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Nerve 9 - Tess de Quincey

Reviewed by Jill Sykes



Performance Space - October 19 until October 30

There have been many memorable performances by Tess de Quincey in Sydney in more than a decade, but *Nerve 9* is the peak of her incisive creativity. While its elements of sound, speech and moving images combine the talents of a range of artists, de Quincey is the inspirational pivot and driving force as choreographer and dancer.

The influence of Japan's *butoh* dance is interesting to observe: standing on the sides of her booted feet so that her body is pushed into a tree-like vertical; throwing her head so far back that her body is almost at a backward right angle as she walks forward; moving so slowly and smoothly that action is almost imperceptible.

But she has moved a long way beyond that conceptual and stylistic source, developing her own movement language. It is vivid, concise and powered by ideas that the audience may

share, or they may find triggers to their own thoughts.

Her bright, bleached, spiky hair tops a strong face unadorned by make-up. A cheap black-plastic raincoat worn the wrong way around suggests a found object, and emphasises her expressive hands as well as the vulnerable V of her bare back down to where the coat is fastened at the waist over tracksuit pants.

Moving to sound compositions by Debra Petrovitch, poems by Amanda Stewart and text by Francesca da Rimini, in designs by Russell Emerson and lighting by Richard Manner, de Quincey's dance spans the extremes of stillness and rapid action, enhanced by these companion elements.

She is presented bodily, in silhouette and in shadow, which in one sequence turns her solo into a duet, then a trio. With the help of the lighting, she constantly remodels the space in look and mood as she works through nine thematic sequences that reflect the body's ninth cranial nerve.

Nerve 9 should not be missed...