



The positive and negatives of less is more

DANCE

The Land of Yes and the Land of No
Brisbane Festival.
Choreography by Rafael Bonachela. Sydney Dance Company. Playhouse Theatre, Queensland Performing Arts Centre. September 28.

ORIGINALLY commissioned for Rafael Bonachela's London-based company in 2009, *The Land of Yes and the Land of No* has been remounted and expanded for Sydney Dance Company in numbers of dancers and design.

There are now 10 performers, five women and five men, who traverse the endlessly episodic structure of this work in beautifully designed white pleated costumes by Theo Clinkard.

Collaborating with composer Ezio Bosso, Bonachela has used everyday signs as a springboard for this work. It's easy to see how such signs are being interpreted as



Dancers in *The Land of Yes and the Land of No*

the dancers move horizontally across the stage or act out in more emotionally charged relationships.

The lighting installation design by Alan MacDonald works cleverly with Guy Hoare's stage lighting to shift the mood of episodes with music changes. MacDonald's use of a two-dimensional grid-like structure of fluorescent light tubes not only frames entrances and exits for the dancers but also shifts

the audience's perspective of place and space on stage.

The work opens with a solo under a single white downlight and ends in a luminescent white state with all of the dancers on stage. In between there are many powerful configurations of coloured cyclorama and linear patterns created by the fluoro tubes.

The dancers are beautifully articulate and their unison sections bound by a shared energy. There

are so many duos and trios that emerge out of group sections that the impact of many of them simply gets lost in the accumulation of sections. A doll-like duo did punctuate with a humorous moment, and a long solo performed by Richard Cilli built in emotional intensity, providing a satisfying journey for the viewer.

Bosso's musical score is rich and lush, with more accessible melodic lines and harmonies than previous works performed by the company. This music carries and supports the densely abstracted dance language, providing points of difference dynamically between each episode.

While the dance vocabulary Bonachela creates with his performers is precise and articulate, more is not always better. There needed to be more "No" in this land to edit the work in length. A couple of false endings and lack of rhythmic texture also makes it feel much longer than its 70 minutes.

SHAARON BOUGHEN

Tickets: \$60. Bookings: 136 246. Until tomorrow.