

Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship

Awarded to Kerry Andrews

Travelled to Sydney, Australia – May 2002

In January 2002 I submitted an application to the Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship fund to undertake a placement with Ausdance NSW based in Sydney to further develop my dance management skills in an international setting.

Looking at past recipients from 2001/02 of the fund I knew that competition was going to be hard to secure a grant towards travel to make my placement with Ausdance NSW a reality. I am a dance manager and when you see names like Fin Walker and Elizabeth Lea as past recipients and very established choreographers in the dance field you know that what will be will be. I was aware that dance management had not featured too frequently on those awarded grants in the past so decided to keep my fingers crossed.

To my surprise and sheer delight I was awarded a travel grant. I could not believe my luck especially as I am no longer a dance practitioner but working in administration. I was over the moon and as directed in my offer letter I contacted John Lesirge of Joint Venture Travel immediately to go ahead and secure my flight.

Within a few days of gaining the news I had secured my flight; my dream venture was about to become a reality.

I got straight onto emailing down under; this project would not have been so easily put together without this unique communication system. It truly is the key to international relationships with arts professionals and allowed me to finalise my arrival and role at Ausdance NSW over a couple of emails with Gregory Nash. I was due to start in the office on Monday 6 May 2002.

I arrived in Sydney on Sunday 5 May after what seemed like an eternity in the air. Once you have mastered a 24-hour flight experience it is amazing how a short hop to New York seems like riding a bike!

Step through customs...from the UK...foot and mouth crisis...they must have asked me a million questions about soil, visiting farms and so on. Being a city girl I could not believe the Spanish inquisition on getting into the country. This made me stop to think about touring dance companies especially into Australia, when so many UK dance companies are made up of a vast array of nationalities. It must be a nightmare if this is how much they question a city girl travelling alone!

Anyhow, after not declaring my favourite M & S Percy pig chewy sweets on the form, I forgot about them really! Immigration finally decided that I could set foot across customs and be free in Sydney to explore the dance sector for just over a month, taking my sweeties with me.

I walked outside to a morning of Sunshine, looking bleary eyed and joined the queue of ants waiting for taxis to various destinations across New South Wales. I predictably ask for a taxi to Bondi (all Pommies head to Bondi, so I am told) where I was to set up camp for the next 5 weeks.

After forcing myself to fight jetlag and stay up to adjust my body clock, I finally collapse into a deep coma of sleep in order to wake and feel as normal as can be for day one at the office:

Monday 6 May 2002

Meeting Gregory Nash at Pier 5, Circular Quay – 9.30am

Get up at the crack of dawn in order to ensure that I am not late to meet Gregory. North Bondi is a bus and train ride away from central Sydney. I completely overestimated my arrival time, after being so use to London and how long it takes to get from A to B, I arrive 30 minutes early. This was not such a bad thing. Blue sky, sun and my first view of the Harbour Bridge and the Opera House. I sat in awe of these famous landmarks knowing that I will have the pleasure of their company for the next few weeks. It was an amazing half an hour to focus on what lay ahead.

Will I recognise him having not seen him for many years? I headed back to pier five to see a smiling Mr Nash looking really well and relaxed. We took a stroll to pier four where the office is based through an area called The Rocks, under the Harbour Bridge and down some stairs. This is also where Ausdance NSW is based.

We arrived at the Office; it has quite a large meeting room, Gregory's office and a large open plan area. It figures that it could be this size as Australia is definitely not short of land!

First point of call is to be briefed over coffee in the Sydney Dance Company café with Gregory, the café is directly beneath the SDC office. I soon realised that coffee culture is huge in Oz and I needed to get with the programme if I was to set up any meetings. Have you ever heard of a tall soy flat white! Anyhow the coffee was great and I begin to get the first feeling that there are a lot of politics in the arts scene in Sydney (sound familiar!). Seems like this was crucial to understand if I was going to help out in the office and get to know the movers and shakers. Thank goodness Tim Tubbs encouraged me to network when I joined UK Foundation for Dance because this was most definitely going to be needed here and I have definitely grown in confidence in this area.

Who else works at Ausdance NSW?

Cathy McDouall is the part-time Administrator, Ursula Scott is the part-time Finance Manager and then there is Patrick Burnett, a former ballet dancer now retired and a volunteer who visits the office weekly to archive material. In addition to the staff there is a membership of 600 people across New South Wales and an army of volunteers who help out from project to project.

I get to meet Cathy who provides a general introduction to the administration systems and shows me how to input data into a database. Believe it or not but I have never done this in my life and it was really good practice. It takes forever but I am here to learn about their organisation and dance scene and administration systems.

The office may have had a small staff team but boy did they have an interesting and productive network system for both email and telephone lines. I spent much of the rest of the morning mastering the art of picking up the phone and diverting the calls to the relevant phone line. For example, at the end of the month there is going to be a master series programme with John O'Connell so there is a voicemail line specifically to leave requests for a place and so on. On email there is a workstation dedicated to news and this is for the Dance NSW glossy magazine produced and received if you are a member of Ausdance NSW. The magazine is edited by Gregory Nash.

Lunchtime...as a volunteer for the next four weeks Ausdance provide me with a lunch and travel credit of \$7.00 a day. So I head down to the SDC café to sample the delights on offer. Pumpkin and coconut soup with toasted Turkish bread, scrummy...

I took a stroll around the building to get familiar with the setting and realised that this is where many of the Sydney based arts organisations are based from Carnivale Multicultural arts organisation to Accessible Arts and Bangarra Dance Theatre who even have their own theatre space. The Ausdance NSW location is a mecca for arts peeps and was to be my office for the next few weeks, how exciting. Having an office above water on the pier was so relaxing. I had never

realised that it is so true and even more so that I felt this, as I am a water sign.

I was beginning to feel very exhausted and having waves of motion running through my body, jetlag was haunting me again. I had learnt so much already about the state of play over here and it had only been a little over 24 hours since I arrived in the country.

In the afternoon I was briefed on the following:

- Metro Moves, an A6 size brochure featuring the next season in dance for all companies and venues in Sydney
- Dance NSW the magazine produced by Ausdance NSW
- Master Series: master classes with a range of professional teachers in a range of dance styles from John O'Connell (choreographer of Moulin Rouge film) to Akram Khan in August for professional dancers.

End of day one and feeling mentally exhausted yet excited about the weeks ahead and the projects that I am going to assist on. Told to look the business tomorrow to win over Simon Wilkenfeld of Bloch for sponsorship towards the Australian Dance Awards in November.

Tuesday 7 May 2003

Issued with a key and have my own workstation. Arrive and get familiar with the office systems.

Due to being a membership organisation I am delegated the task of renewing membership and dealing with enquiries. By dealing with the enquiries I learn that a dance floor is known as a Tarquette in Oz, having left the woman on hold for some time whilst I find out what a tarquette is!

I then dealt with the audition line for the Metro Moves front cover photo shoot. Armies of men and women are signing themselves up. They have to do a gruelling audition to be picked! I began making note of all enquiries, as I was to manage the audition and direct the shoot.

I began to seek advertising for the Metro Moves brochure working on the companies that advertised in the last issue. So engrossed in the process that the next thing it is the afternoon and time to head over to BLOCH to secure sponsorship for Metro Moves and Australian Dance Awards.

The BLOCH Empire, was a building in what seemed like an industrial estate, the meeting goes ahead with Simon Wilkenfeld, Gregory Nash and myself. A firm offer was not put on the table but a contribution would be made to one or both of the projects. The reason that the deal could not be finalised is because the Royal Academy of Dance Genée International ballet competition was taking place in Sydney just after the Dance Awards and they had already committed a vast amount of their allocated annual sponsorship budget to it.

Wednesday 8 May 2002

The 2002 Australian Dance awards:

Today I was to begin looking at the nomination procedure for the dance awards and who is being invited to vote. This was a case of getting my head around the past and how it has been operated before and how best to make the process more smooth running for the coming year. Spent a lot of the day on this drawing up email groups, making sure that there was no chances of cross postings.

Finalised arrangements for the Arts Marketing seminar taking place in the Accessible Arts Training room on Thursday 9 May and once again enrolled participants on the Master Series programme with John O'Connell.

Evening:

This was to be my first visit to the Opera House and to see a show, how exciting. It was the world premiere of *ellipse* by Sydney Dance Company in the Opera Theatre, Sydney Opera House. I met Gregory in the foyer to enjoy a glass of Champagne, naturally darling! On entering the auditorium I was overwhelmed and enchanted, I could not believe that I was about to watch a show at the Opera House.

Sitting four rows from the front in amazing seats (complimentary of Sydney Dance Company) it suddenly dawned on me that half the house were comps! This must be a part of the culture, lots of freebies. I mean if I can get a comp then who else is a guest of a guest, not complaining though.

Graeme Murphy is the Artistic Director and has been looking after the company since 1976. I think that this may explain why *Ellipse* seemed dated to me. Maybe coming from London I engage with international collaborative work weekly. I could not fault the dancers they were superb. I was concerned with the term collaboration. I could see no evidence that a concept had been developed among them. It appeared that they had worked in separate corners of the room. The costumes by Akira Isogawa seemed out of context and the Damian Cooper lighting design was the only reference to the title of the work that could be seen out of all collaborators. However, I am glad that I have seen the company on home turf and looked forward to discovering the independent scene.

The after party provided me with the opportunity to meet some important peeps including Greg Clark, one of the programming team from the Opera House. The movers and shakers were very welcoming to me as an outsider. I thought that I would learn a lot over the next few weeks. Even if it was just confidence building in talking with high profile arts manager/producer types.

Thursday 9 May 2002

Devised a document for sponsorship with Pricewaterhousecoopers working with existing templates in the office to get familiar with the way Sponsorship proposals are written in Australia, a very valuable experience. The same principals apply, you need to think about what the sponsor can gain from being associated with the product.

Prepared for seminar with Judith James, a highly regarded arts marketing consultant in Australia.

The seminar discussed the following:

- 1) define your goals
- 2) identify target markets and describe characteristics
- 3) copywriting
- 4) Independent artist "toolkit"

KISS Keep It Simple & Straightforward
Draw attention to the selling point

Over used words in arts marketing:
Acclaimed, cutting edge, distinguished, dynamic, forefront, innovative, leading, stunning, vibrant, vital

Key selling points:
Celebrity factor/achievements, rarity or novelty item, scale, topicality

Think of audience points of view

During the seminar there were group tasks to look at individuals to try to find each individuals KSP.

Friday 10 May 2002

Re-capped on all projects covered this week. Dealt with new membership for Ausdance NSW and processed applications, payments and produced membership cards.

Sent correspondence to John O'Connell for the Master Series, clarifying the deal and work schedule.

Worked on all workstations downloading emails and processing any relevant data.

The audition: after taking names all week for dancers to audition for the Photo shoot for Metro Moves I managed the audition and signing in of the dancers. I was also a member of the panel selecting the most appropriate dancers for the shoot as I was going to be directing the shoot for Ausdance NSW on Sunday morning with photographer Shane Rozario. Four dancers were selected with very individual looks.

Week one complete and a range of projects have taken place.

Saturday 11 May 2002

Met with Joanne Kee who use to work at the Arts Council of England. She is now on the board of Ausdance NSW. Had a long discussion with her about arts management and the model of the training scheme that I am on with London Arts and UK Foundation for Dance. She was very interested in setting up a similar model. It provided an opportunity to share contacts.

Sunday 12 May 2002

Early morning start in order to get the right amount of sun for the photo shoot. I first meet Shane Rozario then head to meet the dancers at the steps of the Art Gallery of NSW at 7am! We then take a brisk role to Mrs. Macquarie's Chair within the Royal Botanical Gardens.

The view from this point was amazing and I could see why the photographer had chosen the spot. The main landmarks of Sydney were going to form the backdrop of the photo. We spent a few hours at the site and then went to location two, a water feature at Martin Place.

Not too sure if we got the results required but all in all an amazing day as I got to see Sydney from afar and get to know Shane and some independent dancers.

Monday 13 May 2002

My first introduction to some of the Sydney Dance Company team. I had a meeting with Vyvian Palmer, the General Manager about the logistics of managing the master series, as it is a collaborative project between AUSDANCE NSW and SDC.

Then report back to Gregory on the photo shoot and began to look at costing's of Metro Moves and how much advertising was required to cover costs.

Ausdance NSW auspices grant from the Ministry of Arts and Australia Council for independent artists. I spent much of the afternoon getting my head around their system and wording of questions. I kept on imaging the ACE grant forms and thinking back to what they really need answered. I was writing a grant application for Paul Selwyn Norton who has choreographed for the likes of Béjart in the past.

This application was going to take some time in order to produce a well-written application adhering to the guidelines, a great challenge.

Tuesday 14 May 2003

General enquiries and processing of membership applications followed by collation of images and copy for the next issue of Dance NSW magazine.

First Master Series session with John O'Connell, I was extremely excited to meet him and was trying to behave in a calm and controlled manner. It was difficult knowing that he had choreographed one of my favourite movies, Baz Lurhman's *Romeo & Juliet*.

I enrolled all participants and then assisted John for the session. He was delightful and a real joy to work with. His range of Music to teach his sessions was amazing from Buddha bar CD's from the chic venue in Paris to Bachelor Pad Royale. Such a mix of musical goodies.

John explained the relationship between auditions and class and how that you should not just perform in an audition. He highly amused me with his use of expressions, it could have been a comic strip book with "Kapow", "Lightning bolt" and so on.

Clearly John looks for charisma and magic in the studio, he said if you can't feel it and show some light & shade in your work you better go home.

Not all choreography is interesting and John stated that the audience must believe whatever you tell them. Verbalise the movements, do not give the game away that they are not all exciting movements. You should be a blast of energy to make an audience member nervous in their seat. Steps will not save you. In rehearsals always imagine that you are in the Bolshoi with a follow spot on you always; forget the fact that you may be rehearsing in a hideous studio. The key is to seduce an imaginary audience of thousands of people at The Bolshoi Ballet premiere.

John was adamant that you should never mark but always do it full out. Over time your endurance increases. He said it is why Nicole Kidman and Kylie Minogue have star potential. He should know having worked with both of them on *Moulin Rouge*.

John spent some time talking about dance and film. I found this whole topic so interesting as I am so far removed from this field. It intrigues me very much and is an area that I would one day like to work in. On a typical dance movie you would spend approximately 3 months rehearsing followed by 5 months of filming. As a dancer you must be ready for change as the directors vision and music ideas can change at the drop of a hat. All that time rehearsing a set piece could be chucked completely out of the window. The key is to be "ready" and observant.

It was an honour to work with John. He was full of so many interesting stories and experiences and I could not wait until the next session. He made me think about dance film and dance for the theatre. There are many similarities yet they are worlds apart.

Wednesday 15 May 2002

Met with Anandavalli, the Artistic Director of Lingalayam Dance Company to find out about the bharata natyam scene in Sydney. South Asian dance is growing slowly in NSW. We had a general discussion, after the first 10 minutes we realised that we both know many of the same people working in the field. The dance world really is a small global village.

Gave general admin support in the office and dealt with enquiries.

Second session with John O'Connell from 8.30 – 10.30pm for advanced students. Repeated the same format as 14 May 2002.

Thursday 16 May 2002

I had a meeting with Greg Clark, a member of the programming team at Sydney Opera House. It was not difficult to arrange a meeting with him. If I had been in the UK I am sure that it would have taken me a lot longer to set up such a meeting. I had begun to realise that the arts scene is more open to sharing and getting to know keen arts players. The culture is more relaxed, people want to meet you especially if you are from London. I felt honoured and at the same time proud that I had achieved this all off my own back. A programmers time is precious.

Had a personal tour of the Opera House. The building exterior is overwhelming yet behind closed doors the back of the auditoriums is a giant maze. I remembered why I work in the arts; nothing beats the feeling of being in an empty theatre. I was shown all venues from the studio through to the Opera Theatre and where Akram Khan was going to perform "Kaash" later in the year.

The Opera House is going through a transition in their programming and is looking to import more cutting edge work. They have to select work wisely, as it is very expensive for them to import due to the exchange rate.

Another Master Series session with John O'Connell, focussing more on dance style. What is the difference between the work of Bob Fosse and Michael Kidd? Why was Rita Hayworth Fred Astaire's favourite partner?

At the end of the session John provided all participants with a list of suggested dance films to watch in order to understand choreographing and performing dance for film. Please refer to the list enclosed.

Went to Surry Hills to an opening launch of a new Pilates studio as I was writing a piece for the Dance NSW magazine. (Please refer to the enclosed article published in the July/August edition).

Friday 17 May 2002

I wrote the article about my visit to the Pilates studio and dealt with general enquiries in the office. Gregory then talked me through the Ausdance NSW website and how they send out an email to their subscribers frequently called Ausdance Alert providing dancers and organisations with up to the minute information on auditions, articles in the press and any substantial information.

I assisted in updating information for the site. I am so not a technically minded person and could not believe that I had mastered updating a section on the website. After which I was then given instructions on how to send out the alert. I was nervous that I might make a mistake and send it twice or repeat sender groups. Felt relieved that this process was over.

I took a break before assisting John for the final session on the Master Series project. I was kind of sad that these sessions were coming to a close as I had thoroughly enjoyed his company and stories about film and dance. He had also taught me a lot and I will now always look at choreography in film in a different light. He has made me question why a director has chosen to film from that angle or why such a simple move is made to look big to create impact on set. Sometimes if work is too busy it does not create the effect required. This refers back to his earlier comments that the movements for the dancer may be boring. I now get it.

Saturday 18 May 2002

Ausdance NSW board meeting

I attended the meeting as an observer and met the majority of the board including Gregory Nash, Anthony Clarke (chair), Joanne Kee, Becki Tam, Susie Parker, Monica Stevens, Kate Champion and Sarah Vyden.

The meeting provided me with an insight to the overall Ausdance organisation and how Ausdance NSW works primarily independently from the main flagship organisation. Ausdance NSW mission does not match the national office mission. This does not matter, as AUSDANCE NSW is a separate entity and defines it's own goals. Already the NSW office has developed a brand and logo, and is a pro-active organisation not re-active.

It was stressed to think like an international business even though the prime focus is for the NSW members.

There are many systems in place inherited from the main flagship, for example, honouring life members. The board here to consider whether this is still appropriate to the new brand.

Monday 20 May 2002

General day to day admin duties are the same the world over. By the time you have dealt with the post, voicemail messages and emails suddenly half your day has disappeared.

Briefed on the Australian Dance awards and began to collate information on works shown between 1 August 2001 and 31 July 2002.

I had to ring all dance companies to get lists of their principal cast, productions, credits and where they have toured in Australia. This was such a great task as I was discovering and researching all professional dance companies and independent artists. This got me thinking and I made a decision to visit Melbourne at the end of my stay in Sydney to watch Chunky Move, a Melbourne based company under the Artistic Direction of Gideon Obarzanek.

Tuesday 21 May 2002

Continued researching information for the Australian Dance Awards and spent more time on the funding application for Paul Selwyn Norton.

Wednesday 22 May 2002

Had a meeting with Kate Champion (Artistic Director of Force Majeure and Ausdance NSW board member). This was primarily to discuss the Master Series programme in July. Got chatting to discover that Kate had worked with Lloyd Newson and knew many practitioners in the UK. Nothing like a bit of gossip!

Spent time on the budget of the Paul Selwyn Norton application. It is so hard telling an artist that their ideas out way the total income. Arts management can be tough sometimes.

I was over the moon when Monica Stevens, also an Ausdance NSW Board Member, is course director at NAISDA (National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association) invited me to spend some time at the school meeting pupils and faculty staff.

The school is below one of the Harbour Bridge pillars and if I wasn't careful I could have ended up doing a three hour bridge walk climb as both entrances stand side by side one another. I arrive to be greeted at reception by really friendly staff.

Monica made me feel really welcome. I felt very privileged to be in this institution, there is a lot to learn about respecting Aboriginal culture. Without which many performers would not have graduated to become members of Bangarra Dance Theatre (Contemporary Aboriginal Dance Company), an amazing international performing company.

Monica first explained how they go about recruiting people for the course. There are only a limited number of places to make it feel like a family. Many young people on the course had never been to a city before, so a small group helps to this adjustment. NAISDA staff visit the bush to meet different tribes, host talks and recruit young inspired dancers so that they are prepared to teach in the community or become professional performers.

The NAISDA mission is as follows:

"To ensure students have the knowledge, understanding and skills to contribute to the education and future development of themselves, their communities and Australian society in general regarding culture, history and current socio-economic situations of the Indigenous people of Australia"

The building had a wonderful welcoming atmosphere. I spent some time watching a class for first year students with Paul Saliba. It was clear that the students had not had much technical training before but the spirit and ambition to perform was felt sitting in the room. This is a very special institution indeed.

That evening I went to see Bodies, a choreographic platform for emerging choreographers At Newtown Theatre. One of the Associate Artistic Directors of Bodies is a former dancer with London Contemporary Dance Theatre, Patrick Harding-Imer.

The evening was a very long programme, a total of nine works. Bodies is the equivalent of Resolution at The Place. Much of the work had a sense of naivety about it. I believe that this is because those creating new work are not exposed, nor have too much choice in professional work to be influenced by. There was a strong audience following, full of friends and family.

Thursday 23 May 2002

Worked on the project description for Paul Selwyn Norton's application and met with him to finalise the application.

Assisted Gregory to prepare documents for the board meeting after doing the general day to day admin and management of the office.

Set up the boardroom and finished early for the board meeting to commence. Decided to visit the Museum of Contemporary Art, which was displaying a biennial exhibition including work from the highly acclaimed UK visual arts group Blast Theory.

Friday 24 May 2002

Met Kim Spinks the Program Manager for Dance from the Ministry of Arts. Had a brief discussion with her when she visited the office. She was very interested to hear that there was a scheme enabling people funding toward travel costs to learn and engage abroad with other international arts organisations and to become familiar with other sources. I told her all about Lisa Ullmann and the fund.

General admin, processing of memberships and the final version of the Ministry grant for Paul Selwyn Norton.

Went to see Dance Tracks as part of message sticks at the studio in the Opera House. The Opera House was trying out a new idea to bring a younger crowd into the venue. Dance Tracks was about bringing music and contemporary dance together. The Opera House had programmed four events. The night I went I saw ARIA award winning electronic dance artists Pnau with indigenous choreographers Albert David, Jason Pitt and Bernadette Walong. It was a great idea but not so sure that the artists had much time to co-ordinate their work. The dance and music were entertaining in their own right and clearly many of the crowd was new to the space. In effect the Opera House had achieved what they set out to achieve, Pnau fans exposed to dance and vice versa.

Monday 27 May 2002

Took a ferry to Paramatta Riverside Studios where Kathy Baykitch the manager of Western Sydney Dance Action is based. Paramatta is a part of the cultural quarter, but has a regional focus for outreach work. Dance Action set up various classes and projects in a range of styles, very similar to regeneration programmes taking shape across London where arts can play a key role in involving the community and establishing ownership.

Had a tour of the building that is to undergo refurbishment later in the year. The main house has 500 seats plus a large black box area, Cabaret area, studio space and an outside performance area.

Met Robert Price the Director of Riverside who is very interested in bringing over UK artists with the support of the British Council. It seems that audiences based in western Sydney prefer more urban style work.

Attended the small and medium performing arts sector report at Australia Council. Section of report enclosed. It seems that globally there is a need for more multi skilled arts managers and is not just cause for concern in the UK. The conclusion of the report addresses this.

Looking back, there were no manager's under the age of thirty at that meeting. Perhaps an arts management programme to train younger managers can help to change the shape of supporting artists in Sydney as many independent artists are struggling to manage themselves and be creative, there is a lack of resources and funding to support this. In Sydney independent artists are reliant on a producer investing into them, therefore the pool of independent artists not relying on state triennial funding in New South Wales are few and far between. Gregory Nash has played an important role in trying to shift the barriers to make room for more creativity and talent.

A vast proportion of arts funding for dance is distributed to Sydney Dance Company, Bangarra Dance Theatre and the Australian Ballet leaving little or no room for smaller companies to create work. This is to me at the heart of the range of work produced in NSW due to the main distribution of funds. Gregory Nash and Kim Spinks have begun a dialogue to begin to shift this pattern. It is a wait and see process.

Tuesday 28 May 2002

Went to meet the team at the Sydney Festival, in particular Lissa Twoomey to find out about their future programme. In January 2003 they are very excited to be bringing over the Mark Morris group from New York.

It is clear that membership organisations require a lot of general public servicing and it is can become complex to find out whether or not that person is a member or not to provide them with their information request. I am familiar with servicing the general public working at Marylebone Dance Studio yet there is no essential need to pass on information or general public inquiry requests. It became clear at how time consuming it can be. There were many active members who I had dealt with since commencing my placement. The majority of members are just happy to be associated with the organisation and informed of projects and announcements.

Wednesday 29 May 2002

Met with Grainne Brunson who supports Simon Gammell at the Sydney British Council office. She talked to me about the logistics of importing work and why very little work from the UK is seen in Australia due to financial restraints on their budget (exchange rate of sterling into dollars does not add up as being costs effective, therefore, they must be very selective).

Met with Shane Rozario to look at the images taken at the photo shoot. Out of the shoot it is clear that only a handful of images will work on the brochure. No further developments can take place until the sponsor is in place. On hold for now.

Went to visit the Seymour Centre. I had a meeting with Amanda Card of One Extra, a truly dynamic individual making changes and pushing independent work forward. They play a producing role and primarily working with dance and performance art. They receive funding from the Ministry for Arts but cannot rely on this source so require income from other sources. They mainly self-present work in the Seymour Centre (550 seats) but have access to no rehearsal space in the building, this plays effect on their production budgets. Rather than represent an artist they bring them in for a particular project, this way they have more control and overview of the outcome they want to achieve.. Unfortunately as a producing house with limited funds there is no room for expansion or touring at this stage. Most projects are short lived and are rarely seen outside of Australia and generally may only get seen in one other state .

Thinking back to the seminar it is clear that arts funding in New South Wales needs a shift in direction before many talented artists up root and move elsewhere where they can create work and where more funds are available.

Went to see Dreamtime to Dance at NAISDA, which included a very powerful documentary by Firelight Productions. It focussed on some individual pupils at the college and their life and how they came to study at NAISDA. It was a very emotional piece of work and truly made me think about aboriginal culture and

what certain things mean like the "Dreamings" aka Walkabout and how important this institution is to Australian culture.

I have enclosed a copy of the press release received on the evening of the performance and went home feeling very low and confused as to why the NSW government would consider jeopardising the future of aboriginal performance careers. Is Bangarra Dance Theatre enough in their eyes?

Thursday 30 May 2002

As I only had two days left it was time to draw to an end on certain projects and tasks that I had undertaken during the past month. I finally completed the Paul Selwyn Norton application for the Ministry of Arts. It was a huge relief and triumph. Once you are aware on how to write a funding application in general you can then apply and reproduce your format time after time. Thank goodness that I had had some practice of writing such funding applications for artists in the UK. Without this experience this task would have been a greater nightmare. Generally questions are the same and it is a matter of knowing the correct arts speak and lingo to make a credible application, knowing that you are in the know. A buzzword that kept reoccurring during my time was to champion creativity.

Collated all my projects and prepared to hand over to Cathy McDouall the Ausdance NSW administrator. Looking back it is clear that I had covered a lot of areas in the past month from sponsorship to directing a photoshoot. Some things that I had experienced in the UK from general administration to writing grant applications and gained some new skills that will be valuable and informative for me back in the UK including sponsorship meetings, board servicing, directing a photo shoot, managing auditions and so on..

I had a meeting with Shanthini Naidoo from the Opera House about marketing and dance. It was an informal meeting and she was interested to hear about Akram Khan Company as she was unfamiliar with him as an artist. I was able to comment on my views as an audience goer.

Friday 31 May 2002

Today was my last day in the office at Ausdance NSW. I could not believe that the project had come to an end. Much of the time was spent tying up loose ends and looking at the archives in the office as it was my last chance.

I felt that I had become a part of the team and I had forgotten what it was like to work in an organisation having spent the last year at UK Foundation for Dance sharing an office with Tim. My experience will never be forgotten and the time spent at Ausdance NSW provided me with the confidence and reassurance that I had set out to discover. I can be self-propelling and use my own initiative without the need of backup from my trainer. The placement had given me a new lease of life and outlook. It made me aware that I wanted to work internationally.

3 June 2002

Now it is vacation time for a handful of days yet I had decided to pay a visit to Melbourne to take a look at the arts scene and fit in just a few more meetings. Beginning to realise that the workaholic in me cannot switch off completely and I still continue to search for more arts finds. Went to Prahan to visit Sandra Parker of Dance Works (studio, rehearsals, R&D, dance films and create small works). Melbourne is where the independent scene is. I only wish I had longer to discover more in Melbourne.

4 June 2002

Met with Helen Skye of Company in Space, a more digital dance company. Helen had just returned from performing at the ICA in London. We spent a lot of time chatting informally about practitioners and the arts in general over coffee. The coffee in Australia is amazing and that is one of the many things that I will miss on the return to the UK.

Chunky Move: went to see WANTED. The piece was highly original based on a questionnaire on what people like to see when they go to a dance performance. It was a national questionnaire. I had wished that my geography of Australia had improved, as clearly there were a lot of in house arts jokes. Once again I think that the training of dancers in Australia is amazing. I had yet to see a dancer without impeccable technique. It was clever the way it fused pie chart visuals of statistics based on their findings and tried to combine these with actual dance moves to produce the most wanted piece of dance. Wanted is both clever and informative.

Back to the UK:

I had the most amazing experience and knew that I had met some very powerful arts advocates during my time abroad. I most definitely gained skills that I had not acquired to date that will be useful in my role as dance manager in the UK.

I had attended my first sponsorship meeting, assisted on writing a sponsorship document, managed a photo shoot, secured advertising for Metro Moves, wrote an article that was going to be published in Dance NSW. These are just some of the experiences that I gained. All of the above will most definitely be of value to me and the artists whom I manage, some skills could immediately be put into place and others at a later date knowing that I have had some experience in that area.

I met many people and have a great contact book that I am able to share with others in the UK. Any artists or managers visiting Australia, I would be more than happy to meet and talk through my experiences and where venues and producers are based.

If someone was planning a similar trip I may advise them to spend equal amounts of time in Sydney and Melbourne where the main arts infrastructures are based to get a feel for how differently they operate. I only gained a clear sense of the make up of New South Wales and distribution of funds but it was clear that Melbourne had fewer large scale companies and more experimental work.

The opportunity to visit Australia has completely changed my outlook on arts management and helped me to determine that I want to work internationally rather than work primarily in the UK. The experience has made me feel ambitious and has boosted my confidence. In a short space of time I had met very influential and inspiring people and made new friends. In London I am very conscious that I am new to the scene, which is true in terms of management yet I felt that the Australian culture seemed more accommodating and interested in my dynamic attitude and passion for the arts, irrelevant of age, experience and who you know.

At the end of my placement I had a very in depth discussion with Gregory Nash about what I had achieved. Gregory provided me with lots of feedback and advice. At the end of the discussion Gregory proposed a temporary job position at Ausdance NSW from September – December 2002 to be Assistant Producer of the Australian Dance Awards...

Back in the office at Marylebone Dance Studio:

Spent the next few days contemplating the job offer that Gregory had made knowing full well that I was still working for Tim under the London Arts Training Scheme. Had a chat with Tim and we both agreed that opportunities to produce a show at Sydney Opera House do not come around twice?

What happened next...

In September 2002 I went back to Australia. Without the initial placement in May this offer would never have been made. I can never repay LUTSF at how much this scholarship has escalated my career.

I have enclosed a letter from Gregory about my role at the organisation during that period for your information and a copy of the Dance Awards programme and another article that I wrote for Dance NSW magazine.

I want to thank all board members for providing me with this opportunity and can only wish that all other grant recipients had gained as much from their time

abroad as I have. **Thank you, thank you and thank you.**

For further information please do not hesitate to contact me.