

## Jo Lloyd, August 2005

I'm using a band called Yes and the song's called *Owner of a Lonely Heart*. My brother had the album back in '83 and my sister and I found it in the record collection and put it on. The first track is that track.

I think I was about eight. I'd just started doing ballet lessons. My sister and I used to make up lots of dances for the family. I loved doing that, saying "come on, come and watch" as lots of kids do. We were quite committed to it. When Mum was off at work and Dad was watching the footy on the weekends we'd clear the lounge room and make some moves.

My sister said, "I remember this sort of thing" and I vaguely remember a movement that we did. So, I've put something or other in there that's like that.

And the rest of it was sort of like, "Ok. You've got this much time and this is the music." The music is very segmented. It's very easy to block it out and say, "Here's the opening, here's the chorus. With that bit I'm going to make a little solo and then that will be the duo and that will be the lift."

I just went with my instincts. Some of my choices I'd already made and I thought, "I can't really go back on that".

I try to avoid steps just for the steps. I'm not so interested in that. On this occasion I did find that there were some steps in there that were just great. You know, "this is how I want to move to the music". So I approached this in a bit more of a light hearted way.

I made it a tribute to the music. The music's pretty amazing too. It's very energetic. So I thought, "Did I do it justice?" You can read it as a bit of a piss take but I like to think of it more as a tribute to what this music is, to the '80s, that movement we were into, and the dynamics of that sound that was around.

I didn't approach it wanting to make it humorous. This is me looking at things that I see happen. It won't be taken as seriously as it possibly is.

I feel like these are little short films. They're more likely to be comical rather than serious. Often people go that way because it's hard to create, in that length of time, some sort of empathy. It's really hard to build up something where people associate with certain things and they feel a certain way. But I think people who are clever can get there within the space of four to five minutes.

I'd love to choreograph a film clip. I think contemporary dance could be really valuable in film clips. It doesn't happen very often. You see it come up here and there but it just could be really strong.

A song might be about breaking up with the girlfriend and then it has a film clip that really isn't portraying that at all. Film clips kind of layer things and mix it up and people accept it.

I do have a concern for people enjoying work. I'm happy with [my work in] *Album* because I think you can't go too wrong. A choreographer looking at it might say, "She didn't really craft it that well". But most GPs [general public] are going to enjoy what I've done, I think.

Some [dance audiences] have that hang up of "I don't understand it" and they sort of retreat. Some people are happy to just sit back and take it in or some really love to get what it's about. Some are happy to have a good laugh and let it out and know the whole audience is going to hear them laughing. But then some people are sitting there, thinking "Am I supposed to be laughing?"

I think there'll be laughs tonight, though. I think the music is just going to make people lighten up. You don't hear this sort of stuff in contemporary dance that often. I think it's a good kick in the butt for all the stuff that goes on. Not that there's anything wrong with what's going on. Let's just lighten up, you know.

It's that basic thing of making a dance because you love dancing. When you're eight you don't have a history of experiences with relationships or many experiences in life. You're naïve to structure and form

and all that stuff you've learnt through college and working with other choreographers. Every now and then I'd remind myself of that and remind the group, "Don't worry if it's a bit sloppy or whatever."

I feel like I want to make it a little bit more raw. I have an urge to sort of scratch everything a bit. Influences I've had have given me the urge to rough it up a bit. That's hard to do, I think, because dancers want to know the steps, which angle, which foot.

A natural reaction is, "How do you create a mess?" Knowing exactly where everything goes but approaching it so it looks like you don't know what you're doing. Or it's the first time you've gone and pushed that person over and getting slapdash without having aggression.

There's a little bit of aggression in there. I'm still nutting out how to get a certain aesthetic.

I've done a lot of movement as a dancer and I still am. But I really like when it's coming from somewhere. As a performer I like to be out there and know why I'm there and why my body's possessed to do this, where my location is, who I am, what's my relationship to the other people in the space. I like all those things to inform the way I perform something. So naturally that came back when I was doing *Album*.

I did want to plot out a few little narratives. I'm happy for them to be readable but there isn't a 'through line' from the beginning to middle and end. I'm not concerned with people understanding something but I'd like them to get a notion of a certain style of physically being and behaving.

When I make work I do want to communicate through movement. I'm not pushing the audience away. I like to incorporate elements that will mean something so that they can get it.

It always comes back to the movement for me and it always comes back to the imagination. They're the two common denominators that are there from both periods [at age eight and in the present].

I still look up to the imagination to find what's going to happen. It's like you have your blank page and you think, "Where do I start?" You start with your movement. You start with your ideas.

There's a whole lot of hang ups too, I guess. You take on a notion of how you're perceived in Melbourne as a dancer, as a maker. That's what was nice about the naïve thing, to just remind myself to approach it like when I was a kid.

I guess the really big leap is of consciousness. When I was eight, really, what was I aware of? I was just naïve. Now there's an awareness of making decisions, the choices you make, why you make them. I'm far more analytical about it all. And sometimes that gets in the way.

I've worked with lots of choreographers and that adds influence and sometimes that adds confusion. When you've done a technique for so long, then you step away from it, it takes a while for you to realise what you want to keep and what you want to shed. I'm still finding out what I want to do. I try not to adopt approaches that other choreographers I know have unless I feel that that's the only way I can achieve what I want to do. There's a fine line between being inspired and actually plagiarising. I don't want to do that.

Not that I'm doing anything new, probably. But to feel like I find my own way of doing, maybe that will create a result that's not what I've known or what I've done. It just more interesting to say, "Hey, what would it be like if I did it like this?" I've been interested in making work on a impulse or an instinct so this project has sort of suited what I've been interested in.

It's the first time someone's said, "I'd like you to make a piece as a commission". It gives you this sense of acknowledgement and a little bit of respect. You often feel, "Should I not be doing this? Will people see it if I do?"

It is really nice to have a situation where you're not the one organising the studio. Often when you're running the show, you're everyone. You're doing everything. This is like we're all at the same level.

We've all got the same task. And I think it's good for the dancers, good for the choreographers.

There was a pool of dancers [for *Album*]. I didn't say, "I'll work with this one and this one". Now I think, "I wouldn't mind working with that person again". It sort of creates things.

To some people [working with peers] could seem quite frightening. I guess I thought it would be but they're lovely. It feels very supportive, this project. Often we put on our own work and you invite each other to come, but you do it on your own. It's kind of lonely.

I've worked on my own a lot. I've made solo things. I'm still in that situation where I'm delivering to other dancers how I want to approach it or how I want to deliver the information that I normally just deal with on my own. What's the best way to do that?

I had a few moments where I thought, "Wow. I like this way of working." I combined teaching steps with teaching ideas and images. It's interesting what I feel comfortable with delivering to my peers. It's easy for me to just teach a phrase and shape it into order or whatever. But getting more into the way I might find my movement and how I want to perform that movement or the way I might be thinking - that's the sort of stuff I'm more interested in. It kind of happened more towards the end of my rehearsal period.

A year on I'm sure then I'll have shed some of the things I'm not so interested in and picked up on the things I am more interested in or go back to some things.

I think it also would be fascinating if we were given a different sort of task and we had to choose a song. You listen to [Gerard van Dyck's] track. He wouldn't probably pick that music and make a dance to it but it actually suits him. That's still what you get when you see a Gez show. It's an obvious choice for him in that it actually suits what he's on about at the moment.

I don't know about mine but I am interested in different levels of energy. That music is super energetic but it has some real changes.

You can find something that still links up with the now. The way each person's approached that gives you a clue to the same thing back then.

I love that it has generated lots of conversations with other people about what their first work was. It really shows your age and your upbringing and your influences. I wouldn't have made something to this song (I didn't even know who Yes was) but I had this older brother with a fifteen year gap and he was into that.

I did something to *Walk Like an Egyptian* in Grade 6. I did think, "Was that before this one". I did other ones that could even have been earlier but I'm not sure. The piece of music I used in my last show was actually a piece from another album I used to make dances to with my sister. For some reason I thought of that track. I don't know why. It seemed appropriate for the piece I was making.

I'm a fan of the whole concept.

Most of family are coming tonight. I love them to come and see. I [initially danced to] *Owner of a Lonely Heart* with my sister. I played the music to her the other day and she's really excited to see it because she loves the song. It's just exciting that it's going to get aired again. It's also my brother's record. He's going to be there. I have that pride in me. It's special. I know he is a bit sentimental too.

My brother's niece does dancing. She's about eleven or twelve. She's performed in the lounge room for me and I go and see her perform. There's this sort of mooshy, sentimental, family history/ generation thing because she's coming tonight. She's really in awe of what I do and has used me in an assignment. So this is kind of special for her.