

CREATIVE LEARNING RESOURCE

DANCE

THE FARM

# THE NINTH WAVE

Presented in association with Co3 Contemporary Dance



Image: Artwork Agency

**PERTH  
FESTIVAL**

Founder



Principal Partner



**2022**

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**Perth Festival respects the Noongar people who remain the spiritual and cultural birdiyangara of this kwobidak boodjar. We honour the significant role they play for our community and our Festival to flourish.**

# ABOUT THE SHOW

Beginning at a party bubbling over with champagne drinking fools who wilfully ignore the warning signs of the end of the world, *The Ninth Wave* unfolds as a journey of consequences and the young hope that always grows from it.

Across the broad expanse of the iconic South City Beach, *The Ninth Wave* is an apocalyptic narrative performed with wild and fearless abandon by dancers from by The Farm and Co3 Contemporary Dance. Driven by an original score composed by Regurgiatator's Ben Ely, The Farm takes the ideas behind their 2016 Helpmann Award nominated *The Last Blast* to their fullest and most ominous end. This dance on a smoking volcano is the party to end all parties.

*Please note:* classes will need to bring their own chairs or blankets to sit on.

## PRODUCTION CREDITS

At The Farm work is made in a collaborative process where everyone brings their expertise without being confined to it. All animals are equal.

**Directors** Grayson Millwood & Gavin Webber

**Performers** Kate Harman, Grayson Milwood, Sam Coren, Scott Galbraith, May Greenberg, Mitchell Harvey, Alex Kay, Georgia Van Gils, Russell Thorpe and Co3 youth ensemble

**Co3 Artistic Associate** Alice Kell

**Original Music** Ben Ely

**Sound Design** Luke Smiles

**Associate Sound Designer** Anna Whitaker

**Lighting Designer** Mark Howett

**Production Manager & Lighting Associate** Chloe Ogilvie

**Costume Designer** Tyler Hill

**Originally Created & Performed by**

Charles Ball, Essie Horn, Michael Smith, Gabriel Comeford, Hsin Ju Ely, Kate Harman, Gabrielle Nankivel, Craig Barry, Grayson Millwood and The Farm's Greenhouse youth ensemble

**Original Costume Designer** Vilma Mattila

## SHOW DETAILS

**CITY BEACH**

**CITY BEACH PARK**

**Tue 1 – Sat 6 Mar 8pm**

**Duration 60mins**

(entry opposite Jubilee Park)



# INTRODUCING THE FARM & CO3 CONTEMPORARY DANCE

## ABOUT THE FARM

With four decades between them, The Farm range from past artistic directors of state and federally funded organisations (Dancenorth 2005 – 09) to independent practitioners who have forged their own choreographic or design careers. These six passionate artists are diverse across age, gender, race and sexuality. Their roles within the company are flexible, challenging and thoroughly collaborative, giving older artists an opportunity to utilise their experience in an impactful way and empowering younger artists to become the new artistic leaders of their generation. Core to the organisation is an 'artistic brains trust', sharing the artistic vision between four key creatives – Chloe Ogilvie, Grayson Millwood, Kate Harman and Gavin Webber. Two other associated artists act as an artistic advisory panel – Michael Smith and Mindy Davies.

The Farm's artists come from Pilbara, Rockhampton, Gladstone and Northern Rivers and have substantial careers based in regional Queensland. Many of them have also worked extensively between Europe and Australia, bringing the rigour of German thinking, the emotion of Australian storytelling and the visceral passion of Belgian dance into their work. This gives the company the knowledge and ability to connect to a wide audience demographic, allowing them to create work that succeeds in cultural landscapes as diverse as Berlin and the Gold Coast. The mix of The Farm's experience is key to their operations, and their diversity is key to their art.

## ABOUT CO3 CONTEMPORARY DANCE

Driven by excellence and collaboration, Co3 Contemporary Dance is a progressive platform for the exchange of ideas and stories that reflect the experiences of the WA community. With a multi-disciplinary and technological focus, the company presents an annual program of works with unique physicality and expression. They empower and inspire audiences and the next generation of artists through their pathways and engagement programs.

Recent milestones include, far reaching regional community engagement on Raewyn Hill's *The Bird Makers Project and Archives Of Humanity*, a critically acclaimed World Premiere commissioned by Perth Festival and presented in 2021.

Co3 Contemporary Dance is company in residence at the State Theatre Centre of WA on the land of the Whadjuk Noongar people.

# BEFORE THE SHOW



**EXPLORE** The Farm's website and learn more about the collective of artists that work collaboratively on the range of projects The Farm develops. You can click on varying artists to explore their work on a deeper level. It is valuable to learn about current industry practitioners and their style of art whether it be as a choreographer, composer, performer, designer. You can learn about how people are pushing the boundaries of dance or other art forms.

<https://www.thefarm.company/home-1>



**WATCH** the short two-minute teaser video of *The Ninth Wave* performance. This gives you some idea of what to expect from the performance.

<https://www.thefarm.company/the-ninth-wave>



If you are attending the schools performance pre-show talk, **DISCUSS** some questions you may be interested to hear directly from the artists about, for example:

- Site specific
- Creative process and how the group developed the idea, movement and set for the performance.
- Rehearsal and preparation process – taking care of the body, dancing on sand, using props or learning movement,

\*remember to read the notes in this learning resource prior to attending the performance so that you can prepare informed questions and learn something new that might not be mentioned here.



Image Credit: Scott Belzner

# KEY THEMES

## SOCIAL INTERACTIONS AND GROUP THINKING

There are a number of themes explored in *The Ninth Wave* relating to social interactions and group thinking.



**DISCUSS** how *The Ninth Wave* physically portrays the themes below.

- Ignoring of warning signs
- Consequences of actions
- Hope

Consider the use of movement and/or partner work, the use of sound and the incorporation of younger performers and how doing this supports the exploration of each theme.



**READ** more about the hopes and dreams of young people in Australia and access resources that may support some of the personal challenges raised through the themes of this production. You can check

Resources – Year 13

<https://year13.com.au/>

Research – Youth Sense

<https://youthsense.com.au/research/after-the-atar-iii/>

## SITE SPECIFIC

*The Ninth Wave* is set on the beach integrating the sand and ocean as part of the performance. It is important to analyse the impact that exploring a site-specific work has on different elements of dance.



**DISCUSS** these questions.

How would the sand impact the movement execution for the dancers?  
How would the body be affected in comparison to dancing on a standard studio floor or theatre?

How did the natural sounds of the environment impact the work?

Did the sounds of the waves crashing on the shore complement or hinder the performance? Why and How?

What impact did the integration of the natural environment with lighting and the music score have on the performance?

Could this performance be performed to the same standards if the space was changed to somewhere else, for example a theatre or a park?  
What do you think would change and would the performance's meaning or intention be affected?

# Q&A WITH KATE HARMAN FROM THE FARM



Image Credit: Scott Belzner

Could you describe your creative process behind *The Ninth Wave*?

How did you generate the idea for the work and then work to make this a reality?

We moved to the beach after living in Germany and then started wondering why we should ever make a show in a theatre again. We never came up with a good response to that question but the beach does come with its own challenges.

When you're working on the beach, the environment consumes you. It's so loud – the wind and the waves, there is no way to escape it. Communication is tricky unless you are right next to each other and even then, group focus can be carried away on the wind. The fact that this was a new sensation brought us to thinking about how disconnected from nature we can be, and in turn, this became a major theme of the work.

What do you see as the most important themes addressed in *The Ninth Wave*? Why?

This work doesn't offer any answers. It sits more as a piece of reflection on where we are, what we are doing or not doing and how we connect to one another and our environment.

The work has many feelings in it, many viewpoints. In some way our focus is to bring the climate and the way it is changing back into an emotional space in the body, rather than something outside us. We are part of nature, it is happening to us. We must sit with our grief, with our overwhelming sadness and, at times, our indifference.

The work sits in a stunningly beautiful place and invites the audience to reflect on their responsibility and the role that they have played and will play in the future.

Describe the creative process you undertook to create *The Ninth Wave*.

We started with some research around the body and the environment (in this case the beach), how it affects the body and how bodies are affected by it.

As a company the humanity in what we do is the most important thing. To bring this into our work we often start with images, some dreamt up and some sourced from films, articles or books. We digest what we have seen, read and discuss through long open improvisations that allow the subconscious to get to work about what we have just absorbed.

From the improvisations we find fragments of ideas and then explore these through focused tasks. Sometimes we start with a feeling and then find the movement, sometimes we start with a physical idea and we workshop it, until it reveals its meaning.

*The Ninth Wave* had a couple of iterations, each made over very short periods.

We did a beach research project for one week, exploring how the body moves, jumps, falls on the beach, and then spent another week finding sand in every nook and cranny.

Then we spent two and a half weeks making an early version of the work called *The Last Blast*.

Finally for Festival '18 (The Commonwealth Games) we revisited the work and its themes and that's when the work really came to life.

How did you go about generating new movement for the work? (ie. building a unique identity for your movement, creating something brand new)

We often find new movement through small fragments of improvisations that we then expand on by investigating and physically developing it in rehearsals.

It quickly became apparent that working like we do in the studio became like a battle and fighting the sand would be futile. But we also saw that the sand offered us so much. We just had to be willing, curious and observant and it showed us many possibilities.

Could you discuss the importance of the site-specific work and how you developed the concept to incorporate the beach? What challenges did this bring? What joys did this bring to your creative process? How were you able to explore this differently to how you would do so for a studio or theatre-based work?

Since the company has been based on the Gold Coast (since 2014) we've done a lot of site-specific work. We kind of fell into it as the landscape was asking for it. What making site-specific work has given us, is the opportunity to reach people who may not be in a theatre setting. The audience also meet the work differently. Whether they are swimming out to a sand bank or watching from their surfboards (*TIDE*), sitting in their cars with their radios tuned in (*Throttle*) or feeling the wind on their skin and hearing the waves crash on the beach (*The Ninth Wave*), the audience are, to some degree, immersed in the work. The environment holds us in space together, and I think this allows for a more embodied experience for the viewer.

There is something special about reframing a public space and about an audience revisiting the work when they revisit the space.

Site-specific work is also filled with logistical challenges, from how do we light that? to how do we communicate to each other in on-site rehearsals because your stage is 40m wide? to how can anyone stay focused with that damn wind blowing sand in our every crevice? This last one was an issue as we would work something in the studio (so we could talk to each other) take it on to the beach and realise it doesn't read.

When you are working with such big distances between you and the audience, 'staging' becomes very important. Looking at how the body reads and testing it in the space become paramount.



The idea of beginning to develop a dance work from scratch can seem quite daunting when looking at the project as a whole. How do you begin? How do you know or feel when you're 'finished'?

Could you explain your choices around developing the structure for *The Ninth Wave*? How did you develop each section and then bring it all together?

As a choreographer and creator where do you find inspiration for new ideas? How do you keep challenging yourself to find fresh ideas and ways of moving?

During the performance the choreography utilises a range of spaces on the staging area, props and set. Could you describe your creative thought process behind this and how your decisions support your exploration of *The Ninth Wave*?

Where do ideas begin? It's a great question, especially when you work in collaboration. The idea can be big or the idea can be small. For this project the starting point was simply, what can we do on the beach? It was physical. We turned up, played around and experienced what it could offer. From there we'd talk, play, watch movies, read books, collect images and allow ourselves to go 'off track'. Then at some point in the process an idea takes hold and you are no longer searching, it knows what it needs and it will tell you if you are pulling in the wrong direction. By that point you just have to keep your ego out of the way and make the show that wants to be made (which could very well not be the show you imagined).

At The Farm we often try to forget where that first idea came from, we like to share the ownership and offer unfinished ideas to the table so we can build them together.

When is it finished? In our experience the work is never finished. We get it to the best place it can be for the premiere, but we continue to make adjustments in the season and then every time we revisit the work. For this Perth Festival version we will make a bunch of adjustments and changes. (It will be the best version yet). There is always something new to discover.

*The Ninth Wave* became an episodic visual spectacle instead of following some narrative arc, but it certainly wasn't planned that way.

As I mentioned earlier, we began with basic experiments: how does a body fall, jump, move on sand?

We knew we wanted to work in the disconnect we felt with this incredibly powerful environment, and we focused on that point in time, when we as humans knew the effect we were having on the planet and chose to look away

Naomi Klein's *This Changes Everything* has its influences on the work but so did Dr Suess' *Yurtle the Turtle*.

We developed ideas for clear scenes that we wanted to work on and gave them names like "The party of wankers", "Lament" and "Fireflies". We soaked ourselves in the media we were consuming, the environment we were in and the ideas that we were dreaming up. We tried all sorts of things, pulling in many directions, and tested ideas until the work took over, momentum kicked in and we held on for the ride.

We definitely draw from our own experiences.

Some of us like to dive into work or themes to discover more about human nature and ourselves. Those things go hand in hand.

*The Ninth Wave* is loosely set in a post-apocalyptic world.

For this piece, as with much of our work, we like to start in a concrete world, a place that the audience can grasp. We use this world as a departure point for the themes and ideas. It also gives us a place to launch from into the more abstracted, subconscious space.

What is your favourite section of the production? Why?

I'm one of the makers that get to perform in the work. So my favourite moments are affected from my experience more so than from the audience perspective.

In the opening of the show, while the audience is being seated, all us adults lie together, half buried under the sand, looking at the stars and listening to the beautiful soundscape. As you lie there you can feel the world you are creating in the show building around you.

My other favourite moment is the very end of the work, when the adults fall backwards towards the ocean. We lie in the shallows being rocked by the waves staring at the sky as the kids finish the show.

I guess both of those moments are when reality and fiction collide. That experience is totally unique to this time of site-specific work and it is so beautiful.

The part you can see that I love is the moment the adults fall away from the kids near the end and then they start to sway as well as the moment between the father and son.

What words of encouragement and advice could you offer to young creative choreographers who would like to embark on choreographing their own stories and dance works as you have done?

Just start. I was always paralysed because I thought you need to have all the answers to begin. But you don't. All you need is curiosity, a bit of courage and the discipline to keep showing up.

There is no right way to do it – experiment and find new things.

Oh and also fail. I give you the permission. When you fail you know you are trying new things and that is the best place you could be.



Image Credit: Scott Belzner

# ATTENDING LIVE PERFORMANCE

## BE ON TIME

The show will start promptly, so leave heaps of time to find the venue and go to the toilet. Latecomers will not be admitted until an appropriate break in the show, and for many shows you won't be let in if you arrive late or leave the theatre during the show.

## THE THINGS WE WANT TO HEAR...



Live performance is energised by positive audience reactions – laugh when it's funny, cry when it's sad and applaud at the end.

## AND THINGS WE DON'T...



Food wrappers and plastic packets make a lot of noise. It is generally accepted that the audience does not eat during a performance.



Mobile phones must be switched off (not on vibrate). If your phone rings during a performance, it can be very embarrassing for you and very distracting for the performers. Even silently messaging is not cool, because the glow of the screen is off-putting for performers and audiences.



Chatting and whispering during the show is annoying for other audience members and can be very distracting for performers.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

We love seeing you at Festival events. Take photos in the foyer when you arrive or after the show, and tag us using @PerthFest and #PerthFest, or re-post our stories with your hot takes, we love it!

Taking photos, videos or audio recordings is not allowed in the shows though. This is because of copyright issues of the designs and because of the whole distraction thing.

## PREPARE FOR THIS SITE SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE

This performance of *The Ninth Wave* takes place on the beach. You can bring a blanket or chair to sit on. You may prefer to do this to avoid sitting directly on the sand. You also may wish to bring a jacket or additional blanket in case there is a cool wind on the beach.

# AFTER THE SHOW – UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

Once you have attended the production, as students of contemporary dance it is important to analyse the work to place your theoretical study into context within the professional arts industry. Seeing live performances also gives you a better understanding of how works are developed and created.

## ANALYSING THE WORK

When you watch *The Ninth Wave* you will see many ways the creative team have incorporated the elements of dance. You can now watch some excerpts of the work to analyse these sections in a more in-depth manner.



**WATCH** this excerpt from the performance

<https://vimeo.com/675296840/5b4643c1fe>

## ANALYSE THE USE OF BODY



**DISCUSS** the use of **body** in this section of the work. Consider the use of ladders and the integration of counter-balance by the dancers whilst incorporating props and working with a partner dancer.

## ANALYSE THE USE OF CHOREOGRAPHIC TOOLS



**DISCUSS** how the tools below were integrated into the work.

- Canon
- Repetition
- Unison

What impact did the use of these choreographic tools have on the performance?



**WATCH** this excerpt from the performance

<https://vimeo.com/675297229/5ec72a577e>

## ANALYSE THE USE OF ENERGY



**ANALYSE** and describe the use of energy in this section considering the movement style of the dancers. Use correct dance terminology to describe the impact of the sustained and suspended movement the dancers incorporate.

## ANALYSE THE USE OF SPACE



**DISCUSS** how the space is utilised in this section of the work and then expand your answer to include ideas relating to the impact on the audience.

## ANALYSE THE USE OF DESIGN ELEMENTS



**WRITE** two paragraphs analysing how the use of lighting in this section impacts the work.



Image Credit: Scott Belzner

# EXPLORING THE PRODUCTION

## WRITE A REVIEW

A method in which to further explore and challenge your own ideas about a production is to write a review. Whilst a review of a performance can heavily rely on personal opinion, it is important that an author justifies their thoughts with examples and connections to dramatic elements.



**WRITE** a review of *The Ninth Wave* using this handy template

[https://www.perthfestival.com.au/media/lz3hwgdz/cl-resources-reviewing-live-performance-instructions-doc\\_20210111.pdf](https://www.perthfestival.com.au/media/lz3hwgdz/cl-resources-reviewing-live-performance-instructions-doc_20210111.pdf)

## WRITE A CASE STUDY

An additional method in which to look at a dance work is to write a case study analysing the full work in relation to the elements of dance. This is different to a review, which usually includes more personal opinions (justified opinions). You are trying to take on a more theoretical approach when you produce a case study.

- Provide a historical background on the creators
- Summarise the choreographic intent of the work
- Discuss additional choreographic devices and how they are integrated into the work
- Explain the design elements of the work and how they impact and/or support the intent of the work
- The structure of the work
- Discuss how the work can reflect a particular social context
- Discuss how this work helps to push the boundaries of dance in Australia



Image Credit: Scott Belzner