



Attractor

Dancenorth, Lucy Guerin Inc, Gideon Obarzanek & Senyawa

AUSTRALIA

Surrender yourself to a trance-noise odyssey that transcends borders as Indonesia's tour-de-force music duo Senyawa and Melbourne choreographic luminaries Lucy Guerin and Gideon Obarzanek join forces with two of Australia's leading dance companies.

Senyawa reinterprets the Javanese tradition of entering trance through dance and music as a powerful, contemporary ritual. As the performance unfolds, their unusual fusion of hand-made electrified stringed instruments with operatic melodies and heavy metal vocals slowly builds to a euphoric pitch while the dancers are propelled into ecstatic physical abandonment. The result is a visceral, empathic experience for the audience – but you can take it even further.

Attractor features eight dancers and two live musicians. Each performance, 20 completely unrehearsed audience members volunteer to join the performers on stage dissolving the distinction between dancer and non-dancer, audience and performer in a cross-cultural, shared ritual. By crossing these thresholds, we collectively succumb to the inherent power of music and dance, and experience how they can propel each other into heightened states of energy.

Indonesia's tour-de-force music duo Senyawa and Melbourne's choreographic luminaries Lucy Guerin and Gideon Obarzanek have joined forces with two of Australia's leading dance companies, Lucy Guerin Inc and Dancenorth to create this new work.

Choreographer and Director Gideon Obarzanek explains the inspiration behind this piece.

“This work has been inspired by live music created by Senyawa, who reinterpret the Javanese tradition of entering trance through dance and music by blending the metal music they listened to as teenagers with Indonesian ritual and folk idioms,” said Mr Obarzanek.

“Senyawa and I discussed our seemingly contradictory interest in traditional and ceremonial music and dance. We concluded that it was the desire for individuals to become a part of something bigger than themselves. Making Attractor comes from a shared interest to construct rituals for non-believers,” said Mr Obarzanek.

Co-choreographer and Director Lucy Guerin adds that “Attractor has been a succumbing to the inherent power of music and dance, and how they can propel each other into heightened states of energy, tone, rhythm and form”.

“20 members of the audience join in on stage, dissolving the demarcation between dancer/non-dancer, audience/performer, the professional and the amateur, through this participatory act of doing” said Ms Guerin.

Director’s Note - Gideon Obarzanek

I first met Indonesian music duo Senyawa in Yogyakarta in 2014, when we set off on a long journey to a remote village in far eastern Java to observe a traditional trance ceremony. After two nights of prayers and offerings to the dead, dancers entered a state of trance through a series of vigorous performances. Now possessed, they were considered vessels for immortal spirits come to visit the living. To prove this extraordinary transition from human to non-human, they performed shocking acts of pain and strength before being exorcised by Shamans. While in the village, I reflected on my many years of creating virtuosic stage productions with highly trained dancers and my own contrasting early experience in dance. This happened on kibbutz in Israel as a child doing folk dancing where participation was privileged over performance. I am an atheist but have always been interested in religious art and traditional ceremony. While my folk dancing background is not religious, it shares a similar traditional relationship where watching and participating, performing and experiencing are all interchangeable. As contemporary artists performing to secular audiences, Rully, Wukir and I discussed our contradictory interest in traditional music and dance. We pondered why we and other seemingly non-religious people are drawn to this type of ceremonial performance. We concluded that dance and music can create transcendent states for participants, through which they become a part of something bigger than themselves. Making Attractor comes from a shared interest to construct rituals for non-believers.

Director’s Note - Lucy Guerin

This work for me has been a succumbing to the inherent power of music and dance and how they can propel each other into heightened states of energy, tone, rhythm and form. I have always believed that we can watch dance without having to translate it into a meaning beyond what we see and experience. We accept this easily with music, and with the help of Senyawa’s incredible sound I hope that we can experience this work beyond a representation of a narrative or a theme. The excitement of working with Senyawa and their willingness to play and try new things has been a joyous experience. We experimented initially with leading and following; dancers responding to the music and the musicians following the movements and rhythms of

the dancers. But these boundaries have become blurred and get tossed back and forth throughout the work. The movement involves gradual evolutions of form that connect the dancers as one organism, made of individual bodies. I was not looking for clarity of image in this piece but rather a constantly shifting texture of movement that allows the eye to move between absorbing the whole picture and finding detail and precision. Kyle, Amber and the dancers have contributed generously to this creation with their remarkable skills. It couldn't have happened without their patience and dedication and this has been deeply appreciated by both Gideon and myself.

Dancenorth biography

Dancenorth is a contemporary dance company based in Townsville, North Queensland. An epicenter for artistic exchange and collaboration Dancenorth balances a dynamic regional presence with a commitment to creating bold, adventurous and critically acclaimed contemporary dance.

Under the Artistic Direction of Kyle Page, Dancenorth delivers an ambitious and far-reaching program including the creation and presentation of new work, national and international touring, professional development opportunities for dancers and choreographers as well as national and international residencies and research projects.

Parallel to this is Dancenorth's education and cultural engagement program, The Enrichment Projects, provides the framework for a wide range of reciprocal activities. Bound by an overarching ethos of inclusion, each branch of the Enrichment Projects has been designed to Inform, Impart and Inspire.

As a creative hub for choreographic development and research, Dancenorth makes a significant contribution to Australia's cultural ecology by valuing and supporting risk and innovation as a means of extending contemporary dance as an art form.

Dancenorth is supported by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body; the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland, Townsville City Council and the Tim Fairfax Foundation.

Senyawa biography

Jogjakarta's Senyawa embodies the aural elements of traditional Indonesian music whilst exploring the framework of experimental music practice, pushing the boundaries of both traditions. Their music strikes a perfect balance between their avant-garde influences and cultural heritage to create truly contemporary Indonesian new music.

Their sound is comprised of Rully Shabara's deft extended vocal techniques punctuating the frenetic sounds of instrument builder, Wukir Suryadi's modern-primitive instrumentation. Inventions like his handcrafted 'Bamboo Spear'; a thick stem of bamboo strung up with percussive strips of the animal skin alongside steel strings. Amplified it fuses elements of traditional Indonesian instrumentation with garage distortion. Sonically dynamic, the instrument can be rhythmically percussive on one side whilst being melodically bowed and plucked on the other.

Senyawa have performed at many notable festivals and underground clubs such as MONA FOMA Festival in Tasmania, the Adelaide Festival with Korean singer Bae Il Dong, Malmo Sommarscen Festival in Sweden, Salihara Literature Festival in Jakarta, Art Basel Switzerland, Café Oto in London, Cypic Festival Glasgow,

Copenhagen Jazz House Denmark, Resonate Festival Belgrade Serbia, CTM Festival in Berlin, Copenhagen Jazz Festival, UNSOUND Festival Poland, Clandestino Festival in Norway, The Lab San Francisco, Eaux Claires Festival WA, Bridget Donoghue Gallery NYC, Pioneer Works NYC and Oct Loft Jazz Festival in China.

They have collaborated and performed with many notable musicians such as Yoshida Tatsuya, Otomo Yoshide, Lucas Abela, KK Null, Keiji Haino, Rabih Beiani, Greg Fox, Arrington De Dionyso, Melt Banana, Jon Sass, Damo Suzuki, Jerome Cooper, Justin Vernon, Oren Ambarchi, David Shea, Trevor Dunn, and Kazu Ushihashi. In 2012 they completed a film in collaboration with French filmmaker Vincent Moon.

Lucy Guerin biography

DIRECTOR / CHOREOGRAPHER

Born in Adelaide, Australia, Lucy graduated from the Centre for Performing Arts in 1982 before working with Russell Dumas (Dance Exchange) and Nanette Hassall (Danceworks). She moved to New York in 1989 for seven years where she danced with Tere O'Connor Dance, the Bebe Miller Company and Sara Rudner, and began to produce her first choreographic works. She returned to Australia in 1996 and worked as an independent artist until 2002 when she established Lucy Guerin Inc in Melbourne to support the development, creation and touring of contemporary dance works.

Lucy has toured her work extensively in Europe, Asia and North America as well as to most companies internationally, most recently, Lyon Opera Ballet (France), Skanes Dansteater (Sweden), The Young Vic (London) and Rambert (London).

Her awards include the 2016 Australia Council Award, a Sidney Myer Performing Arts Award, two New York Dance and Performance Awards ('Bessies'), several Green Room Awards, a Helpmann Award and two Australian Dance Awards.

Gideon Obarzanek biography

DIRECTOR / CHOREOGRAPHER

Gideon is a director, choreographer and performing arts curator.

Gideon founded dance company Chunky Move in 1995 and was CEO and Artistic Director until 2012. His works for Chunky Move have been diverse in form and content including stage productions, installations, site-specific works, participatory events and film. These have been performed in many festivals and theatres around the world including Edinburgh International, BAM Next Wave NYC, Venice Biennale, Southbank London and all major Australian performing arts festivals.

In 2013 Gideon was a resident artist at the Sydney Theatre Company where he wrote and directed 'I Want to Dance Better at Parties'. He later co wrote and directed a documentary version with Mathew Bate winning the 2014 Sydney Film Festival Dendy Award.

Gideon is a recipient of an Australian Creative Fellowships working with theatre, dance and documentary filmmakers to develop projects with simultaneous live and screen outcomes.

Samantha Hines biography

DANCER

Samantha Hines was born and raised in Sydney, Australia. She studied contemporary and classical dance for two years at Sydney's Ev and Bow under the directorship of Sarah Boutler and Lisa Evans. In 2010 she went on to continue her training at New Zealand School of Dance and in her final year was hired by Australian Dance Theatre. While with Australian Dance Theatre Samantha performed and toured extensively with the company throughout Australia, Europe and Asia. In 2013 she embarked on the Australian tour of G as well as Proximity at the Arts Centre Melbourne (winner of Green Room Award for Best Performance by an Ensemble) along with two European tours of Proximity in 2013 & 2014. In 2015 she performed in three European tours of Multiverse, as well as the Australian national tour of Be Your Self.

Samantha has collaborated and performed in the world premiere seasons of Daniel Jaber's Nought (2013), Garry Stewart's Multiverse (2014), Habitus (2016) and Beginning of Nature (2016). Samantha has since left Australian Dance Theatre and is now working as a freelance dancer around Australia.

Jenni Large biography

DANCER

Jenni trained at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. She graduated in 2010 receiving the Hawaiian Award for most outstanding graduate. During her studies she completed the international exchange program at the Taipei National University of the Arts and travelled to the United States to perform at the World Dance Alliance.

As an independent artist, Jenni has developed, performed and toured works by Aimee Smith, Sue Peacock, Leigh Warren, Isabella Stone, Ashley McLellan and Lizzie and Zaimon Vilmanis. Jenni was a founding member of the Sydney-based Dance Makers Collective and has recently begun developing her own work with collaborator Jack Ziesing.

From 2012-2013 Jenni was a member of Tasdance under artistic director Annie Greig, performing and touring works by Anton, Francis Rings, Larissa McGowan, Anna Smith, Marnie Palomares, Byron Perry and Tanja Liedkte.

Jenni joined Dancenorth in 2015 under the directorship of Kyle Page. Performance highlights include A Pre-Emptive Requiem for Mother Nature by Alisdair Macindoe; If __ Was __ a double bill by Ross McCormack and Stephanie Lake, The Three Dancers by Lee Searle; Rainbow Vomit (2015 Brisbane Festival) and Spectra (2015 Japan Tour) by Amber Haines and Kyle Page.

Ashley Mclellan biography

DANCER

Ashley was born in Cairns and began dancing at the age of 7 with 'Creative Moves', and later at 'Daphne Learoyd School of Dance' in Shepparton, Victoria.

Ashley graduated from the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), with an Advanced Diploma of Performing Arts (Dance) in 2010, where she was awarded the, Dance Theatre of WA Award 2008, Leinster Award for Dance 2008, and the Hawaiian Award for Ballet 2010.

During and after her training, Ashley spent four years performing with the West Australian Ballet, under the directorship of Ivan Cavallari performing corps de ballet and soloist roles.

She received the award for, Outstanding Performance by a Female in Melbourne's Short and Sweet Festival for her self-choreographed solo, Other in 2013, and was granted a successful recipient of the Australia Council's ArtStart Grant 2014, during which time she danced in workshops and festivals across Europe and Asia. Upon returning to Australia, Ashley choreographed and performed Pearl for Lucy Guerin Inc.'s season of Pieces for Small Spaces.

In 2015 Ashley performed in Melanie Lane's work, Merge for Melbourne's Dance Massive festival and began dancing full time with Dancenorth Australia, under the newly appointed director Kyle Page.

Over the years Ashley has worked with artists such as Graham Murphy, Marcia Haydee, Garry Stewart, Ivan Cavallari, Nana Bilus Abaffy, Tony Yap, Gregory Lorenzutti, Alisdair Macindoe, Melanie Lane, Kyle Page, Amber Haines, Geoffrey Watson, Stephanie Lake, Ross McCormack, Lee Serle, Lucy Guerin Inc. and Gideon Obarzanek to name a few.

Mason Kelly biography

DANCER

Mason Kelly, originally from Geelong, Victoria, attended The Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School in Melbourne where he trained for three years. In 2013 he commenced full-time training as a contemporary major at The New Zealand School of Dance. During his time at NZSD Mason performed in the World of Wearable Arts, directed by Malia Johnston and NZSD's choreographic season of 'The Residents' directed by Victoria Columbus which toured to Tempo Dance Festival Auckland. He also worked with James O'Hara, Lina Limosani, Michael Parmenter, Nils Christie and Ursula Rob. In 2015, at the start of his third year, Mason was lucky enough to join Dancenorth under the new directorship of Kyle Page.

Since then he has performed and toured works around Australia by Alisdair Macindoe (A Pre-Emptive Requiem for Mother Nature), Ross McCormack (If Form was Shifted), Stephanie Lake (If Never was Now), Lee Serle (The Three Dancers), Kyle Page and Amber Haines (Rainbow Vomit, Spectra) and Lucy Guerin and Gideon Obarzanek (Attractor). He has also worked with the Townsville community choreographing and teaching workshops.

Georgia Rudd biography

DANCER

Georgia graduated from the New Zealand School of Dance as a contemporary major in 2015. During her training, Georgia performed two new works, Preface – Homage to a Risk (presented at Tempo Dance

Festival) and *Visions of Salome* (M1 Contact Dance Festival Singapore) by Ross McCormack's company Muscle Mouth. While studying she also worked with, Iratxe Ansa and Igor Bacovich, James O'hara, Matthew Smith, James Pham, Thomas Bradley and Sarah Foster-Sproull.

Professionally, Georgia has performed works by several choreographers in 2016, her first year with Dancenorth; *Rainbow Vomit* (Kyle Page and Amber Haines), *If Form Was Shifted* (Ross McCormack), *If Never Was Now* (Stephanie Lake), *The Three Dancers* (Lee Serle), and *Attractor* (Lucy Guerin and Gideon Obarzanek).

Felix Sampson biography

DANCER

Born in Wellington, Felix studied at the New Zealand School of Dance (NZSD), graduating in 2015 with a Diploma in Dance Performance. While studying at NZSD he worked with many influential choreographers such as Ross McCormack (*Preface: Hommage to a risk*), Douglas Wright (*Rapt* excerpts), Craig Bary (*Rapt* excerpts) Thomas Bradley (*Conditions of Entry*), Iratxe Ansa (*Metamorphosis 2015*) and Sarah Foster-Sproull (*Forgotten Things*) among many others.

Upon graduating, Felix worked with Malia Johnston in her short work *Semble* which was performed at the Cubadupa Festival in Wellington, and *World of Wearable Art* during their mini show at the Brancott Estate.

Felix then joined Australian Dance Theatre (ADT) in May 2016 as a full-time company dancer. Upon joining ADT he performed in the return season of *Ignition* working with choreographers such as Lina Limosani, Katrina Lazaroff, Erin Fowler, Matte Roffe and Thomas Fonua. He then performed multiple works under the choreographer and directorship of Garry Stewart; *Objekt*, *The Beginning of Nature*, and *Doppelganger*.

Jack Ziesing biography

DANCER

Jack Ziesing began dancing in Canberra at Quantum Leap Youth Dance Company under the direction of Ruth Osborne.

In 2008 Jack undertook training at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. While there he worked with choreographers Aimee Smith, Melanie Lane, Anton and Amaury Lebrun (Spain). In 2009, he received a scholarship to attend the Taipei Ideas Dance Festival specialising in rope and aerial work. Jack also travelled to the United States to attend the World Dance Alliance Conference and perform choreographer Sue Peacock's *any given moment*. He graduated from WAAPA in 2010 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Dance.

Upon graduating, Jack developed *Ghostlight* choreographed by Kate Weare (USA) for Buzz Dance Company and also performed in Chrissie Parrot's *Cyg.net 2* for the opening gala at the State Theatre Centre of Western Australia.

Jack joined Expressions Dance Company in 2011 under artistic director Natalie Weir. While at the company, Jack was fortunate to perform in many of Weir's signature award winning works. He toured extensively

nationally and internationally and collaborated with other companies including Queensland Ballet, Cathy Sharpe Dance Ensemble, LDTX/Beijing Dance, Singapore Dance Theatre and Guangzhou Modern Dance Company. He also performed works by commissioned choreographers such as Antony Hamilton, Lucas Jervies, Paul Selwyn-Norton, Lisa Wilson, Nerida Matthaei, Liesel Zink, Cameron McMillan and Xing Liang.

Jack now works as a freelance performer and choreographer. He recently performed in Ohad Naharin's *Decadance* for STRUT as part of the MoveMe festival in Perth before choreographing for QL2's *EAT* in Canberra.

Jack is a multiple nominee for both the Australian Dance Awards and the Robert Helpmann Awards for Best Dance Performance by a Male.

Josh Mu biography

DANCER

Josh Mu is an Australian-based independent contemporary dancer. His dance roots begin in breakdance and hip hop culture, and have expanded to include contemporary dance, ballet, circus, gymnastics, yoga and physical theatre.

Mu's varied skill set has enabled him to work with a wide range of prominent companies and artists across Australia, including Chunky Move, Force Majeure, Dancenorth, Antony Hamilton Projects, Shaun Parker & Company, Sydney Theatre Company, Perth Theatre Company, Marrugeku, Tracks Dance Theatre, Buzz Dance Theatre, Jo Lloyd, Stephanie Lake, Gavin Webber, Garry Stewart, Lucy Guerin, Gideon Obarzanek and Meryl Tankard.

Mu is an ArtsNT scholarship recipient, an AusdanceWA award winner for 'Outstanding Performance' and a certified yoga instructor.

Mu is continually exploring potential for new movement, is fascinated by the benefits of yoga for performers, and is interested in where arts and technology intersect.

Quotes:

"Watching this work is an electric experience; it is a highly successful collaboration between Australian and international artists that is evenly balanced and rich. The work deserves a longer season than the few performances it has been allocated here in Melbourne." SYDNEY MORNING HERALD and THE AGE

"Choreographically, Attractor channels a sense of frenzied possession - with dancers' flailing limbs and rubbery torsos endlessly energised by the music, by one another and by the dynamic of the group. The dancers are brilliant - free and technically wonderful. The music incorporates deep, human sounds as well as alienating cacophonies and blood curdling shrieks." DANCE AUSTRALIA

"There were shockingly tender, melodic interludes, but for the most part the set was a punishing barrage of driving rhythms and noise and primal vocalizations that had no analogue in the Western world. It was incredible." Eaux Claires Festival

Website: www.dancenorth.com.au

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/dancenorthAUS/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/dancenorthaustralia>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/dancenorthtsv>

For further information, interviews or images please contact:

WA MEDIA: Stephen Bevis
+61 8 6488 8618 / 0448 927 281
sbevis@perthfestival.com.au

NATIONAL MEDIA: Miranda Brown
+61 3 9419 0931 / 0411 568 781
miranda@mbpublicity.com.au

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Wendy Martin is the Artistic Director 2016 – 19.

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