

Dancing by leaps

BUTTERFLIES could be fluttering in the stomachs of Hawthorn's Flare Dance Company members as they hit the stage next week.

Ten dancers will perform for the first time since the company was formed this year, in Melbourne University's annual Flare Dance production *Poise*.

Artistic director and Hawthorn East resident Jane Khoo founded Melbourne University's Flare Dance Ensemble in 2001 and the Hawthorn branch in 2007 to extend her vision beyond the tertiary institution.

"We are all excited and have been rehearsing very hard since April," she said.

"It's a contemporary jazz piece. We are all amateurs but we have been dancing for many years."

Khoo, a clinical neuro psychologist, started dancing when she was three years old in Chinese cultural dance at Singapore Dance Ensemble.

She graduated 10 years later with distinctions from the Beijing Royal Dance Academy.

Khoo has performed in many productions and trained in a variety of



Dancers Lily Martin, Jane Khoo and Delphine Sinclair.

Picture: GLENN DANIELS N14FP301

styles from flamenco and Broadway to hip hop and jazz. "Dancing keeps me balanced," Khoo said. She said the Hawthorn company was a platform for amateur dancers and choreographers within the community to perform in a variety of dance styles in productions and other cultural events.

"Next year I am hoping to get a few more dancers and

hold our own concert to raise money for a local charity in Boroondara, that's my aim for 2008," she said.

Poise is at the Union House Theatre, University of Melbourne, from October 11-13. Tickets: \$15/\$12.

Bookings: phone 8344 7447 or www.flaredance.com. Details: www.flare-dancecompany.com

Progress Leader

LATEST NEWS

An ensemble that dances with Flare

03Oct06

HAWTHORN'S Jane Khoo is the artistic director of Melbourne University's Flare Dance Ensemble.

Over five years she has led the group from its original five-member status to an impressive 300-strong collective, performing eclectic and diverse dance styles ranging from jazz, hip-hop and classical ballet to contemporary and ethnic traditions.

"It's a dynamic showcase of dance pieces that are choreographed and performed by students who have a strong passion for dance," Khoo said.

"This is student creativity at its very best."

Khoo will perform in and direct Flare's annual show, *Elements*, at the Union House Theatre, University of Melbourne, October 19-21, 7.30pm.

Details: email <mailto:bookings@flare> or phone 8344 7447. Tickets: \$12/\$10.



Flare artistic director Jane Khoo in rehearsal. Picture: CHR SCOTT N14PP207

For more arts news, see *Progress Leader's* new section, *Play!*, from page 41 in the October 10 edition.

**Review of “Elements” production directed by Jane Khoo (current Artistic Director of FDC)
Eyeball Newsletter 25 October 2006**

Flare Dance Ensemble presents

DANCE

Elements

Union Theatre, 19 – 21 October

The Flare Dance Ensemble began their journey in 2001 making *Elements* the production to mark the young company's fifth birthday. Comprising of a sixteen different dance pieces, to a large extent choreographed by students themselves, it was a show that brought many....uh, elements of dance and performance to the stage. There was hip hop, Latin American, traditional Chinese, ballet and Russian Gypsy dancing, as well as slide projections separating each piece, a wide-ranging collection of pulsating music and more costume changes than a Pussycat Dolls music video. It was a tightly woven journey, executed with moderate fuss and maximum professionalism, much to the delight of the full house that packed into Union House theatre to see it.

The show opened with a bang with *Eskalation*, a journey through contemporary dance and popular music (from the likes of Evanescence and PCD) and these two features married well. *Enigma* followed a similar theme; although I did find it difficult to reconcile such a skinny group of people performing dance moves made famous by the very bootylicious Beyonce Knowles et al. *Taboo* was a successful marriage of Latin American and classical ballet, Gypsy, from guest performers Vjerba Dance Theatre, was warmly received and the earthy rawness of the bodies in *Desert Storm* was perfectly complemented by crisp choreography and timing, and simple but visually arresting costumes. An honourable mention to *Spring Shower* for the use of the lovely yellow umbrellas previously seen in 2005's *Singin' In the Rain*.

In Act Two Flare's first entirely classical piece opened proceedings. Taking on the challenge of performing the world famous Dance of the Little Swans from Swan Lake was an enormous task, and the five performers in that piece are to be commended for their courage in such an undertaking, and the confidence they showed in carrying it off. While it was met with lukewarm applause from the previously boisterous audience (Bolshoi it was not) the enthusiasm of the performers was heart warming. Of the other pieces in Act Two, *Gig-Gantic* got the most enthusiastic response from the viewers. I felt that *Dusk* and *Flare FM 107.8*, though technically excellent, covered a lot of the same ground as *Gig-Gantic* and the earlier pieces in act one – a lot of 'arm dancing' (that's my technical term for a lot of arm movements, and only a basic two step shuffle performed by the feet) and crumpin' – but the finale tied the whole show together nicely.

Most pesky was the audience's tendency to carry out full-volume conversations between each piece, though I confess I was perhaps the only person to find this irritating, as every other person was engaged in it. It did not appear to be distraction or indifference that drove the audience to such a situation, because throughout each piece attention was unwavering, and support for their friends on stage often verbalized immediately before and during each piece. The Flare Dance community obviously extends much further than the stage and the wings of the Union Theatre, and if they continue to deliver such popular productions there's no reason they cannot exist for another five years and beyond.

Reviewed by Georgie Young

Flare Dance Ensemble “Poise” production, Union House Theatre Melbourne University Oct 2007

