

EDUCATION RESOURCE



LUCY GUERIN INC/GIDEON OBARZANEK/
DANCENORTH/SENYAWA

A SECONDARY/WACE

ATTRACTOR

**PERTH
FESTIVAL**

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ATTRACTOR

Lucy Guerin Inc / Gideon Obarzanek / Dancenorth / Senyawa
Australia / Indonesia
Dance

About the performance

Indonesia's tour-de-force music duo Senyawa and Melbourne's choreographic luminaries Lucy Guerin and Gideon Obarzanek join forces with two of Australia's leading dance companies, Lucy Guerin Inc and Dancenorth. Together they take you on a unique music/dance ritual. Senyawa reinterprets the Javanese tradition of entering trance through dance and music as a powerful, secular, present-day ritual. Their unusual sound borrows from the metal bands they listened to as teenagers — Black Sabbath, Metallica, Iron Maiden — and Indonesian ritual and folk idioms. As the performance unfolds, Senyawa's unique 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 wild physical abandonment and ecstatic release, creating a visceral, empathic experience for the audience.

Each performance, 20 completely unrehearsed audience members volunteer to join the company on stage. This participatory act of doing dissolves the demarcations between dancer and non-dancer, audience and performer, professional and amateur. 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.

Cast and crew

Co-Choreographer & Designer Gideon Obarzanek

Co-Choreographer Lucy Guerin

Music Production & Performance Senyawa

Artistic Director Kyle Page

Dancer & Rehearsal Director Amber Haines

Dancers Jenni Large, Ashley McLellan, Mason Kelly, Harrison Hall, Jack Zeising & Josh Mu

Lighting Designer Ben Bosco Shaw

Engineer Nick Roux Sound

Costumes Harriet Oxley

Production Management Emily O'Brien

About the performers



About Senyawa

Musicians

Jogjakarta's Senyawa embody 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.

Senyawa have performed at many festivals and underground clubs such as MONA FOMA Festival in Tasmania, Copenhagen Jazz House Denmark and UNSOUND Festival Poland, and have collaborated and performed with many notable musicians including Yoshida Tatsuya, Lucas Abela and Melt Banana. In 2012 they completed a film in collaboration with French filmmaker Vincent Moon and in 2017 released their latest album.



About Lucy Guerin
Director & Choreographer

After graduating from the Centre for Performing Arts in 1982, Lucy Guerin worked with Russell Dumas (Dance Exchange) and Nanette Hassall (Danceworks) before spending seven years in New York where she danced with Tere O'Connor Dance, the Bebe Miller Company and Sara Rudner and began to produce her first choreographic works. She established Lucy Guerin Inc in 2002 to support the development, creation and touring of contemporary dance works.

Guerin has toured her work extensively in Europe, Asia and North America and has won numerous awards, including two New York Dance and Performance Awards ('Bessies') and several Green Room and Australian Dance Awards.



About Gideon Obarzanek
Director & Choreographer

Gideon Obarzanek is a director, choreographer and performing arts curator. He 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, and have been performed in many festivals and theatres around the world.

In 2013 Obarzanek 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.



About Dancenorth

As a major champion of the arts in regional North Queensland Dancenorth balances a dynamic regional presence with a commitment to creating compelling contemporary dance that tours the globe. Led by Artistic Director, Kyle Page, Dancenorth is an integral part of the Australian dance ecology making a significant contribution to the dance sector and building literacy around contemporary dance nationally.

Dancenorth empowers and supports artists by providing a creative hub for many artistic voices including a diverse range of choreographers, guest collaborators, artists in residence and dancers. Alongside our professional ensemble and touring productions sits an equally vital pillar of focus, the Enrichment Projects. Dancenorth works with diverse and minority communities across Queensland using dance to support, enhance, inspire and heal - bringing communities together.

Themes

Cultural representation through sound: Senyawa uses everyday farm materials to create musical instruments. What culturally symbolic sounds are evident in this work? How could iconic features of Australian culture be represented through sound?

Changing communities: Our communities change over time as new technologies, developments and global influences bring transformation and growth. What changes have you observed in your community? How has this impacted our wellbeing and lifestyles?

Tradition: Customs and traditions form part of our lives, perhaps without knowing the origin or significance. What important things do you do because you've always done them? How are the traditions in your family different to those in other families?

Key ideas to explore with students

Trance and dance: *Attractor* reinterprets the Javanese tradition of entering trance through dance and music as a powerful, secular, present-day ritual. What other forms of trance have been repurposed or altered to suit contemporary experience?

Transcendence: Gideon Obarzanek suggests that dance and music can create transcendent states for participants. Do you agree? Why or why not?

Q&A with Lucy Guerin & Gideon Obarzanek

How did you come to be working with Senyawa?

Gideon: 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 and 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 in constructing rituals for non-believers.

How do you work to combine the music and movement?

Lucy: 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.

There are a number of collaborators for this show – how did you approach making the work together?

Lucy: 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.

Making dance sequences, music and even lighting design is not dissimilar. There is an initial period of play around an agreed idea – improvising, jamming and programming – that eventually leads to making choices. We go through this process simultaneously, either responding to each other or working independently. Some sequences are kept and altered to fit more tightly with other forms while others are discarded. The resulting scenes of the collaboration are completely intertwined and inseparable.

How does the involvement of audience members affect the show?

Gideon: The line between viewer and performer and professional and amateur is blurred by people coming up on stage and joining in. Through this participation the rest of the audience see themselves as part of the show. By the end of the performance there are twice as many people on stage from the auditorium than the original cast. As the work progresses, Dancenorth's extraordinary virtuosity shifts to a more generous and celebrated dance that everyone feels a part of.

Developing choreography

Choreographers develop and notate dance in different ways. Methods include graphic symbols and figures, path mapping, numerical systems, and letter and word notations. Several dance notation systems have been invented, many of which are designed to document specific types of dance. Recorded dance notation that describes a dance is known as a dance score.

Lucy Guerin used a numerical system in the development of the choreography for *Attractor*. Her notations are below.

Rhythm Script 2

8 x still

12345678 12345678 **1**2345678 12345678

12345678 **1**2345678

1234 **5**67 **1**234 **5**67

1234 **5**678 **1**234 **5**6

12345678 **12345**

1&2&3&4&5&6&7&8& **1&2&3&4&5&6&**

**1e&a 2e&a 3e&a 4e&a 5e&a 6e&a 7e&a 8e&a 9e&a
10e&a** (full shake)

12345678 12345678

1e&a 2e&a 3e&a 4e&a 5e&a 6e&a 7e&a 8e&a (full shake)

12345678

1234 x shake 5678 x still **1234** x shake 5678 x still

1 2 x shake 3 4 x still, **5 6** x shake, 7 8 x still

1 2 x shake 3 4 x still, **5 6** x shake, 7 8 x still

1 shake 2 still **3** shake 4 still **5** shake 6 still **7** shake 8 still

1 shake 2 still **3** shake 4 still **5** shake 6 still **7** shake 8 still

12345678

1&2&3&4&5&6&7&8&

1e&a 2e&a 3e&a 4e&a 5e&a 6e&a 7e&a 8e&a (full shake)

Full Group

1e&a 2e&a 3e&a 4e&a 5e&a 6e&a 7e&a 8e&a (full shake)

1e&a 2e&a 3e&a 4e&a 5e&a 6e&a 7e&a 8e&a (full shake)

THE CLUMP

Configuration 3

Shoulder 4
Hold 4
Head 4
Hold 4
Hip elbow 4
Hold 4

Configuration 1 4

Shoulder 4
Hip 4
Finger 4
Head 4
Coccyx 2
Foot 2
Arm 4
Knee 2
Leg 2

Transition to **Configuration 2** in 4 counts

With connections:

Shoulder 4
Hip 2
Finger **and** 1
Head 4
Coccyx 'out' Foot 'in' 3
Arm Knee spiral 3
Retrograde arm knee 3
Small reverse 1 out 1 in

Travelling out with circles in 5:

Shoulder
Foot
Head
Turn

Travelling in to standing in 5:

Fingers
Hips
Elbow

Jen Sam Mason Jack go down

G Josh Ash Harry stay up in 3:

Double hands
Foot
Sacrum

Then revers ups and downs in 3

Turn to right 1

Head to stand 1

Shoulder knee to flat on floor (accept G) 2

Ribcage head 2

Head circle 1

Hips head leg toward front right corner 4

Shift 1

Pause 4

Arm connect to someone 3

Other arm connect to someone 3

Arm connect to someone 3

Hips return hips 3

Stand up connected 6

Head wrist circle 2 Reverse 2

Knee to back corner 3

Leg leg pivot 4

Lower to floor top diagonal 5

Tiny hand twist x2 and head 4

Seaweed legs roll over 5

Spreading apart Stomach heel head knee 3

Spreading apart elbow wrist hip foot 3

TO SENYAWA

Right left together head, Right left together head, everything 9

Circle extended arms 3

Arms reverse 1 return 1

Knee back L corner 1

Shoulders downstage R corner **and** 1

Head upstage L crn 1

Elbow hand connect downstage R crn **and** 1

Bum shoulder knee to ground 1 2 3

Head wrist return 2 2

Hands and head travel 5

Throw/shuffle 1 **and** 2 **and** 3 **and** 4 **and** 5 **and** 6

Foot head pelvis shoulder 4

Hand foot knee 3

Swing arms locked 6

Mason **knee** to Sam, 1 (**all one count**)

Sam/Mason **hand** to G, 2

G/Sam/Mason **foot** to Josh, 3

Josh/Sam/Mason/G **foot** to Kyle, 4

Kyle/Josh/Sam/Mason/g **hip** to Ash, 5

Ash/Kyle/Josh/G/Sam/Mason **head** to Jack, 6

7

Jack/Ash/Kyle/Josh/G/Sam/Mason **back** to

Jen, 8

Pile Up - Josh leaves – group stands.

Resources

<http://senyawa.tumblr.com/>

<http://www.dancenorth.com.au/>

<http://www.lucyguerininc.com/>

<http://chunkymove.com.au/company/associated-artists/gideon-obarzanek/>