

Elizabeth Vilmanis - Curriculum Vitae



CONTACT INFORMATION

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EDUCATION/TRAINING

I was born in Tanzania, East Africa, so I feel I was born with the African love of movement and rhythm. Once my family moved back to Australia, there was no stopping me from joining in with dance. At a very young age I would run into the studio and attempt to do my older sister's ballet classes, and officially began my ballet training by age 3 (British Ballet Organisation Method) in Adelaide, South Australia. I later trained up to Solo Seal standard in the Royal Academy of Dancing Syllabus as well as learning the Vaganova and Cecchetti methods of Ballet. In my teenage years I added the dance styles of contemporary and jazz to my repertoire. I was selected by audition to become a member of the South Australian Children's Ballet at the age of 12 and performed as principal dancer for four of the six years I was with the company. Despite being warned by many people of the lack of stability that a career in dance might bring and of the competitive prospect of gaining work in the dance industry, dance was my passion and so in 1998 I moved away from home to Brisbane, Australia, to study dance at the Queensland University of Technology, where I performed lead roles in works by Paul Old, Harold Collins, Natalie Weir and John Utans.

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| 1991 – 1996 | Dancer with the South Australian Children's Ballet Company |
| 1993 | Selected to become an interstate associate of the Australian Ballet School, age 14 |
| 1996 | Awarded Associate of the Royal Academy of Dance, age 17 |
| 1997 | Recipient of the South Australian Stage Dancing Society's Aggregate Award and Senior Classical Scholarship, age 17 |
| 1998 - 1999 | Queensland University of Technology, Associate Degree in Dance |

EMPLOYMENT

Performance and choreography

In my first audition for a professional dance job I was asked to join Expressions' Dance In Education Company with whom I toured dance shows to primary schools throughout Queensland. This job made me realise the importance of choreographing captivating educational dance shows and touring them to school students, some of whom would never have had the opportunity to experience contemporary dance had we not performed at their school. Two years later, after understudying roles for the Main Company's season of "Virtually Richard III", the Artistic Director, Maggi Sietsma, invited me to join Expressions Dance Company, and I made my debut performing with the company at the Beijing Modern Dance Festival. I continued as a professional contemporary dancer with the company, touring both nationally and internationally for six years, performing major roles in "Virtually Richard III", "Score", "The Fifth Door", and "Fragments of Memory". During my time with the company I had the opportunity to dance in works by choreographers such as Maggi Sietsma, Cheng Tsung Lung, Sue Peacock, Justin Rutzou, Zaimon Vilmanis and Natalie Weir. I was even fortunate enough to be selected to perform in Katie Noonan's (a popular Brisbane music artist) film clip "Time To Begin", which Natalie Weir choreographed on six of the company's dancers. My first official choreographic work was "Café 3941" in 2006 for the company's "Either Side of Forty" Season.

In 2008 I chose to become a Brisbane based Independent Dance Artist and retired from the stability and security of Expressions Dance Company so as to challenge myself to dance outside of my comfort zone, pushing myself to continue to develop my skills as a dancer and also to start building my skills in choreography. I have since collaborated on several choreographic projects directed by Lisa Wilson and her Elbow Room Collective and I performed "Autonomous", a short, self choreographed work as a guest artist for the Royal Academy of Dancing's "Sir Robert Helpmann Centenary Scholarship Awards" in Adelaide. In November of 2010 I was commissioned by the South Australian Children's Ballet Company to choreograph and perform a three minute contemporary solo as a professional guest artist for their Silver Gala celebrating the company's 25 year history. This year I am excited to have been commissioned by EDC to choreograph and perform a solo for their "SOLO Festival" at the Judith Wright Centre in April/May. I recently danced in the film clip for Electropop Duo - Edge of Colour's new single "Tokyo" which was a great deal of fun.

A significant amount of my work as an Independent Artist so far has been in collaboration with Independent Dance Artist, Zaimon Vilmanis. I collaborated with him to create "Forgotten Interlude", a 20 minute duet which Sybella Blencowe commissioned him to do in Adelaide and which we also presented in Brisbane for Ausdance Queensland's Bell Tower II Series. We also choreographed and performed "Drift", a duet, for Mad Dance House's "This Is How It's Done" season. This duet was later commissioned by the Aboriginal Centre of Performing Arts to be remounted on two of their students for their season of "Souls Entwined". Last year I worked in partnership with Zaimon and Independent Photographer/Film Maker/Composer, Ryadan Jeavons, on "A Likely Distrust" - a project researching the interaction of dance theatre with film projection. It was a first stage development made possible by a Fresh Ground Residency (a Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts Initiative). We hope to take this to a second stage development this year and we hope to form a new dance theatre and film projection company/collective in Brisbane in the near future.

The opportunity to extend my dance movement vocabulary and experience a very different contemporary dance company environment was presented to me after participating in company class with Leigh Warren whilst on holiday, when I was invited by him to join his Adelaide based project company Leigh Warren and Dancers commencing in 2009. In my first year I was involved in the 'Artists in Health' program at Flinders Medical Centre which was recently awarded a South Australian Business Arts Award. I also danced in the company's national tour of "Seven" and performed "Shimmer" and "Impulse" for the prestigious Holland Dance Festival. Early in 2010 I took the opportunity to work collaboratively with Guest Choreographer, Prue Lang (Ex-dancer for William

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Forsythe and well regarded Independent Choreographer in Paris, France) in "Rubicon" as well as with Leigh Warren in "Meridian" for the company's premiere season of "Frame and Circle" for the Adelaide Festival. In the same year I was contracted for seven weeks by the company for the creation and performances of "Maria De Buenos Aires", a tango opera in collaboration with the State Opera of South Australia. This year I will join Leigh Warren and Dancers from July to September to perform at the Oz Asia Festival (Adelaide) and the Brisbane Festival.

I have been twice nominated as 'Dancer to Watch' in the Dance Australia Critics' Survey (2002 and 2007).

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| 2000 - 2001 | Expressions' Dance In Education Company, Brisbane |
| 2002 - 2007 | Expressions Dance Company, Brisbane |
| 2002 | 'Dancer to Watch' – Dance Australia Critics' Survey |
| 2006 | "Café 3941" – Either Side of Forty Season, Expressions Dance Company Studio Theatre, Brisbane |
| 2007 | Katie Noonan's music film clip "Time To Begin" 'Dancer to Watch' – Dance Australia Critics' Survey |
| 2008 | Lisa Wilson's Elbow Room Collective - "Space_Between"- World Dance Alliance, The Loft Theatre, Brisbane and "Elbow Room"- Brisbane Powerhouse |
| 2009 | "Autonomous" – Royal Academy of Dancing's Sir Robert Helpmann Centenary Scholarship Awards, Dunstan Playhouse, Adelaide "Forgotten Interlude" – Burnside Ballroom, South Australia "Forgotten Interlude" – Ausdance QLD's Bell Tower II Series, Theatre Rehearsal Room, Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts, Brisbane "Drift" – Mad Dance House's This Is How It's Done season, Gardens Point Theatre, Brisbane "Drift" (performed by students) – Aboriginal Centre for Performing Arts' Souls Entwined season, Cremorne Theatre, Brisbane |
| 2009 – 2010 | Leigh Warren and Dancers, Adelaide |
| 2010 | "A Likely Distrust"(First Stage Development) - Fresh Ground Residency at the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Art |
| 2011 | Edge of Colour's film clip "Tokyo" Solo for "SOLO Festival" for EDC, Brisbane Leigh Warren and Dancers, Adelaide |

Teaching

I continue to be a sessional dance lecturer for the Queensland University of Technology, as well as an Associate Artist for Expressions Dance Company and teacher for various dance schools in Brisbane. In 2008, I adjudicated the Queensland Cecchetti Medals in Brisbane. Over the span of my professional career so far, I have led dance workshops around the world; highlights have included teaching for the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts, the Wellington Summer School in New Zealand, and the Development of Contemporary Dance in Noumea. In September last year, the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts requested me to teach class for their Adelaide audition for their 2011 intake of dance students.

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| 2006 | Workshop Teacher, Development of Contemporary Dance, Noumea, New Caledonia Teacher, Wellington Summer School, Wellington, New Zealand Workshop Teacher, Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts, Hong Kong |
| 2008 | Adjudicator, Queensland Cecchetti Medals, Brisbane |
| 2008 | Teacher, Davidia Lind Dance Academy, Mansfield, Queensland |
| 2008 - 2011 | Sessional Lecturer in Dance, Queensland University of Technology, Dance Department and Oodgeroo Unit, Brisbane |
| 2009 - 2010 | Teacher, Leigh Warren and Dancers, Adelaide |
| 2009 - 2010 | Teacher, Expressions Dance Company, Brisbane |
| 2011 | Associate Artist, EDC |

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SCOPE (Securing Career Opportunities and Personal Employment) selected me to be a participant in their program in 2009 and in my 2nd year they selected me as one of only 13 participants Australia Wide for their short program. Through regular meetings with a personal career advisor, this program will help set up a 5 year career action plan. I am very excited to be a part of SCOPE and value the organizations support in this transitional period of my career.

I maintain a membership with Ausdance and through this dance advocacy I have become aware that the dance scene in Brisbane is very fragile, despite there being many extremely talented artists that reside in the city. I wonder if much more could be achieved if Dance Artists were better able to communicate with each other and with others; therefore, I formed Brisbane Dance Artists Hub last year to provide Brisbane Dance Artists with a friendly platform to communicate their thoughts, ideas and questions, and to support each other, through BDAH I hope to strengthen the voice of the Brisbane Dance Sector in years to come. The evolution of Dance in Brisbane is extremely precious and I am determined to see its survival even in a country so engrossed in sport. Because of my belief that actions speak louder than words I have found myself pursuing a new pathway in the dance industry so that I can play an active role in contributing to dance's evolution. I would like to continue to base myself in Brisbane and aim to shift my dancing focus to choreography over the coming years, endeavoring to create my own portfolio of choreographic works; hoping to establish my career as a highly sought after Choreographer and as a Dance Artist that chooses to rise to the challenge of making significant contributions to my art form.

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| 1999 – 2011 | Member of Ausdance QLD |
| 2009 – 2011 | SCOPE participant |
| 2010 - 2011 | Brisbane Dance Artists Hub |