describes:

In the late 1860's T. H. Huxley and John Lamprey drew up systems of standard procedures for ethnological photography... Huxley placed his subjects next to a clearly marked measuring rod: Lamprey's were positioned in front of a metrological grid of 2 inch squares made from string... common to all was the fundamentally racist idea that the "lower orders" would prove to be physically inferior. (1994, p. 15).

The static placement and the instructions from off camera, suggest to me a relationship between Leisure Mistress and the, I am assuming male director, not dissimilar from the photographer and his native subject.

*Drum roll and Leisure Mistress places her index finger precisely on her cheek with the thumb of the same hand under her chin. Her opposite arm supports the "thinking" position. She must be intelligent as well as attractive. This is the first stylised gesture that she has performed. Leisure Mistress is demonstrating that she is thinking and once again she is aware that we are looking at her. What is this performance that we are looking at? Is it high culture/art or pop culture/look art? Is this a striptease or what's the reverse? Is this naturalistic or is this a dance? Is it good or is it bad? Is it arbitrary or is it highly contrived? This is more like a home movie. An eroticised folk performance in a domestic setting.*
The previous description has been inspired by an act entitled "Sweet Miss" from a 1950's-1960's compilation video called Shocking Strippers. I have contextualised this cultural artefact for my own purposes and reconfigured the content and original intentions to suit myself.

"Sweet Miss" begins with a strip. LEISURE MISTRESS begins with a dressing up. I am interested in the "little dances" that this sequence provides. Nothing too vigorous, just a movement moment. Although they are all apparently naturalistic in terms of movement content, the heightened awareness of being watched, adds a stylistic element that tightens the rhythm and muscularity of the performers' moves. The body is unable to employ a dance technique to disappear behind and I believe that in this state the body's history is revealed most blatantly. As well as these stylised moments I am also drawn to the accidents that occur - following the impulse to pick up some fluff from the carpet, scratching at the face when she turns from the camera. (If I can't see you, you can't see me.) I am also interested in the relationship between the audience and the performer and the line of understanding where we all know this isn't real this is pretend. Yes it is a postmodern pastiche. No it is not postmodern dance.

* See LINK #1 DOING A DUMAS (p. 21 - 22).
DOING A DUMAS

In mid-1997 I was invited by Russell Dumas to participate in the Dance Exchange project *The Oaks Cafe*. The focus of the project was to investigate a dancer's “performance”, as Russell describes it; “the noise that remains around each performer within the formal embrace of the choreography”. The practice was concerned with what the body includes and excludes, what it proposes and suppresses in performance as issues of significance within the choreographic process. Russell proposes that choreography can be seen as a bond between the body’s repertoire of imagery and another reality. Other choreographic concerns in *The Oaks Cafe* project focused on contingency plans that evolve during the act of choreography and the decisions made post-production: commentary, editing, juxtaposition and contextualisation. There was a tension set up by the inscribed experience of the body of the performer, and the narrative fiction set up by the formal choreographic concerns.
DOING A DUMAS

I took up the invitation from Russell Dumas to be part of The Oaks Cafe Project with a hint of trepidation. I have watched and admired the work of Dance Exchange over the years and I was all too aware that our work practices and performance styles were poles apart. However I recognised that this was precisely what attracted me to the project.

Due to problems with schedules the worships with Sara Rudner and Jennifer Way Rawe were unable to occur within the time frame. This was disappointing but the project was able to shift focus onto the work that Dance Exchange had been making over the last years. Working with Russell Dumas generated a lot of information and valuable stimulus and was especially inspiring as I had not danced for four years.

In early 1998 I began learning existing movement material from The Oaks Cafe. Part of the process involved personal choreographic variations on a set of Russell's phrases. This studio work continued in a spasmodic way, according to other commitments, over the whole of 1998. This gave me the chance to engage in the process at my own pace.

In February / March 1999 I worked in a more intense way for three weeks full-time leading up to Cassandra's Dance at the Sydney Opera House, as part of antistatic 99. The performance season was essential to the development of the material as it clarified the process for me and I came to a clearer understanding of how I had engaged with the material. My performance persona and inscribed bodily experience met the formal choreographic demands on the stage!

This project has given me a renewed interest and belief in dance. Russell Dumas's aesthetic and philosophy on dance as an art form has inspired me in my own dance practice and I believe that this will intersect in a challenging way with my choreographic process. For me this was an inspiring and rewarding experience.

Julie-Anne Long, May '99.
In the Sydney Morning Herald in March 1998 there was an article on the soft focus world of glamour photography. “Across the country, people from housewives to hairdressers to lawyers are paying big money to be made up by a professional and photographed at their most seductive... Until recently glamour photography was an American phenomenon... What is surprising is how little people seem to talk about it. This is a private pleasure: an album of dreams or a photo for the bedroom wall. Sometimes these secret selves are unrecognisable even to their owners.” Maybe LEISURE MISTRESS is my secret life?

In CLEAVAGE [2] my 1995 solo work, I spent most of the performance naked from the waist up with my breasts just hanging around. I wanted to subvert the “perv” quality that you often get with nudity in performance and by exposing myself with little fuss, audience members found it either incredibly disconcerting and confronting, or quickly accepted and forgotten. The sound track, which I recorded myself, provided an eclectic array of thoughts on breasts and cleavages from discussions with female friends, a paleontologist, a group of men, a bra fitter and some young children. Amongst this was a discourse on how dance doesn’t quite know what to do with breasts. Kathy Driscoll offered:

It's interesting in dance that most dance practice ignores... boobs. There is no sense that the front of the body has two bumps on it if you’re female. There is a sense of very clearly anatomically defined use of, use and understanding of the body. The understanding of the spine, of spiral, of articulation in the pelvis and joints in the body, much more working from a skeletal understanding of the body, very little understanding or I suppose an use of the knowledge of hormones, tissue, fat cells. What impact do those parts of the body have on the dance?

Dramaturg: Virginia Baxter. The Performance Space Studio, June/July 1995
LEISURE MISTRESS also deals with the body.
Or more specifically the dancing body which is not a dancer's body.
Or the non dancing body which is a dancer's body.

This perverse attitude to dance and the dancer
has lead to my interest in a dance of inactivity and lounging.
A dance of laissez-faireism!
Loitering,
inertia,
Immobility,
procrastination,
stillness
and passive self-annihilation.
These states initiate and prompt the movement concerns
of this made-to-measure solo work
LEISURE MISTRESS.
THE BUSTER PROJECT

Never work with children or animals.
W.C. Fields
DANCES WITH A CANDID CAMERA

This year's Biennale of Sydney reflected a growing interest among contemporary artists in everyday phenomena and the power of simple gestures. Artistic Director Jonathan Watkins argues that artistic sources of inspiration are increasingly found closer to home. Their works often have a directness which connects them to what is common or familiar. They are observations on the nature of our everyday lives.

1998 11th Biennale of Sydney "everyday."

The Buster Project is of the everyday. Buster is a boy whose mother is a choreographer. I am that choreographer. THE BUSTER PROJECT started out as a personal plan to make a home video of my son to send to his grandparents. Episode #1 was completed in mid 1997 when Buzzy was 16 months old, it made a great Christmas present! It focused on his locomotive skills and used a simple narrative.

Home movies have an unfortunate reputation because it's easy to confuse what is interesting to oneself with what is interesting to others. So I decided to think about what Buster was doing physically at that particular time and create a narrative using these actions, to give the video a coherent structure and continuity. It became a choreographic exercise. THE BUSTER PROJECT sits in an area between reality and constructed artifice, starting with a simple concept for each episode.

With Episode #1 BUZZY, I used the premise of sending Buster unaccompanied to the shops to get the newspaper. At the time he was only just beginning to walk and as he had a fabulously unorthodox but nonetheless efficient crawl, I decided to utilise that plus the numerous other modes of transport that he enjoyed. I scripted the journey and prepared a storyboard to shoot from. The storyboard is at page 62 - 65. MEDITATION #2 Buzzy.
A SILENCE
Around this time I was inspired and bemused by the range of reading material that I devoured which reflected the concerns of, almost undoubtedly first time parents, about the physical idiosyncrasies of their child. When told “You mean he’s not walking yet and he’s only ever crawled like that!” I rushed to read if my instincts that my son was AOK were misguided or justified. Most literature reassured me that every child is unique; each develops at his or her own pace and because few children are perfectly average or typical, comparisons are not very useful.

“By the end of this month, your toddler... should be able to:

* pull up to standing position
* get into a sitting position
* cruise (move from place to place, always holding on)
* clap hands (play “patty-cake”)  
* indicate wants in ways other than crying.”

*What to Expect: The Toddler Years,* (Eisenberg, 1995, p.1)

“SLOWPOKE WALKER “I really thought that by now my son would have started walking. But he hasn’t even tried yet.” FREQUENT FALLS “Our one-year-old daughter can barely stay on her feet for five minutes at a time without falling. Is something wrong with her coordination?” CONTINUED CLUMSINESS “My toddler has been walking for a year now, but he still falls or trips several times a day. Could he have a problem with his coordination?” BUMPING INTO THINGS “My son constantly bumps into things - tables, chairs, people. Could something be wrong with his eyesight?” TOEING-IN (PIGEON-TOES) “Now that my daughter has started walking, I’ve noticed that her toes turn inward. Is this something that needs attention?” TOEING-OUT “My son who has been walking for a few weeks now, walks like a bow-legged duck, with his toes pointing out. Is this normal?” FLAT FEET “Both my wife and I have normal arches, but our fourteen-month-old son seems to be completely flat-footed. We’re worried this could be a problem.” TOE WALKING “Our daughter just started walking and seems to think she’s a toe-dancer. Her feet are never flat on the ground.” KNOCK-KNEES “Our daughter was very bow-legged when she started to walk a couple of years ago; now suddenly, she seems knock-kneed. What’s going on?”

“What you may be concerned about” from *What to Expect: The Toddler Years,* (Eisenberg, Composite from Chapter One).
A STILLNESS
For ALIEN Episode #2 I was interested in capturing the rhythm of Buster’s simple walking patterns, trips and falls. I shot the footage in twenty hectic minutes, having a clear idea of character, setting and atmosphere, and from this I created the schedule of shots which I later storyboarded with a focus on ground patterns from which it would be possible to learn “the dance.” The storyboard is at page 79 - 81. MEDITATION #4 Alien.

The “Prelude” from *Les Sylphides* drifts in the background atmosphere;
Da da-da dum dum dummmmmm... Da da-da dum dum dummmmmm... Da da-da dum dum dummmmmm... Da da-da dum dum dummmmmmmmmmmmm...

A group of wood nymphs or sylphs (Sylphides) are dancing in a faraway forest. Sunbeams sliding through the trees light up the white flowers in their hair and their quivering silver wings. The sylphs drift to and fro as though wafted by a gentle breeze. Sometimes they seem like wind-blown leaves. Sometimes they move like white waves rolling in and retreating from the shore. Sometimes they are almost transparent, filmy figures in the mist.

Their dances tell no story, but they express heights and depths of emotion. The nymphs respond to the music in all its changing moods - sad in the Nocturne, wistful in the Waltz, gay in the Mazurka, joyful in the Grande Valse Brillante. Everything is radiance as the sylphs move exquisitely, ecstatically. It is like a beautiful dream remembered, like poetry realized without words and recreated in motion.

*Louis Untermeyer, Tales from the Ballet* (1969, p. 15).

This is music to dance to. The prelude composed by Frederic Chopin, is part of the ballet *Les Sylphides* choreographed in 1908 by Michel Fokine. I used this music as the inspiration for Episode #2 of THE BUSTER PROJECT.

*Let me describe the scene: it’s cold and dark, the night is closing in fast. We’re exposed to the elements. The subject is galloping ahead. I’ve got the camera in my RH and the torch in my LH. I can’t look into the viewfinder because I have
to keep my eyes on the subject and anticipate what might happen next. The terrain is hazardous and he has no sense of fear. I don't want to lose my star in some nasty accident. The focus of the camera is left to it's own devices while I am split between the roles of director, camera operator, lighting designer, child welfare officer and caterer.

It occurs to me that making THE BUSTER PROJECT is rather like making a wildlife documentary. Here is an extract from "Strictly for the Birds", describing a trip with Sir David Attenborough to Venezuela where he is filming a sequence for the series The Life of Birds:

Down at the Natural History Unit, when they talk about their location shoots they always come back to one goal: "getting the behaviour.” it is relatively easy to record a creature on camera; the real trick is to catch it doing what you know it is capable of, the thing that makes it extraordinary. A bird if paradise having a snooze is not much cop. A bird of paradise taking out it’s maracas and doing the samba is one of the wonders of the world. Pearson, 1998.

For human wildlife you need a lot of patience and ingenuity, it is essential to keep your wits about you and despite all the pre-planning, you know that you can’t repeat shots. If you miss that magic moment - tough! The challenge is for the camera to be as unobtrusive as possible. Or in my case, the challenge is to capture Buster acting unselfconsciously in front of the camera. The subject is the movie itself; a single subject video essay.

A great deal of this type of film making is created at the editing stage. I used video editing techniques to “choreograph” the natural undisciplined physicality of a child, dictated by my choice of shots and manipulation of footage in the editing suite. Basic editing tools that I started to experiment with in ALIEN include changes of speed and retrograding action. I am always working
consciously to direct the viewer's attention to specific parts of the body through a variety of shots from panoramic to extreme close up.

I suffered from a trace of apprehension as I committed myself to THE BUSTER PROJECT. My one niggling fear was that this could be construed as indulgent nepotism - let me be the one who said it first! However, I prefer to think it was more a case of resourcefulness and using whatever material is easily accessible. David Hockney's daschunds Stanley and Boodgle are the sole subjects and inspiration featured in his latest book *David Hockney's Dog Days* (Bullfinch, 1998).

My plan was to have completed six episodes by the end of this research, in conjunction with making a solo performance piece for myself. Each episode was to be produced approximately six months apart, to utilise and identify the various stages of Buster's physical development. I was not proposing to "make him do what I want" (if only I could!) for unlike a performing bear, there was no preparation or training for Buster! Rather I planned to set up environments and situations to encourage him to "do what he does" and let the candid camera observe him in a "natural state." (think *Born Free*) The challenge for me was in devising a concept for each self-contained episode to support this idea of a dance video. Manipulating the footage choreographically in the editing suite was to be a substantial part of the process, considering that I often had less than ideal footage to work with! The objective was for the series to exist as short films which utilised movement as their primary communicator.

But hang on a minute what is going on? Why the past tense? Well...

On Thursday April 1st, 1999, THE BUSTER PROJECT hit a brick wall! What had happened? I had footage for Episode #3 but I was stumped when it came
to deciding what to do with it. It wasn’t at all what I wanted. It wasn’t at all useful for the concept I had in mind. First I tried looking at it afresh with the possibility of adapting the idea and going with something that came out of the raw material that existed. Nothing... Then I thought about extending a scene with Buster’s shadow, one small glimmer of interest and shooting more footage using shadows but that proved to lead nowhere. What were the identifiable problems?

1. Buster was self-consciously aware of the camera and “mugging” constantly. The more I tried to distract him the more he played to the camera.

2. He wouldn’t do anything that I wanted him to do. Remember I wasn’t going to make him do what I wanted, I was only going to observe what he did. Hah! I can’t drop my role as benevolent dictator with the ease I imagined!

3. On a practical level the prospect of editing this conglomeration of unsatisfactory material was daunting. To make use of the fabulous editing facilities at the University it would have taken 2 hours to travel there - maximum student time allowed in the editing suite is 2 hours - 2 hours travelling time home. So for 2 hours in the editing suite it would cost me practically a whole day. Add to that the fact that I am an inexperienced operator of the Media 100 suite and it usually took me a good part of my time setting up and getting the feel for the equipment. In terms of economy of time the editing was proving to be a costly practice.

I abandoned this project after Episode #2, in order to concentrate on LEISURE MISTRESS. The demands on my time defeated me. The worn out heroine could only do so much. I don’t subscribe to the perpetual state of Supermum. I am still committed to the aims and objectives of THE BUSTER PROJECT but I will resume this course of action at a later date.

In 1999 I completed a “Writing for Children Course” and drafted two children’s picture books with a movement theme central in each.

* See LINK #2 CHILDREN’S PICTURE BOOKS (p. 35 - 41).
Dear Ms T...

I am a choreographer/performer. Over the past ten years I have written a body of text for performance, recently published in “Performing the Unnameable”, Currency Press, 1999. In the past year I have shifted my focus to include writing for children and I am currently interested in incorporating the knowledge I have gained through my movement teaching of children, into my writing.

“Danny Loves Dancing” is the story of a 6 year old boy who loves dancing in his special costume at home. His friend Jake sees him dancing in private and thinks it’s a huge joke. He tells all the kids at school and for days they laugh and tease Danny. Danny is miserable because his secret is out. Jake feels bad because he realises that he has hurt his friend. So with the help of his teacher and all the kids in the class, Jake hatches a plan to cheer Danny up. One morning they all arrive at school and set up costumes and music. When Danny arrives at school he is greeted by a room full of dancing Dannies!

“Galloping Grace” begins with a dream. In her dreams Grace is strong, fast and tricky. But in her days Grace is small, quiet and timid. The problem is she doesn’t feel small, quiet and timid. So, Grace decides to show people what she’s really like. One morning she gets dressed with layers and layers of clothes. Grace is unrecognisable. She gallops to school and in front of the assembly she undresses to reveal the true identity of the mysterious galloper. The crowd goes wild. They no longer see Grace as small, quiet and timid. Everyone cheers for Galloping Grace and Grace feels great!

These are two of a collection of four stories using this movement theme. They can exist individually or work as a series. There are five friends who appear in different combinations. Danny and Jake are the main characters in “Danny Loves Dancing”. Although we do see the others in the classroom scenes, Grace features in “Galloping Grace” with Jake and Izzy making cameo appearances and all can be spotted in the assembly scene. Izzy is the chief protagonist in “Izzy Does It!” supported by the others. All five feature in “The Show Goes On” with Theo taking the lead.

Please find enclosed my picture books “Danny Loves Dancing” and “Galloping Grace”. I look forward to hearing from you and enclose a self-addressed envelope.

Yours faithfully,
DANNY LOVES DANCING

Danny loves dancing.

Danny wears a special costume when he dances. His underpants with stars. His bright white singlet. His back to front hat and around his waist an inflatable orange swimming ring. Danny likes to see his toes when he dances.

Some days Danny dances to the Herb Boys. Other days Brass Band Marches. In fact Danny dances to all sorts of music, it just depends what sort of mood he is in.

First he warms up on the rug in the living room. He stretches like a pussy cat, curling his body in as small as possible. Then he reaches out with his feet and hands, far apart.

Next Danny moves onto the wooden floor. Spreading his arms, he prances around the room like a pony. He picks up his feet as if the floor was muddy and then as if the floor was hot sand.

Before he knows it he’s running and leaping, up and down the hallway. Danny imagines he’s an eagle diving to catch a mouse. Sometimes he’s a seagull hovering over the waves.

Into the kitchen he jumps like a kangaroo. He hops like a frog on the cold hard lino. He eats sultana flies with his quick darting tongue.
To finish his dancing Danny likes digging into the dress-up box. He turns himself into funny people with scarves, shoes and masks.

His favourite is a big rubber horse mask. Everyone says "How scary!" when they first see it, but all his friends love being scared!

One day Danny was dancing. He soared and swooped like an eagle up and down the hallway. The music kept playing but Danny stopped dancing. Frozen to the spot.

There at the screen door was his friend Jake. Watching. Laughing and laughing and bending double with his laughing. Danny knew his secret was out.

The next day at school Danny could tell that Jake had told the others about his dancing. They all giggled behind his back and looked at him in a strange way.

For a week the playground was a lonely place. Danny was unhappy and Jake felt bad about telling everyone.

Every night Jake thought hard about how he could make it up to Danny... finally he had a plan!

First Jake needed Miss Balfour's help. That afternoon Miss Balfour sent Danny out of the classroom on an errand and Jake explained his plan to the rest of the class.
Everyone was excited and eager to help. Theo, Ricky and Marrisa had extra singlets. Everyone had a hat to wear.

Izzy’s mum borrowed a box of old swimming rings from the local pool. And Grace had just the right music for Jake’s surprise.

The next day everyone arrived at school half an hour early and hurried into positions.

Danny ran in just as the bell was ringing. He opened the door of the classroom and was surprised that no one was there. Then the music started...

Twenty one children jumped out from their hiding places. Running and leaping. Dancing and laughing. A room full of dancing Danny’s. It was the funniest, strangest thing Danny had ever seen.

As the music got louder, Jake handed Danny a swimming ring. Danny started dancing... and dancing... and dancing...

Danny loves dancing.
GALLOPING GRACE

Grrr Ace! Grrr Ace! Grrr Ace! Grrr Ace!
Gallop! Gallop! Gallop! Gallop! Gallop! Gallop! Gallop!

Grace laughs like a horse as the wind whips through her hair. The crowd cheers wildly as she storms across the finish line.
Grrr Ace! Galloping Grace! Grrraace!

Grrr Ace! Galloping Grace! Grrrace woke up!
Something is wrong. A single tear balances on the tip of her eyelashes. Hover... hover... hover...

In her dreams Grace is strong, fast and tricky.
In her days Grace is small, quiet and timid.

Something is wrong. Grace doesn’t feel small, quiet and timid.

The single tear goes hover...hover...plonk.

When Miss Balfour asks “How many metres in a kilometre?”
Grace answers “I don’t know.” Even though she knows it’s 1000.

When Izzy and Jake say “Come and play at our house.” Grace says “My Mum won’t let me.” Even though she hasn’t asked her Mum.
When Grace’s aunties come to visit, they chuckle “Sweet little Gracie”, as they pat her on the head. But Grace doesn’t feel sweet or little.

So...one cold winter morning, Grace hatches a plan to make people see her as she really is. She puts on long johns, woolly socks, boots and knee pads - in case of slips.

One skivvy, two skivvies, a jumper, and a vest - in case of tumbles.

A skirt, a jacket, a scarf and a beanie - with a large red pom pom.

For the finishing touch she straps on a thick piece of bubble wrap and some wrap around sunglasses to protect her on all sides - if she should fall.

Grace is big, round and scary! Grace is ready to roll! Gallop! Gallop! Gallop! Gallop! Deep inside Grace feels her heart beating. It beats so loudly she puts her hands over her ears to stop them exploding.

Heads turn to stare, as Grace gallops by. Legs shudder, as the ground quakes with Grace’s gallops. People gasp and ask who’s behind the layers.

Grace is on the final stretch. She storms through the school gates and into the middle of the assembly. All eyes are on the mysterious galloper.
Grace stops. Breathing heavily. Out and in, out and in, out and in, and in! She slowly starts peeling off the layers. Rip goes the bubble wrap, pop goes the pom pom. The scarf slides off and Grace is feeling brave. With a flourish her jacket, skirt, and vest jump off. Followed closely by the jumper.

Grace is ready for the encore. In a moment of daring Grace strikes the sunglasses. Small, quiet, timid Grace. No! Grace feels big, strong and very, very tricky.


Galloping past the playground.
Gallop! Gallop! Gallop! Gallop!
Galloping across the field.
Grrr Ace! Galloping Grace! Grrr Ace!

Now everyone knows Galloping Grace. Grace feels the sun on her face. Her hair streams behind her. Galloping Grace is a sight to be seen. Galloping Grace knows that this is no dream!

Her friends are cheering. Miss Balfour is cheering. Even the bigger kids are cheering. Grrr Ace! Grrr Ace! Grrr Ace!
Galloping Grace!
A SILENCE
SHAKING A LEG

I am often of one opinion when I am lying down and of another when I am standing up. G.C. Lichtenberg (1742-1799)
JULIE-ANNE LONG
invites you to

THE LEISURE MISTRESS DANCES:
an investigation of a practice
where fact and fiction collide

MA(Hons) Presentation

Fri 8 Oct Sat 9 Oct Sun 10 Oct 1999
The Performance Space 199 Cleveland Street Redfern

Welcome to this home made, made-to measure presentation of fifteen dance performance ideas. This running order may or may not help you decipher these disparate and desperate elements:

MEDITATION #1  Beans - Mask Dance
NARRATION #1  Hostess - Mostess
MEDITATION #2  Buzzy - Too good to be true
NARRATION #2  Witchie Poo - Offering, Torn, Mirror Mirror
MEDITATION #3  Call Me
NARRATION #3  Bearded Mistress-Walk on by, Ever After, Pussycat, Showgirl
MEDITATION #4  Allen - Prelude
NARRATION #4  Princess - Arms Walk, Help Me, Bye for now...

thanks to
rohan, buster, pam & kevin, graeme, paola, ariel
amanda, sue-ellen & minna, the caleys, garry
jacqui, the centre for performance studies.

the performance space supported by
SETTING THE SCENE

During my years of bountiful employment I was accustomed to the conventional sociability of work which many people take for granted. The routine of getting ready and travelling to the workplace, tea breaks to exchange relevant and irrelevant information, even the anticipation of the end of the working day. When this ritualistic rhythm disappeared I found myself unsettled.

It was replaced by the perpetually employed role of unemployed / student / housewife / mother. The workload of the housewife / mother is one where... "maintenance and reproduction is... repetitive and routine... and does not involve specified sequence or progression." (Chodorow, 1978, p. 179). In contrast to my professional identity I had no clear way of defining my progress in the day to day structure of my new role. Within this situation, I was attempting to position my dance making and research. This was often exacerbated by the dilemma of being frequently unemployed.

For the bulk of this research I worked on my own, in my own home, rarely separate from my other roles in life. The process was frequently muddled, fraught with obstacles and frustrated by lack of space, both physical and mental. Despite this, it was often lonely. Solitude amongst the chaos. The heart of LEISURE MISTRESS is this domestic position.

In the past I made work with a collaborative creative team of performers, designer, composer. American dance artist Molissa Fenley who has worked almost exclusively since 1988 as a soloist states "I wanted to work the way a painter or writer does - there's no translation between thought and action" (Banes, 1994, p. 348). While this is partly true for myself, the determining factor in my situation was not an artistic choice but an economic one. Christy Adair
suggests that Virginia Woolf’s analysis of women’s access to literary production is still relevant today and that it is relevant to a discussion of women and dance (1992, p.63). Woolf argues that material conditions - money, housing, health and so on - affect writing. These conditions affect the artists perceptions and indeed the form chosen. The content and form of LEISURE MISTRESS is the direct result of time and place and is shaped by social factors. These restrictions encourage me to work around my life, which remains central, rather than my life adjusting to circulate around work/art at its core. This is where I position myself, partly through necessity and partly through choice, and I believe this is a condition that women encounter more than men. It is telling to look at the public profile of dance in Australia at the end of the ’90’s and to analyse the roles that men and women have adoted in the dance profession or industry!

The performing of a selection of this research material proved to be confronting especially in those moments of insecurity when I convinced myself that it was self indulgent and boring. “Coming out” of my insular working environment, I had no measure of anticipating how it would be received. When a gaggle of people will be arriving tomorrow for the LEISURE MISTRESS, you have little choice. It feels like the bride at the altar scenario where, with rising doubts she is tempted to turn and flee, but the bigger picture anchors her uncertainties.

The running order was decided after endless meditation, ordering, shuffling and re examining. Each selection has a specific connection to the whole but I have chosen them on very different selection criteria.

The LEISURE MISTRESS dances cannot be entirely known because it is an idiosyncratic network of intersecting structures and processes. I am interested
in the placement of the texts - dance, music, spoken, TV - that I have selected and manipulated and in the resulting accumulated meanings. I am not interested in giving particular texts emphasis in this work because it is not my intention to propose a definitive interpretation. I don’t doubt that audience members viewing the material live and readers of these pages will have their own agendas in regards to what is clear and what is inconsequential.

* See Link #3  REMEMBERINGS ON DANCE (p. 48 - 52).
REMEMBERINGS ON DANCE

antistatic 99 -practice

The 2nd antistatic dance festival was held at The Performance Space, Sydney, March 26 - April 11, 1999. Two weeks of workshops with international artists, between three weekends of performances, forums, discussions and installations.

antistatic aims to foster critical debate and inquiry into contemporary dance practice in Australia. antistatic 99, in particular, looks at the differences between practices and the values that underpin those differences. What kind of work do we make, and why, and what is the cultural, historical and international context of our work?

from “call for proposals. antistatic 99 -practice”

Virginia Baxter and Julie-Anne Long were commissioned by the curatorial team to devise a performed commentary in response to the diverse range of events in this festival.
JULIE-ANNE AND VIRGINIA ARRIVE AND UNPACK AN ASSORTMENT OF REFERENCE MATERIALS, KEYS, NOTEBOOKS, PENS ETC FROM THEIR BAGS. THEY READ FROM SCRIPTS BUT THE TONE IS AS RELAXED AS IT MIGHT BE IF THEY WERE REALLY HAVING A CONVERSATION IN FRONT OF 100 OR SO PEOPLE.

VB Having committed ourselves to this thing called “Rememberings on Dance” back in Feb and seeing it set in concrete in the antistatic program in March, we now realise that neither of us is in the right state for it.

JAL Given that we’re both suffering from freakish memory lapses..

VB In my case I think due to aging and in yours, induced by, what is it, a sort of ennui, or a crisis of faith or identity or ...?

JAL I made a few notes on my condition in case I forgot.

SHE ROLLS UP HER SLEEVE TO REVEAL A SET OF NOTES ON HER ARM

My dilemma is this. When I watch a piece of dance I am often taken with one movement. Sometimes it’s a tiny phrase. And all I want is to see it again. I wait for it, but 9 times out of 10 it’s never seen again. And because I’m watching for that movement or idea, I miss seeing the rest. I can’t remember any of it.

VB I have no difficulty remembering tone, atmosphere, the “sense” of the movement but aside from the phenomenon you describe-the wanting to see the loved movement again-detail often escapes me.

JAL But I’ve noticed when we talk about something together, your memory for detail is quite precise.
VB   Oh, in conversation I can retrieve memory.

JAL  TO AUDIENCE So you can see what we're up against.

A  SIGNIFICANT PAUSE

JAL  We desperately prepared lists.

THEY READ FROM PIECES OF PAPER

JAL  "I liked it”. “I fount it very satisfying”. “It left me out”.
    "I disliked it intensely”. “It was fun”. “Thoroughly engaging”.
    "I don’t like that kind of thing”. “I hated it”. “I let it wash
    over me”.

VB   “I’ve seen it all before”. “I couldn’t see anything in it”.
    “I wanted more”. “It made me think”. “Where was the dance
    between love and death?” “It lost me”. “I drifted off”.

THEY CRUMPLE THE PAPER AND THROW IT AWAY.

JAL  In the end we decided to take our forgetting to Jennifer
    Monson’s workshop.

THEY MOVE TO EITHER SIDE OF THE TABLE INTO TWO POOLS OF LIGHT.

JAL  “Bring your focus to your feet, spread the toes, shift the
    weight through from your heels to the balls of your feet, feel
    the suppleness.”

VB   “Suppleness can be contagious. Perhaps even the breath can
    become supple. Is it possible to maintain suppleness in a
    sudden stop? Take a walk around yourself.”

VIRGINIA MOVES TO THE TABLE. JULIE-ANNE REMAINS STANDING.

VB   Let’s take a small walk around Julie-Anne Long one of the
    dancers who appeared in Russell Dumas’ Cassandra’s Dance
    which opened antistatic at The Studio ... am I right?

JAL  Yes I think so.
VB You’re not sure?

JAL Well, some people I know quite well said they didn’t see me.

VB Why do you think that is?

JAL Well, I had no solos and there were a lot of dancers on the floor...

VB And it was quite dark at times ...

JAL Well, that’s true and there was a lot happening ...

VB Yes, I wanted to talk about that. My sense in Russell Dumas’ work is always of the whole. Individual moves I forget, or erase—perhaps because they’re based on ordinary movements

JAL Ordinary in what sense?

VB Well there are no spectacular leaps or dramatic gestures or ...

JAL Absolutely not.

VB In fact I wanted to ask you ... I read in Summer 97 issue of Writings on Dance (p. 11) Russell Dumas says “(The dancers are) not trying to produce how they’re being seen. The trick is to have the work just out of grasp so that the dancers’ focus is just on doing the task rather than on displaying the task, or mastery of the task, or mastery of the task” So what is the task?

JAL DEMONSTRATES A SHIFT ONTO THE RIGHT LEG LETTING THE LEFT LEG HANG AND SWING BEHIND HER AND THEN ROTATE OUT TO THE SIDE

Well this is the way I remember it and I’m not saying I’ve got it right. You’d need to ask Russell ...

VB It’s more your memory of the process I’m interested ...

JAL Well, OK you might take a move like this ...

SHE DEMONSTRATES AGAIN

... and we’ll go over it and over it for hours, days, to learn
where the weight is how the muscles respond to a particular way of moving. The next day Russell might come in and teach the same move in an entirely different way as if the other had ceased to exist.

VB So you're working towards a deep memory of the moves. And what happens in performance?

JAL Each of the dancers attempts to perform the task in their own way.

VB Depending on what?

JAL A sense of their own expertise, the interplay with the other dancers.

VB And is the audience meant to be witnessing your remembering?

JA Once we enter the frame we concentrate fully on executing the task. The audience is peripheral.

VB That would explain what Zsuzsanna Soboslay in RealTime #30 describes dancers doing a Dumas as displaying “a perspex translucency”. Or Eleanor Brickhill's comment that “they look like they've been called to the door at midnight.”

JAL Perspex translucency ... I like that. So what do you remember from the work?

VB I wrote in this notebook “Fmir moves reconfig, ref something gone before. Details: body of dncrs tog in dark, slow-driven-cult move without quest. Fmir lifts & blnces, subtle signs btwn dancers, intelligence signals itself-go now, lift now ... Strength, blnce-Keith March so close to fall I stopped breathing ... fine, sharp sounds, moving, light, etc. It's memorable in it's entirety though the specificity escapes. I'll know when I enter it again that I'm doing a Dumas that I'm back somewhere that I know. I also made a note that Thomas Hahn writing about Sankai Juku’s latest work (Ballet Tanz, February 1999) said “still unbroken is the ability to embed the entire body in a single movement, thus making air and space visible”...
MUSICAL NOTES

Choice of music is always an extremely important component in my work. The music provides a vital layer of meaning which sometimes functions in conjunction with the dance and sometimes in opposition. The music is not merely a support for the dance, neither does the dance solely illustrate the music. I position the dance and the music as dependent of each other and for me it is not complete if one of the layers is missing.

I have been fascinated with Symphony No 6 in B minor Op 74 “Pathetique” by Tchaikovsky for a long time now. I first used the first movement for a short work called APARTMENT [3], performed by two male non-dancers and one female dancer in an informal studio showing. The performers climbed in a window five stories up, watched TV, cleaned their ears and drank cups of tea. All the action was tightly timed and choreographed to the cloyingly seductive themes of the “Pathetique” Symphony. I love the exaggerated sentiment and melodrama suggested by this music. There’s something very B-grade about it. I wanted to play with the drama of the music, by playing melodrama in the action. I am also interested in under cutting the tone of the sound by using it as a score for something undramatic, something naturalistic.

“Tijuana Taxi”, Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass is the music for BUZZY. It is music my parents used to play on the weekends on their 8 stack stereo record player. It is music which blared at my ‘90’s summer wedding. It is festive travelling music. I have a fond sentimental attachment to Herb Alpert and it is funny! Who can resist smiling when that HONK! blurs out?

[3] APARTMENT
Directed by Julie-Anne Long
The One Extra Company, 1996.
George Street Studios, Sydney.
I am often attracted to 60's pop songs. I choose known melodies to reformulate existing interpretations of them. I like to play with the meaning of the lyrics and enjoy subverting them in a kitsch parody, usually with a contemporary twist. In BITE PULL SUCK I choreographed plastic smiling showgirls walking in invisible high heels to "Can't take my eyes off you" by Frankie Valli and The 4 Seasons. For LEISURE MISTRESS I had in my mind that I wanted to use "Call Me" after hearing it in the Austin Powers movie International Man of Mystery. I liked the idea of the Leisure Mistress being an exhausted call girl. The song suggests she is ready and willing anytime, the reality for the LEISURE MISTRESS is quite different. I searched high and low around Sydney for a recording of this song and was told that I probably wouldn't find it anywhere. I accidentally stumbled across it in a bargain shop for two dollars. "Call Me" written by Tony Hatch and sung by Petula Clark.

I like to choreograph movement to a specific piece of music and then to place it with something else entirely. This is especially useful for me when I am making gestural material because the literal nature of the gestures can become juxtaposed against an entirely unexpected soundscape.

The haunting "Prelude" from Les Sylphides provides an evocative soundtrack for THE BUSTER PROJECT Episode #2 ALIEN. I have treated it digitally and incorporated some sci-fi sound effects and distortions. I also reference the mystical setting of Les Sylphides and the story of this ballet of elusive creatures.
TV TIMES

In 1993 I devised and directed SUBURBAN PIRATES for 10 circus performers under the age of 16, 3 contemporary dancers and 1 actor. It was a co-production between the One Extra Company and the Flying Fruit Fly Circus.

In SUBURBAN PIRATES audiences will meet a tribe of strange characters as we delve into the underbelly of every day life. The show, suitable for all ages, will tell familiar stories but with a twist. What happens to the perfect nuclear family when the new neighbours are not from "Neighbours"? Programmed like TV but unlike TV, the stories will be repeatedly interrupted, not by commercials, but by a world of wonderful tricks and physical invention.

Extract from SUBURBAN PIRATES Publicity Material.

My aim for the narrative sections was to integrate the physical disciplines as much as possible. The show was not a series of physical displays, much to some people’s disappointment. However I did incorporate this tried and tested circus format in an ironic way using the TV structure. For the commercial breaks I used a circus act / classical ballet variation, where skills are blatantly displayed or "sold", much like the selling of laundry powders on TV.

I am interested in the programming formula of prime TV - the structure of a "soap" storyline and the way the narrative is interrupted by commercials. Circus acts, like advertisements, are about selling a product. I wanted to play around with these parallels. Six thirty-second flashes of circus and dance and then back to the storyline - how does this TV structure translate to live performance?

Extract from SUBURBAN PIRATES Director's Note.

Now, six years later, I am using a similar structure, albeit for different reasons. In Tania Modleski’s The Rhythms of Reception: Daytime Television and Women's Work, she investigates the relationship between the rhythms of daytime television and the rhythms of women’s domestic life and work. In the world of LEISURE MISTRESS this premise has proved to be an appropriate springboard for structuring the material to be performed.
In my household the television is often turned on, left on, just on. Background noise with more often than not, no one in the room. I know this is frowned upon but it’s something that I accept, most of the time. Some people have the radio to keep them company, we have the TV. I seldom sit and “relax in front of the tele.” I need to be doing something, as well as watching or listening.

So what happens if I use a television set in this performance? If a TV is on in a room with something else happening - a conversation perhaps? Surely not! I know my attention is subtly and insidiously diverted to the box. I can't help but let my gaze drift towards that screen. Do you know what I mean? So... what happens if I place myself in a space with a TV and “dance”. The TV provides a further layer of colour, sound and action. It fills gaps and silences. It frames the live action and is also a diversion. Will the punters look at me? Or will the power of the screen be irresistible?

I admit that I’m asking for trouble in pitting myself against such a formidable opponent as “the box”. But I want the distraction. I want the backdrop of the flickering screen. I want to work with these things. I live with these things. I am preoccupied with this commonplace object of our everyday life and this is my point of departure for dealing with this choice.

To set the scene I have included the television texts which accompanied each section. The first meditation was accompanied by a block of five commercials. I chose each specifically for the relevance of the spoken text and for the ways they related to each other and the chosen section.

In Saving Time: really simple solutions for really busy people, Lynne Wenig urges us to utilise our time. “The average TV commercial break is three minutes long, which gives you a useful twelve minutes every hour.” (1999, p. 43).
A STILLNESS
MEDITATION #1 Beans

TV TEXT:

TARGET: We realise that not all women are the same. Some have long legs, some have shorter ones and some have a different shape altogether. In our experience there's no such thing as the average woman. Every woman is unique. At Target we treat them that way. We have a range of clothes to just about fit every body. So no matter what shape or size you are if you're a woman, get into Target.

FOR ME: Looking for a monthly magazine that's fresh and different then take a look at the new For me Monthly. It's got everything you need. Cooking That's for me. Beauty Makeovers. That's for Me. Home Ideas. fashion. That's for me. Plus win a fantastic Toyota wrap 4 And inside get your free pattern to make these cool kids clothes. There's fifteen stylish and easy home decorator tips. Plus Shape up for Summer and join Weight watchers for free. For Me Magazine it's got everything you need every month. That's For Me.

JIFF: Welcome to Jiff making life easy.

W: Bathrooms are all about getting clean but that makes them magnets for dirt and scum

M: So it's a good idea to clean as you go

W: Of course Jiff cream is great for cleaning your enamel bath but you can use it to remove stubborn spots of mould from the bathroom ceiling.

M: And it won't cause the ceiling paint to flake and crumble. a little Jiff cream on a damp ballerina cloth and just rub it down, followed by a quick rinse with warm water. That's the power of Jiff.

OLAY FACE WASH:

W1: Can a face wash make you look younger?

W2: I don't think so

W1: So what did women say after they'd actually tried Olay's new face wash with break through beta hydroxy and exfoliating micro beads

W3: The tiny beads really make my face come alive every morning. They wake it up

W4: It leaves it feeling very smooth and very refreshed

W1: You needn't take their word. Prove it for yourself. And the name New Daily Renewal Face Wash from Oll of Olay. Proof we can help you look younger.

GEORGIAN STATE DANCE COMPANY: Direct from a sellout world tour. Hutchison Entertainment Group Presents the World's Number 1 Dance Ensemble. The Georgian State Dance Company. From the former Soviet Union comes the most spectacular dance ensemble ever to tour Australia. Over 40 performers, breathtaking costumes, electrifying and dangerous, with the unique dance of the swords and daggers. Having performed to over 15 mil people world wide the Georgian State Dance Company presents one show only.
An overstuffed armchair in need of renovation, floats like an island in front of a 1960’s wallpapered wall. A television monitor and video sits in the space, a focal point. The Leisure Mistress, dressed in rumpled striped pyjamas and thongs, prepares “beans in jackets”, an uninspiring dish of green string beans threaded into pasta tubes, a reliable favourite with the under-fives. She makes her way to the chair where she sits with the bowl of food on her lap.

Folk dances sometimes develop around work activities. Rhythmical movement, as in the Japanese rice-planting dances, can make the work more pleasant. "Folk Dance," Microsoft Encarta 96 Encyclopaedia.

A two dimensional cardboard cutout mask of Liz Hurley is tied with elastic to her head. The Leisure Mistress casts her eyes out through Elizabeth’s crudely slit eyes. Too soon to gauge a response she reassures herself;

"You know and I know that this is, what it is!
A homemade mask of Liz Hurley cut from a poster.
It doesn’t matter if you don’t know who it is,
as long as you see the smile and the sculptured hair.
Have a look at the profile,
look at me from the back,
it’s ok.
I don’t need to worry about destroying the illusion
because there isn’t one!"

Taking her cue
from the foreboding opening melody line of Tchaikovsky Symphony No 6;
she slides her thonged feet
backwards and forwards
on a little patch of floor, an approximation of home turf.
Head and feet,
1 2 3333 4,
1 2 3333 4,
R L Rrrr L,
slide slide slidellle flex,
  lift and cross
  legssssssssslip
    crash!
  Recover.
  Repeat.

Simple to the extreme.
Observe the repeated trajectory.
Easy to learn.

Well this certainly isn’t “proper” dancing,
anyone can shuffle their feet and cross their legs.

There’s no recognisable technique.
It doesn’t require an audience.

The lack of these criteria
suggests that this could be a secular folk dance,
marking a domestic life.

The inevitability,
the monotony, no surprises,
except maybe in the slip of the leg
trying to find that easy, comfortable position,
though that too is predictable.

It is not a celebration,
I’ve called it a meditation.
NARRATION #1 Hostess

TV TEXT:

SORBENT: This show is brought to you by thick soft sorbent the gentlest way to start the day.

THE PRICE IS RIGHT: Are you ready to win? (Crowd claps and cheers)
Donna Ross! Come on down! (Crowd claps and cheers)
Neal Robinson! Come on down! (Crowd claps and cheers)
Sandra Giles! Come on down! (Crowd claps and cheers)
Karen Birkett! Come on down! (Crowd claps and cheers)
You're the first four contestants on THE PRICE IS RIGHT and now here's the man who can make you a winner Larry Ender “Hello Thank you very much”
The Showcase! We're sending you on a Barrier Reef Cruise... But for now you're heading bush with the Country Clothing Package and bar-b-que... The action gets even hotter with this treadmill and golf clubs... You can time this win to perfection with these his and hers dress watches... You always have time for this, it's a family motorcycle package...
(Theme music and clapping to add break.)

WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE: You’ve won eight thousand dollars, sixtyfour thousand dollars, quarter of a million dollars. It's back. Register now and you could walk off with one million dollars. It could change your life forever. Who wants to be a millionaire returns soon to Channel 9.

Theme music from the game show mixes with the yearning phrases of Tchaikovsky’s “Pathetique”. Head inclined, kinks in the shoulders, arms gesturing at promised prizes and a fixed smile. The Price is Right Hostess displays the goods and herself. The LEISURE MISTRESS Hostess wishes you to observe the sources of her work. She draws your eye to the childhood novel and encourages you to continue reading at your own leisure. She invites you to peruse the display of flotsam and jetsam she has collected. Some of the objects may appeal and will be revealed during the course of the presentation, while others remain mysterious, incongruous or merely dull. Hands clap with hips and head bumping. Small scuffing geisha walks in rubber thongs. A burst of step-hop-scuff-scuff before settling into the aged armchair. She takes off the mask and wipes the beads of sweat from her “glowing” face. She shifts her focus to the TV as a voice tempts her; “It could change your life forever.”
MEDITATION #2  Buzzy

1. Title: Buzzy
bee crosses screen

2. Buzzy Bee followed
by Buster

3. Crawling
profile

You're just too good to be true / Can't take my eyes off you / You'd be like heaven to touch /

4. Crawling
back view

5. Walking
with pusher

6. Walking
head visible

I want to hold you so much / At long last love has arrived / And I thank God I'm alive / You're just

7. Riding
in pram

8. Wheels
down hill

9. Riding
motorcycle

too good to be true / Can't take my eyes off you / Pardon the way that I stare / There's nothing
to compare / The sight of you leaves me weak / There are no words left to speak / And if you
10. Driving
car

11. Rocking
cow

12. Hand Tapping
buzzer

feel like I do / Please let me know that it's true / You're just too good to be true / Can't take my

eyes off you // I love you baby and if it's quite alright / I need you baby to warm my lonely nights /

13. Walking
towards camera

14. Walking to drop
profile in front of shop

15. Crawling
up to doorway

16. Hand over
newspaper

17. Crawling
reverse direction

18. Walking
away from camera

I love you baby / Trust in me when I say / Oh pretty baby don't bring me down I pray / Oh pretty baby
now that I've found you stay / And let me love you baby let me love you // You're just too
19. Over gutter  
aerial shot

good to be true / Can't take my eyes off you / You'd be like heaven to touch / I want to hold you

20. Rocking  
cow

21. Driving  
car

so much / At long last love has arrived / And I thank God I'm alive / You're just too good to be true /

22. Riding  
motorcycle

23. Sitting  
in pram

24. Walking  
head visible

25. Walking  
with pusher

26. Crawling  
towards camera

27. Crawling  
profile

Can't take my eyes off you // Pardon the way that I stare / There's nothing else to compare / The sight of you leaves me weak / There are no words left to speak / And is you feel like I do / Please
28. Credits

Buzzy is...

let me know that it's true / You're just too good to be true / Can't take my eyes off you // I love you

29. Sitting

In high chair

30. Crying

in high chair

31. Eating

In high chair

baby and if it's quite alright / I need you baby to warm my lonely nights / I love you baby / Trust in me when I say -

"Just stop crying! Sit there! Eat that! Settle down! And...and...act your age!"

32. Reading

in high chair

KRAFT SINGLES: Little boy clomps into kitchen wearing Mum's shoes. He opens the refrigerator and with a bit of difficulty stretches up to reach the cheese. He takes it to the table and unwraps it. Mum enters and smiles as she sees him eating. "The milky taste of Kraft Singles. The taste kids single out."
NARRATION # 2 Witchie Poo

TV TEXT:

Theme Music: HEY WHAT’S COOKING? What you cooking up today? Hey what’s cooking? What’s going on? In your most particular way. All of the things that you do everyday. What’s cooking? What’s going on? What’s cooking...

Geoff Jansz: Oh look at that doesn’t that make you want to eat it. Good thing it’s a cooking show. This is a cake and I’m not going to show you how to do this but I do want to tease you with the fact that over the next week or two I will show you some cake decorating techniques and this is something down the track. We are going to start with a plain cake here. A cake I stole from Qantas, no. A plain cake and um whatever plain cake you like I’m talking about the decoration of this. First thing I want to make is a gnash.
Spread this on the surface and down the side as well. Down the sides we go. Is that in the way? Course it is. Cake decorating. Didn’t I promise that Kerri-Anne would help me? Boys and girls is Kerri-Anne lurking somewhere? Will she come? I feel like I’m doing Humphrey. I don’t think Kerri-Anne’s ready to help me just yet. This goes round the side and that’s going to form a bit of a glue for sticking on some more decorations. Now you don’t have to go too far with that.

(Cut voice over and following sequence is closeups of decorating techniques.)
Spooning the melted chocolate onto flat surface, smoothing it with spoon.
Using a serrated implement, raking through the soft chocolate to form rows.
Displaying the frozen strips of white chocolate.
Spooning melted dark chocolate onto rows to create stripes of light and dark.
Cutting the frozen slabs of striped chocolate with the tip of the knife.
Sticking the cut squares to the side of the cake.
Spooning more liquidy white chocolate onto board.
Dripping dark chocolate onto white.
Forking the two together to create a marbled effect.
Shaving the congealed white and dark swirly slab.
Curly shavings of chocolate, plied on top of cake to complete the decoration.

Geoff Jansz: It’s difficult under lights to do but essentially that’s one idea of presenting your cakes just using light and dark chocolate.

Theme Music cuts to an ad break.

DOVE CHOCOLATE: Young woman caressing chocolate bar and then caressing man. Seductive music plays throughout and voice sings:
Smother... Creamier... Aah... Chocolate... Chocolate... Let me feel your body...
Cause I can’t take it any longer...
The rationale for certain choices is often very simple, very literal, even banal. My aim is to create an image or a moment by layering these elements.

OFFERING:

* My friend Sue-ellen “taught” me how to make this delicious, nutritious meal!
  Cook the beans!
  Cook the pasta!
When cool slip the beans into the pasta jackets!
Top with sauce... Tomato is especially popular! Serve!

* In June 1999 I was choreographer on a production of *Hansel and Gretel* by Sydney Theatre Company and Theatre of Image.

WITCH: Sleep tight, my children. Close your eyes, close your minds. Let Mrs Mac take care of you.

SHE PINCHES THE CHEEKS OF HANSEL.

Too thin. Still far too thin. But you'll get fatter, my beauty. You'll see. A few weeks on Mrs Mac's special food and you'll be as fat as a little piggie. Richard Tulloch, 1991, p.18.

WITCH: See, there’s some lovely food, made from secret recipes from my very special cookery book. Your brother’s eating, you eat up too, and then I'll eat... er, put you to bed. Richard Tulloch, 1991, p.24.

* Bedtime stories for Buster:

“A boy! cried the witches. “A filthy smelly little boy! We’ll swizzle him! We’ll swizzle him! We’ll have his tripes for breakfast!” Roald Dahl, *The Witches*, (p. 90).

* “Be a Witchie Poo Mum!” Buster asks, fifty times a day.

A small section of the story danced many times.
TORN:
I searched for existing movement that transformed everyday movements and work actions into dance steps and arrived at the Tai Chi sequence “Fair Lady Works Shuttles”. Its name derives from its similarity to the action of a woman using a traditional Chinese loom. I learnt this sequence in a perfunctory manner, from a book on the benefits of Tai Chi for relaxation and self defence. The key to performing “Fair Lady Works Shuttles” is to shift the body weight at exactly the right moment to free up the legs, and to ensure that the hip joints relax as the weight shifts. Tai Chi reduces stress and offers a relaxing sense of internal calm. Just what I needed!

My next task was to adapt the phrase to work with a piece of music that was pulling in all directions and accelerating in speed. Moving from one door to another. Torn by the demands of working, running the family and the household, feeling like I am never able to complete tasks... worn out. If only it was as easy as this proposition from The Reluctant Keepfitter:

When pushing your trolley around the supermarket there is ample scope for some deep bending and high stretching as you pick goods from the low and high shelves. If you can get into rhythm with the usual musak played in supermarkets it could give your shopping a whole new dimension. Esther Fairfax, 1981, p. 57.

MIRROR MIRROR:
"Why would I want to turn a a well choreographed eyebrow into a word?"

Spalding Gray in "Books" Vogue, p. 68.
MEDITATION #3 Call Me

TV TEXT:

ELIZABETH TAYLOR: "Composite visual of a young, glamorous Elizabeth as Helen of Troy from the 1967 production of Doctor Faustus. Accompanied by TARGET Voice Over: We realise that not all women are the same. Some have long legs, some have shorter ones and some have a different shape altogether.

BITE PULL SUCK SHOWGIRLS:
Sequence 1 includes small demi-point walks in bare feet, low key swings of the hips and arms, with fingers clicking.

ELIZABETH TAYLOR: "Stills from Reflections In a Golden Eye.
*Close up of her eyes wide and staring. On her hand in the foreground is the 33.19-carat Krupp diamond that Richard Burton paid over $300,000 for in 1968.
LIZ HURLEY: "Close up of the mask worn in Meditation #1 Beans.

BITE PULL SUCK SHOWGIRLS:
Sequence 2 includes cliched show girl shimmies and poses with exaggerated open mouths and gushy facial expressions.

ELIZABETH TAYLOR: "Arriving at the Academy Awards ceremony in 1961.
*March 1961 (in one of the most famous photographs of the year) being wheeled into the London Clinic where she remained desperately ill with advanced pneumonia, hovering near death for several days.
*A paparazzi photograph of "Liz" and "Dick" during the beginning of their affair Elizabeth sunbathing on a yacht with Richard Burton rubbing her back.
*As Martha in Who’s afraid of Virginia Woolf? With the help of thirty extra pounds, padding, a frowsy grey wig and make-up she is transformed into a bloousy harpse.
*A radiant close up of Elizabeths face.
LIZ HURLEY: "Collage of photos of her Infamous dresses.
*Liz Hurley Glamour shot from magazine.

CALL ME: If you're feeling sad and lonely
There's a service I can render
Tell the one who loves you only
I can be so warm and tender
Call me don't be afraid you can
Call me maybe it's late but just
Call me tell me and I'll be around...

When it seems your friends desert you
There's somebody thinking of you
I'm the one who'll never hurt you
Maybe that's because I love you
Call me don't be afraid you can
Call me maybe it's late but just
Call me tell me and I'll be around...

Now don't forget me cos if you let me
I will always stay by you
You've got to trust me
That's how it must be
There's so much that I can do...o...o...o

If you call I'll be right with you
You and I should be together
Take this love I long to give you
I'll be at your side for ever
Call me don't be afraid you can
Call me maybe it's late but just
Call me tell me and I'll be around...

Instrumental Break

Call me don't be afraid you can
Call me maybe it's late but just
Call me tell me and I'll be around...
Now don't forget me cos if you let me
I will always stay by you
You've got to trust me
ELIZABETH TAYLOR: "A typical "girlie" pose in leopard print bathing suit kneeling incongruously in a child's blow up paddling pool.

*1955 Elizabeth's twenty-third birthday. family portrait with husband Michael Wilding and sons Michael Jr and Christopher.

BITE PULL SUCK SHOWGIRLS:
Sequence 3 includes gesture sequence to "I love you baby...", legs in arabesque open positions, awkward crutch shots with "kitten" kicks and "I'm-so-cute" shoulders.

That's how it must be
There's so much that I can do...0...0

If you call I'll be right with you
You and I should be together
Take this love I long to give you
I'll be at your side forever
Call me don't be afraid you can
Call me maybe it's late but just
Call me tell me and I'll be around
You've got to call me
Call me now

Wow... wow... wow... / I love you baby and if it's quite alright / I need you baby to warm my lonely nights / I love you baby trust in me when I say / Oh pretty baby don't bring me down I pray / Oh pretty baby now that I've found you stay / And let me love you baby / Let me love you.

BITE PULL SUCK The One Extra Company, 1992.
Put on the dirty, pink, fluffy, bunny ears
with daggy, saggy, white elastic knotted under chin
change tape
press play
walk “naturally” to upstage corner
turning around into the wall,
back to audience
- take up start position -

Lean against the wall with bum and back
place feet at a comfortable distance from the wall to give room to manoeuvre
(8 and)
drop into right hip
let eyes drift to the left
follow lazily with chin
lean weight into the wall
initiating from left side and shoulder
let left arm slide up the wall as the body starts turning into it
palm of hand is flat
fingers loosely spread
leave your eyes looking out for as long as you can
keep the expression as neutral as possible
if you can’t resist a little something - look bored

at some point the face will come into contact with the wall as the body rolls
around to make front contact - allow the mouth and nose to become distorted
by the surface and hope that you don’t leave lipstick on the wall...
continue the roll
encouraging the right arm
to slide above your head
as you roll through the centre
maintain contact with the chest and hips for as long as possible as you
continue rolling
lean into the right side
complete the sequence to finish with back to wall

repeat sequence

Clunky drops into right hip - left hip - right hip - left hip
let the knees respond to these shifts - right - left - right - left
the head should become involved as well as the eyes
which follow last
leaving hips in contact with wall
drop body and head forward
rebound up
repeat clunky hips
place hands flat on wall by thighs
"there's so much that I can..."
tilting pelvis forward and back rock
"do... 2 o... 3 o... 4 o..."
repeat first sequence

Instrumental break

Dive hands down to floor to kneel on hands and knees
rocking forward back forward back forward back forward back forward back

eyes lift to stare towards audience

cooporate arms and legs

to walk

on all fours

1 - 2 slide down

lengthen body along ground

roll from right side over onto left side

make sure the face completes the roll

by allowing nose and chin to rest into the floor

roll back to right side

in one smooth movement sit up

to swing legs together in a half circle

around to lie down on the other side

roll onto stomach

to finish facing front again

using the momentum of the roll

bend the legs into sitting position

seamlessly stand

to finish further along the wall

in starting position

with burn and back

in contact

"If you call I'll be right with you..."

Repeat first sequence

one complete roll around wall

repeat place hands on wall beside thighs
do eight pelvic thrusts
with eyes glazing over
push off wall out of last thrust
shift to “naturalistic” walk back to the tape recorder
loosen elastic
take off bunny ears as you leave.

"Bearded Bunny" from LEISURE MISTRESS Julie-Anne Long, 1999.
NARRATION #3 Bearded Mistress

TV TEXT: DAYS OF OUR LIVES:

SCENE ONE: PHONE CONVERSATION
Mr M: Make sure you are not seen by anyone.
Man 2: Mr Meera I'm not sure I understand what you're asking me.
Mr M: Then I will go over it one more time. The woman that I knew was very special, beautiful, charming, loving and very talented, a gifted pianist.
Man 2: But she had one flaw.
Mr M: Yes. Her emotions could be overwhelmed by stress, fear and she tried to calm herself by controlling it in a very unusual way.

MEMORY OF A ROMANTIC SCENE SHE IS ON A LOVE SEAT IN THE GARDEN MR M ENTERS WITH A RED ROSE.
Mr M: My darling you are so very beautiful
Woman 1: Don't.
Mr M: Why not? Why won't you let me love you?
Woman 1: No no I'm not free to love you.
Mr M: You keep saying that but you never explain yourself.
THE WOMAN TURNS AWAY AND PLAYS AN IMAGINARY PIANO WITH HER FINGERS. SHE HUMS.
Mr M: What are you doing?
Woman 1: Chopin's Nocturne Opus 9 (CONTINUES HUMMING)
Mr M: You're playing it in your head?
Woman 1: And I hear it there too. It calms me. Nothing can upset me when I hear the music. (CONTINUES HUMMING)

RETURN TO PHONE CONVERSATION
Mr M: This woman is going through the greatest stress of her life. Now if she is the woman that I once knew she may give a sign that I will recognise and it is up to you to see that sign and report back to me immediately. Do you understand me? Immediately. Before anyone else finds out.

Man 2: Is she the woman if she gives a sign?
Mr M: Then she knows secrets that I will do anything to keep. That is the reason why I must know. So that I can act before anyone else does.

SCENE TWO: HOSPITAL
Peter: Who are you? FLASHBACK:
Veiled Woman: Please let me go you're hurting me.
Peter: I have to talk to you.
Veiled Woman: Get away.
Peter: I have to talk to you.
Veiled Woman: No please let me go.
Peter: I'm sorry I cannot do that, not until you tell me why you lied
Velled Woman: for me. I know that you saw... you did didn't you?
Peter: Yes
Please who are you? Why did you lie for me? It's Jack and
Jude they've seen us.
Velled Woman: I have to go
Peter: No Jack won't let you go. He'll force you to tell him why you
lied for me.
Velled Woman: I swear I'll never betray you. Never.
Peter: Tell me why. Tell me before they get here.
Velled Woman: I can't tell.
Peter: Why did you lie for me?
Velled Woman: I can't tell.
Peter: Jack won't give up. You can't stop the truth from coming out.
Jack: Hello (CALLING FROM A DISTANCE)
Velled Woman: No No (SHE JUMPS)
BACK AT THE HOSPITAL
Peter: Why did you put yourself in danger to protect me? You're a
total stranger. There's something about you. I can't figure it out.

SCENE THREE: MR MEERA'S LOUNGE ROOM
WATCHING TELEVISION VIDEO OF THE WOMAN IN A HOSPITAL BED
Mr M: My God if that is the woman I once knew how horrible to
have such beauty destroyed. Such pain. No... no...
no movement... no her hands lie still... no there is no sign, it
cannot be.

The bearded lady defies the myths of conventional beauty. She is freakish, yet
fascinating. She lives on the fringe of things. She is a side show.

There is a bearded lady in my neighbourhood. People shun her in the street.
She is always on her own. She looks preoccupied. I wonder about her life...

I went to find a beard and find one I did, at the local fancy dress hire place.
"Not much call for a bush rangers beard like this," the peroxide blonde behind
the counter smiled, "Tony, what about this one?" she yelled.
"That old thing..." Tony sneered, from behind the leprechaun tunics, "... you can
have it for five dollars."
"I'll take it!" I snapped, holding it up to my face.
"Oh... it's for you?" the blonde commented!
* If you see me walking down the street and I start to cry each time we meet walk on by.... make believe that you don’t see the tears just let me grieve in silence cause each time I see you I break down and cry... y... y... y just walk on by... * I want to marry a lighthouse keeper and keep him company I want to marry a lighthouse keeper and live by the side of the sea I’ll polish his lamp by the light of day so ships at night can find their way I want to marry a lighthouse keeper won’t that be ok we’ll take walks along the moonlit bay maybe find a treasure too I’d love living in a lighthouse how about you... u.... u... u I dream of living in a lighthouse baby every single day I dream of living in a lighthouse a white one by the bay so if you want to make my dreams come true you’d be a lighthouse keeper do we could live in a lighthouse a white one by the bay... y... y won’t that be ok * Pussycat pussycat I love you yes I do you and you’re pussycat eyes... what’s new pussycat wowowowo what’s new pussycat wowowowo... pussycat pussycat I love you yes I do you and you’re pussycat nose... what’s new pussycat wowowowo what’s new pussycat wowowowo... pussycat pussycat I love you yes I do you and you’re pussy cat lips...

There is a gesture for each of these words, choreographed to short phrases of popular songs. These sections are repeated a number of times. All movements are gestural or recognisable movements, some are dance steps. It should look like I know what I am saying, even if the audience doesn’t really understand the language. It is not necessary that the audience knows the source of this movement, but I would like to convey the sense that I am having a dialogue with myself. Some movements and gestures will start to become recognisable, the more they are repeated. There is a narrative going on in my head and body, but it’s probably different to anyone else’s.

Meaning cannot be ascertained without a context because the same movement has different meanings in different situations (Best, 1979). How the work is produced and the interaction between the performer and the audience contribute to the creation of meaning in dance. When someone from a dance audience asks, ‘But what did it mean?’ There is frequently an assumption that the dance had one meaning which the speaker missed. However, dances are multi layered and can be read in a number of ways... Although there is no one meaning or interpretation of a dance, some interpretations can be more easily substantiated than others. This is because of the shared visual symbols of everyday life, which are also used in dance, which we understand to have specific meanings in particular contexts. Adair, 1992, p.62.
"... you need to do more work with the beard thing (as we said) but I think some of the more poignant stuff was..." Email from Amanda Card, 20 October, 1999, 13:49:35.

Feedback indicated that this was the most indecipherable section. I wonder how it would have read if I hadn't worn the beard? The beard came out of my desire to wear an accessory for each section - the Liz Hurley mask, the witch's nose, the bunny ears, the beard. Although these items can all have literal interpretations they also have other meanings. I thought these props might appear too literal, but juxtaposed with the chosen actions, I don't think they were. Likewise, the movement comes from a literal source, as I rarely begin making movement from an abstract idea. All the movements in BEARDED MISTRESS are clearly mimetic and representative of the words from the chosen songs. I am reassured when audience members have different readings of the gestural language. I wanted the movement of the body to be coarse and slightly grotesque, internally erotic for the performer (not externally for the audience). I wanted it to be gross. The bearded lady is not a common female image. Her demeanour is excessive and not easily contained. The beard frames her manic eyes.

It strikes me that a lot of theatrical dance at the end of the 20th century is refined, frequently physically extreme, often athletic and production is slick. Irreverence towards the dancer's body is not a popular approach. Home made production values are under rated. I like to think that these subversive values which I support, question the heirarchy of dance today. This is a dance in the margins, there is a hint of loosing control, of cracking up, of breaking down. There is no definitive interpretation of BEARDED MISTRESS or for that matter LEISURE MISTRESS. Neither should there be.
MEDITATION #4 Alien

1. Traffic and light
2. Light
3. (SLOW)
4. (FAST)
5. Rhythm drag
   Hand only
6. In corner
   Push off for drop
7. Reverse
8. (SLOW)
9. Touching light
   Slow motion
NARRATION #4  Princess

TV TEXT: DAYS OF OUR LIVES:

SCENE FOUR: MR MEERA’S LOUNGE ROOM. PHONE RINGS.
Mr M: Yes. No, no, no, no no. He has nothing to fear from me or the 
woman in white, because if she was the woman I once knew, she 
would have reverted back to her old habits. She would have, 
well, been humming along to the music. She would have been 
moving as if she were playing a piano. No there’s no sign at all. 
Nothing at all.
CROSS TO TELEVISION WITH VIDEO IMAGE OF WOMAN IN HOSPITAL BED 
THEN OPEN UP TO SCENE IN HOSPITAL ROOM. HER HANDS START TO 
MOVE PLAYING AN IMAGINARY PIANO.

SCENE FIVE: ANOTHER LOUNGE ROOM.
Peter: It hasn’t always been this way Jen. For the longest time the 
woman meant nothing. Now all of a sudden she’s become more 
and more important in my life. The word of a complete stranger 
has so much power over me.

Jen: But she said she didn’t see you with Jude and I believe her, no 
matter what Jack believes.

Peter: He hasn’t given up you know. He’s pinning all his hopes on 
finding out who this woman is. He thinks that her identity will 
somehow discredit me.

Jen: it doesn’t matter what Jack thinks, I love you Peter... KISS... And 
I’m totally committed to you.

Peter: Your faith in me means so much Jen... KISS... So much... I love 
you so much... KISS KISS KISS HE CARRIES HER OUT OF THE 
ROOM AS JACK ENTERS FROM ANOTHER DOOR.

Jack: Well I’m not going to let you win Peter. You may have Jennifer 
now but you’re not going to go on that honeymoon. I’ll find out the 
lady in white’s identity first and hopefully that’ll be enough to 
prove to Jennifer who or what you really are.

SCENE SIX: HOSPITAL FOYER
Man 3: You’re what?
Woman 2: I’m pregnant. I’m carrying your baby. Our baby. After all this time 
and all this struggle, I just found out. I’m so happy.

THEY HUG. HE DOESN’T LOOK HAPPY. WOMAN 3 IN BACKGROUND 
SQUEEZES HER FINGERS TOGETHER AND CLOSE UP ON HER FACE 
LOOKING VERY GRIM. DAYS OF OUR LIVES CREDITS ROLL UP.
Voice Over: ... star in the action thriller THE LONG KISS GOOD NIGHT. The 
lost past of a lethal secret agent comes back to haunt a suburban housewife with deadly consequences THE LONG KISS 
GOOD NIGHT. Premiering Sunday.
THE YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS is next...
ARMS WALK:

It wasn't until I "performed" LEISURE MISTRESS that I confirmed how crucial the audience is to my work. I can even go as far as to say that I am dependent on the audience's contribution in crafting the persona. It is not until the stakes are high and an audience is present that certain decisions are made; timing, expression, shifts in dramatic emphasis. Each performance is structured and pre-planned with little space for improvisation. It appears to be the same show but it's not. Of course you could say this of all live performance but for me these inconsistencies and subtle shifts are amplified due to the intimate performance space and the one to one relationship between performer and audience. Spalding Gray the American autobiographic monologist, applied a dance analogy to his stage work in a recent interview: "It's like dancing with a partner. You're reciprocal, you're going back and forth, you're leading sometimes, sometimes they're leading you. It's interactive." (Interview, Baine).

For most theatrical genres there is a set of parameters, a code of expectations to be adhered to. It is easier to label that way. PRINCESS played with the dichotomy between humour and sadness. I am interested in the slippages between different genres and styles. I enjoy employing shifting methods and changing frames of reference. Ultimately I am not concerned with a consistent cohesion of meaning for the audience.

For me, PRINCESS was the most elusive section to resolve during the process. However, while performing, it began to make more sense to me. My instinctive decisions for pursuing the idea proved to be right. PRINCESS unfolded unexpectedly to be the most personal and the most revealing. It began as a simple idea to choreograph an arm dance using the instantly recognisable gestural language that ballet teachers often adopt to mark
movements - an "in joke". It evolved into a very simple dance with an atmosphere of regret, lost dreams and aging, feelings I choose not to engage with much in my everyday life, je ne regrette rien.

To begin training particularly in ballet, one must have the required body shape. Daily, throughout training, the dancers are confronted with their body shapes in every class as they dance before walls of mirrors. For women, who are socialised to pay a good deal of attention to their looks, this daily confrontation usually results in a dissatisfaction with themselves and a constant battle for perfection which frequently includes extreme dieting... Adair, 1992, p.16.

I could also write about the phenomenon of the dancer's body because in retrospect I think the notion of that particular corporeality is at the core of PRINCESS. But I am only interested in the relationship of one woman to her body. LEISURE MISTRESS is about one woman's experience as a dancer of her own body. PRINCESS is a case where action, the performance, speaks louder than words and the embodiment of these ideas is best served by the dance. It is my intention to illuminate the idea or image through the movement but not to draw the audience's attention to the dance.

HELP ME HELP ME HELP ME HELP ME HELP ME HELP ME HELP ME HELP

This spinning image overlayed with words interests me because of the potential for an emotional resonance from two abstract elements.

*See LINK #4 COMING UP FOR AIR (p. 85 - 87).

BYE FOR NOW: "Thanks for coming. I'd really like to get some feed back... there's a visitor's book at the desk where you can make a comment, or if you're really keen there's some self addressed envelopes, you can send me something (smile) Bye (exit carrying tape recorder with music still playing)...
COMING UP FOR AIR

Director: Wendy Houstoun.

Wendy Houstoun is a leading British choreographer who has developed a unique style of dance theatre that explores narrative forms, and skilfully combines movement and text. Her highly successful solo *Haunted, Daunted and Flaunted* was seen at the 1998 Adelaide Festival. Her work often reflects the contemporary concerns of a fragile global society, its occupants edgy and paranoid, seeking some form of security as their boundaries keep shifting.

*** The One Extra Company approached Wendy with a proposal to create a project with like minded Australian artists. I was invited to participate in this seven week development project which provided a unique opportunity for the exchange of ideas with international and nationally based artists.
Thursday 14th January 1999:

It's got me thinking about my body and for all the negatives you know I'm not really bothered. I'm a bit like an old car. A classic in need of a bit of attention. The rego's due and it's maintenance time if the old girl's going to hit the road again. The chassis is sound - just a little rust and deterioration. The upholstery is saggy but nothing that can't be fixed, accepting that it's impossible to restore to it's original condition. Engine starts every time and ticks over nicely once warm. All knobs and levers work, most of the time. Should get a few more miles out of the old girl if she's treated well.

I got my licence renewed today - the photo is tragic! Had just finished the first class with Wendy and things were looking and feeling irredeemable. I have to live with this photo for 5 years! Aah!
Week 1: Except from Journal

Gestures at table (head covered) in response to words.

Different legs with arms etc.

Phrase of 5 gestures

Words

Take wrist lift diagonally over head

→ scoop down and curl (Plunge)

Steve Paxton's arms 123 + settle (DRIFT)

Drum middle fingers (mucocutus) palms down

Run fingers like a spider (running)

let R finger drop and part off edge of table (DROP)

Take it into your legs

Take it into your body

Sink in chest R side over

Roll up lifting R Side up

Body roll this R ✓ + cut

Shift ribs R L R + settle arms cur fingers +

Shimmey shoulders as you bring body +

drop R shoulder over

DOUBLES: Leaning & Flicking (ROZ)

Laughing
A SILENCE
Dear Readers,

I hope that you have enjoyed this book as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Signed

Julie-Anne Long

Conclusion from TO DANCE YOUR LIFE AWAY Julie-Anne Long, 1972 (p. 43).
5

TO AND FROM JACK

My photographs do me an injustice. They look just like me.

Phyllis Diller.
Dear Ms Long,

I am writing to apologise for being so remiss in not contacting you after your recent LEISURE MISTRESS performances. I am sorry that I did not get to see your work, but it completely slipped my mind. There was so much else to see and do in the month of October. I hope you understand.

I heard on the grapevine that you were "...amazing, best thing I've seen in ages..." (Erin), "... fantastic..." (Rosemary via Sherridan), "Kooky, very kooky" (Donna) and that you were "... a joy to watch" (Amanda). Pauline told me she "had a smile on her dial" and Clare said that "some bits made her laugh out loud, others made her profoundly sad". It sounds like it was very nice dear.

Oh, the wonders of Email, I feel as if I was almost there, although I do find it difficult to interpret this praise when I observe that most of the audience were friends of yours! All women! Hmmmm. I think you need to broaden your horizons and look at expanding your audiences. You can't just preach to the converted, Ms Long.

Pardon me for appearing nosy but I was wondering what your intentions are for the future? I think it's probably about time you got a job. You've got responsibilities, a young lad and you've never even had a mortgage. You'll be forty before you know it and what do you have to show for your life? I don't mean to be harsh sweetie, but times are tough, you need to adopt a strategy. I don't want to go on about it, but, what are you going to do next? You've got to snap out of this LEISURE MISTRESS thing! At the risk of over stepping the mark, maybe summertime is a good time to join a gym or go swimming. It's not too late to get yourself together. What about a dance class? Yoga perhaps? I have a friend who teaches yoga and she takes on cases like yours.

Well I'm off to a conference in Franceville tomorrow, so must get an early night, after my exhausting day packing. I do hope you have a relaxing Christmas and a festive New Year with the family. Please keep me informed of your plans and if there's anything I can do to help, don't hesitate to call.

Kind regards
Dear Jack,

Please call me Julie-Anne. I feel as if we have known each other long enough to drop the formalities. I was very disappointed that you didn’t make it to the LEISURE MISTRESS performances, but such is life. I’ll get over it. You should be better organised. I’ll get you a diary for Christmas.

I’m surprised at you Jack, may I call you Jack? You shouldn’t believe everything you hear on the grapevine, after all, people only tell you things they know you want to hear. You weren’t there and hearsay is only a small part of the picture. Although, I did receive some lovely letters in response to the performances. By the way, I didn’t like your inference that it was a closed shop! There were plenty of men in the audiences. Maybe they’re not as willing or able, as women, to express their opinions about something like this!

You will be pleased to know that I am already thinking and planning ahead. Isn’t it funny when you’re in the thick of finishing off one project, the seeds of another come bursting through and start to take over. Do you know what I mean? Between you and me, I think going solo is the way to go. The next work on the drawing board is tentatively titled MRS WHIPPY. Blow performing in theatres, LEISURE MISTRESS will be in a display home and MRS WHIPPY will drive around In... you guessed it a Mr Whippy van!

I’m eager to reconfigure myself or even reinvent. Maybe I should get a “real job”, a regular income beckons from where I’m standing. Spread the word that I’m on the loose and let me know if you hear of any “gigs” on the horizon. Don’t worry, the family won’t starve and I will make an effort to get to the swimming pool this summer. I know yoga is good for me, but my body’s not too keen.

Buzzy’s coughing! Poor thing! He’s had a hacking cough for a couple of weeks now. Better go and reapply the Vicks... I hope I’m not going to be up and down again all night, tonight... I need my beauty sleep!

Good luck at the conference. Are you presenting a paper? By the way where’s Franceville? Happy New Millennium! (I know that’s not accurate but I’m getting in early). Here’s something corny but true “The times they are a changing” (from some song, by someone famous, written some time ago).

Take care, beware, I’ll write again soon.

Much love
APPENDIX


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