

Secondary School Teachers Guide

RESTLESS DANCE THEATRE presents

naturally

A **double bill** directed by
Michelle Ryan + Emma Stokes

“LIFE IS
A SERIES OF
NATURAL AND
SPONTANEOUS
CHANGES.
DON'T RESIST...
LET THINGS
FLOW
NATURALLY.”

Lao Tzu

13-21 November 2015

**The Odeon Theatre
57a Queen Street Norwood**

What's a Nice Girl Like You Doing in a Place Like This? Photo: Shane Reid

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1. How to use this teachers resource

This Teachers Resource is designed to accompany a live viewing of the Restless production *Naturally*. It has been created with the Australian curriculum in mind, to give students the opportunity to develop skills relating to the standards in the Australian curriculum, and specifically to the subject of dance.

The resource covers:

- **Discussing**
- **Responding**
- **Making**
- **Analysing**
- **Appreciating**

Naturally is suitable for all secondary year levels.

This guide aims to present a host of learning opportunities for teachers to pick from, which can be adapted depending on the level and needs of their classes. It also offers several discussion questions and many of these questions can be used to target literacy outcomes - debates, essays, written responses.



2. About *Naturally*

Restless has always had a fascination with what it means to be human and how as individuals we interact with each other.

Naturally consists of a double bill of *Touched* and *Nice Girl* and brings to the stage 21 talented performers ranging in age from 17 to 53. Themes of love and attraction are explored through the rawness of animalistic behaviours through to the gentleness of a shared secret.

Touched

Touch is sensed all over your body but what are the emotions you feel in your heart when you are truly touched?

The work delves into a delicious array of sensations and emotions, the loneliness of rejection and the anticipation of a delicate caress. It is sometime humorous, at times confusing but always honest.

Production Credits

Lighting Design	Chris Petridis
Set and Costume Design	Ailsa Paterson
Music	Liz Martin

Nice Girl

Nothing fancy, just romantic.

Throughout our lives we feel drawn to others, but how do we navigate the emotions, needs and pressures that arise. To trust our intuition and follow our urges may leave us feeling vulnerable.

We look to the colour, flair and sensitivities of animalistic courtship to guide us on our personal journeys. We weave our ideas of romance with our more primal instinct.

Production Credits

Lighting Design	Chris Petridis
Set and Costume design	Ailsa Paterson
Music	including; Boards of Canada – Slow this bird down Quantic – Time is the enemy Nathan Milstein – Meditation (from 'Thais') Flight Facilities – Heart Attack

3. Getting to know Restless

Purpose

Restless Dance Theatre collaboratively creates outstanding inclusive dance theatre informed by disability.

Vision

Our Vision is to present unexpectedly real dance theatre works in multiple mediums to diverse audiences nationally and internationally.

Mission

The Restless mission is to continually evolve our bold work and be widely celebrated for our leadership.

Restless Dance Theatre is Australia's leading dance company working with people with and without disability. The Company creates high quality real, raw and uninhibited dance theatre that speaks eloquently to everyone.

There are 2 distinct areas of activity for the company:

1. WORKSHOP PROGRAM

Restless Central is open to anyone aged 15 to 26.

Links is open to anyone aged 8 to 12.

The workshops involve creating movement in a safe and fun environment where the participants' ideas become dance. No experience is necessary, just the desire to take part. Workshops are open to people with and without disability and are led by highly experienced tutors in an accessible space.

Additional workshops programs are run throughout the year for organisations, schools and other age ranges.

2. ENSEMBLES

YOUTH ENSEMBLE The Youth Ensemble consists of young artists with and without disability aged 15 to 26. The Ensemble collaborates with nationally and internationally recognised directors to create distinct, high quality performances across a range of art forms. Membership is by invitation only.

SENIOR ENSEMBLE

Graduates from the Youth Ensemble have the opportunity to join the Senior Ensemble, allowing these artists to continue developing their pathways as independent artists. *Nice Girl* is the first professional work by the Senior Ensemble.

Restless Dance Theatre has achieved national and international acclaim for both its performance and film initiatives. A film venture, *Necessary Games*, won four awards at the SA Screen Awards in 2009. In 2010 these films also received awards at several film festivals including the XIII Brooklyn International Film Festival in New York and the ReelDance Australia and New Zealand Awards. Restless has also received an award for Outstanding Achievement in Youth or Community Dance at the Australian Dance Awards and an SA Ruby award for Sustained Contribution by an Organisation. In 2015 Restless Dance Theatre was nominated for Outstanding Achievement in Youth for *Salt* at the Australian Dance Awards.

The Dancers

Youth Ensemble Dancers:

Josh Campton
Chris Dyke
Kathryn Evans

Jianna Georgiou
Michael Hodyl
Lorcan Hopper

Caitlin Moloney
Jenna Hann
Darcy Carpenter

Senior Ensemble Dancers:

Natalie Binks-Williams
James Bull
Cinzia Schincariol
Rachel High

Kym Mackenzie
Dana Nance
Andrew Pandos
Mark Tanner

Dimitri Vuthoylkas
Anastasia Retallack
Tom Colwell
Jesse Rochow



4. Getting to know Artistic Director and choreographer of Touched - Michelle Ryan

Michelle Ryan has enjoyed a career that has spanned 25 years in the arts. Michelle worked for Queensland Arts Council before joining Meryl Tankard in Canberra and Adelaide as part of Meryl Tankard's Australian Dance Theatre. She was a performer with Tankard for 7 ½ years followed by projects in Europe as Tankard's assistant, which included the Andrew Lloyd Webber West End Production, *The Beautiful Game*. On returning to Australia, Michelle was a



founding member of Splintergroup and worked at Dancenorth for five years in various capacities.

Michelle returned to performing in 2011 as a guest artist for Alain Plattels' *Out of Context for Pina* by Les Ballet C de la B followed by *Take Up Thy Bed and Walk* by Gaelle Mellis in 2012. Michelle was appointed Artist Director of Restless Dance Theatre in 2013. She directed her first work, *In the Balance* for the company in 2014.

Michelle recently performed in London at the Unlimited Festival and at the Malthouse Theatre in Torque Show's *Intimacy*, which recently won an Australian dance award. Michelle is the subject of a new documentary created by Meryl Tankard, called *Michelle's Story* premiering in the Adelaide film Festival October 2015.

5. Getting to know choreographer of *Nice Girl* - Emma Stokes

Emma completed her Bachelor of Dance Performance Degree in 2007 at the Adelaide Centre for the Arts and was the recipient of the Helpmann Academy and Minter Ellison Rising Star Award. Since graduating Emma has worked consistently in the South Australian independent dance scene and has been employed to teach and choreograph dance across the state.

Emma was a founding member of Katrina Lazaroff's One Point 618 Dance Theatre and performed in *Pomona Road*, *Involuntary* and *SKIP*. Emma has performed with the South Australian State Opera Company in *Turandot* and *Rigolotto* and international acts, Studio Festi's' *Il Cielo che Danza* and La Fura dels Baus' *Le Grande* for Adelaide Festival. She has also performed internationally at Edinburgh Military Tattoo and Oman Military Tattoo.

In 2010 Emma started work with Restless Dance Theatre as Assistant Director on *Next of Kin*. In 2013 Emma choreographed *The Memory Keeper*, a collaboration project between Restless Dance Theatre, Riverland Youth Theatre (RYT) and the Riverland Special School (RSS). Her second collaboration with RYT and the RSS led to *Watermark*, a production which premiered at the Australian Youth Dance Festival in 2014.

Emma is currently studying a Masters of Teaching through the University of South Australia.

What's a Nice Girl Like You Doing in a Place Like This is Emma's first full length work for Restless Dance Theatre.



6. Before the show

You may like to ask students to independently consider one of the following topics before seeing the show. The questions are also suited to a whole class discussion and brainstorm.

RESEARCH

Explore the Restless Dance Theatre website. Use the internet to discover more about the company's work.

CONSIDER

What does it mean to be touched, both physically and emotionally? Can you recall a time you were moved by to

DISCUSS

What makes a good dancer? What are the physical and mental characteristics that a good dancer needs?

OR

RESEARCH

What does the term "to go with one's gut feeling" mean? Where did it originate, what does it mean, does it apply to you? Can you think of an instance where going with your gut has gotten you in trouble?

CONSIDER

What are the affects social media has on relationships. Is it positive/negative/both?

DISCUSS

What are the pressures that young people today face in relationships? Are the pressures from external sources? Peer pressure? What else?

WRITE

Write a paragraph about a time you have felt rejected or you have rejected someone. Assign this feeling a colour, a sound and a touch.

OR

RESEARCH

Research an arts funding body in Australia? See if you can gather any information on where Restless funding comes from? There are 2 other major dance companies in Adelaide? Who are they? Can you research where their funding comes from?

WRITE down everything you know about tasking in dance. What is it, when is it used, why is it used, have you experienced it before?

DISCUSS

What is the role of an Artistic Director of a dance company? What is their role within an arts organisation? What do you think they do on a day to day basis? How is an Artistic Director different from a Company Manager?

CONSIDER

Consider the idea of dance being a very powerful form of expression and communication. How is this compounded for a dancer with a disability?

REFLECT

Choose artists you know with a disability considering actors, musicians, dancers and visual artists. Write down their names.



7. After the Show

Discuss

- How do you think the dancer's disabilities informed the work?
- Were you aware of the presence of disabilities? Did any awareness impact on your response to the work?
- Consider what makes a good dancer?
- Has your view been challenged by the work *Naturally*?
- What was the relationship between the music and the movement?
- Were the movement qualities different or similar in *Touched* and *Nice Girl*?
- Did the production elements add to or distract from the movement? Expand.
- What were the main themes being communicated in the two pieces? Did you relate to the themes? Expand

Write

- Write a review of *Naturally* use formal writing. Describe your first impression, the structure of the work, a critical analysis of the style of movement, how the production elements influenced the viewing and your interpretation of the themes.
- You are an interviewer writing a piece about *Naturally* for the national newspaper. Devise a list of 5 questions each for the following people: Michelle Ryan, Emma Stokes, Jianna Georgiou, Lorcan Hopper and Ailsa Paterson.

Discuss

- *The success of Restless Dance Theatre is grounded in the fact that the dancers are not trying to emulate other styles or other dancers: they move as themselves, and it is this authenticity that gives their work such power and resonance.*

Design a new poster for the production of *Naturally*. It can be digitally created or hand drawn. Include key information about the production, (who, what, where, when).

RESPONDING

The following creative movement tasks are suitable for all year levels, and can be adapted in complexity to suit a beginner dancer through to the highly advanced student.

Movement in the production was predominately generated through the use of tasking.

Tasking refers to the process whereby a choreographer gives the dancer a "task" to create original movement. The dancer is asked to respond physically or verbally to a question, image or a piece of music etc. The choreographer will then edit the dancers' material to ensure the "tasked" movement created relays the emotional intent the choreographer hopes to communicate.

CHOREOGRAPHIC PROCESS - TOUCHED

Michelle on her choreographic process: “During this process I found myself shying away from external stimulus, and I could feel this work being more emotively driven. The dancers and I worked to search for meaning through the internal. That is, we were internalising not only our stimulus but also our responses. This led us to discover more intention-based movement. I have always been drawn to challenging a dancer’s natural movement response. I am interested in a dancer rebelling against the “comfortable.” I want to find a new and different physicality in each person. One that maybe they haven’t even been aware of before. To watch someone discovering a new way to move is like adding a new vocabulary to the body. During the process for *Touched* the moments of stillness were as important to me as the movement. It can be challenging for the dancers to harness the power and energy of a moment of pure stillness on stage. But it communicates a softness I want to invest in. In turn, it can evoke feelings in an audience in a different way than movement can.”

MOVEMENT TASK - WRAP/DISSOLVE

CREATE THE MOVEMENT FOR 2 OR MORE DANCERS

- Dancer A wraps a body part around dancer B. Dancer B must then figure out a way to “untangle” themselves from the “wrap” and move away from dancer A. This is done via a melting or dissolving.

EXTEND THE MOVEMENT

- Challenge dancers to think about different body parts, not automatically wrapping with a hand or arm. What would it look like to wrap around someone with a back, a torso, a leg? Ask dancer B to alter their start position, to make it more difficult/easy for Dancer B to wrap.

DEVELOP FURTHER

- Alter the emotional intention of the movement. What would it be like to dissolve away from a wrap from someone you really like? There may be a hesitancy or longing in the dissolve? Try anger, sadness, joy etc.
- Pick 3 of the best wrap and dissolves. Create a duet by linking them with transition steps. Now try and manipulate the duet with the elements of dance. Could it travel? Can you turn it into a jumping phrase or retrograde the sequence.

IMPROVISATION TASK - HOW DO YOU FEEL?

An improvisation task that allows the dancers to harness the natural energy they are feeling to create movement.

CREATE THE MOVEMENT

- Ask dancers to sit and really focus on how they are feeling at the present time? What is their emotional state? After some quiet reflecting time ask a dancer to stand up and physically communicate how this emotional feels to music. Slowly let another dancer

enter the space and start improvising their emotional state physically. Allow the improvisation to continue for a few moments.

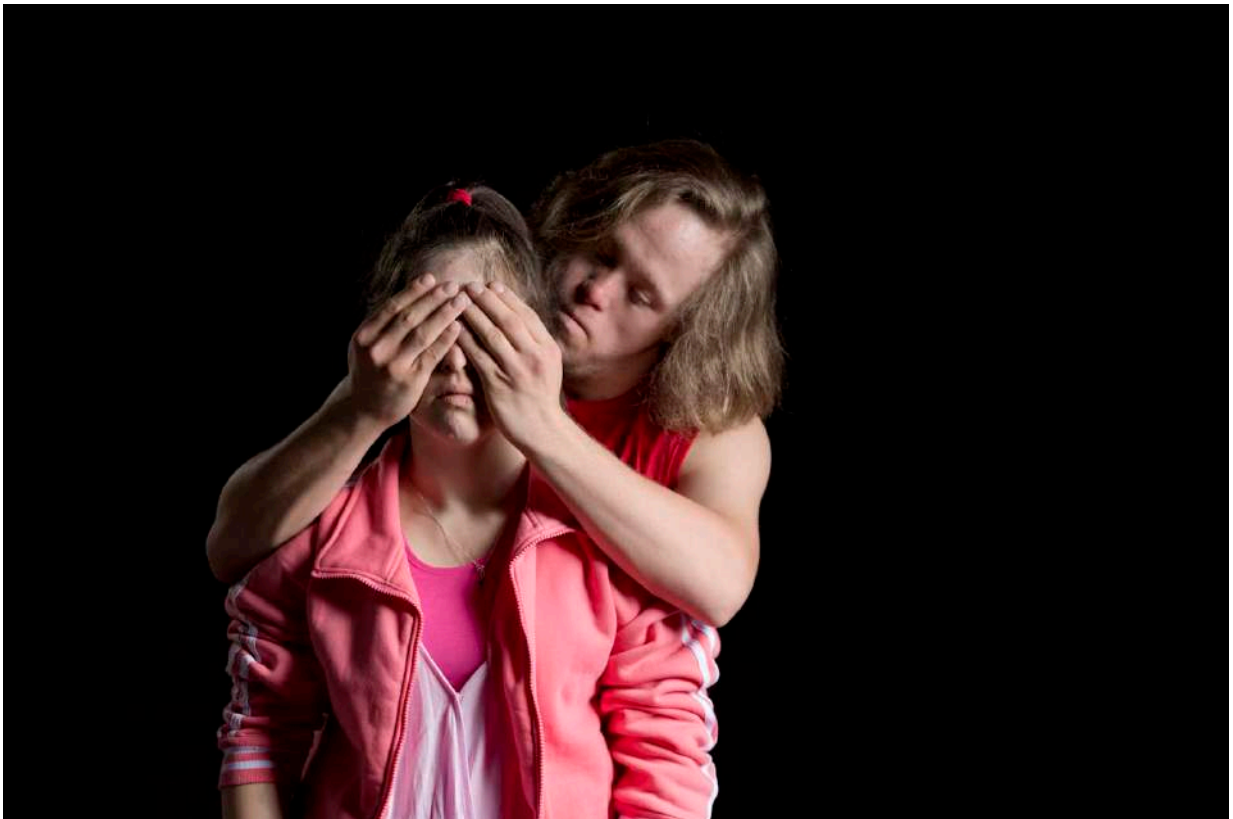
- At the conclusion of the improvisation ask the original dancer to reflect on how another person entering the space altered their emotional state? Where they aware of a new and or different energy?

EXTEND THE MOVEMENT

See if a dancer can alter another dancers' emotional state on purpose, by harnessing a completely opposite energy and movement quality.

Create a trio where three dancers are all moving with a completely different emotional states remaining connected at all times.

- How challenging is it to remain connected with someone moving with a different intent? Begin this tasking using contact improvisation and then try and set the movement created through the improvisation.



CHOREOGRAPHIC PROCESS – *What’s A NICE GIRL Like You Doing In A Place Like This?*

Emma on her choreographic process: “During my time with the Senior Ensemble, our conversations and explorations naturally led us towards the theme of relationships. We started exploring relationships in all of their incarnations. Not only humans but animals. We were fascinated by the intricacies of animal courtships, and the very human experience of being in love. We discussed the power of love being strong enough to crumble rationality, religious beliefs, and society’s expectations for us.

I was inspired by a poem, written by Nick Hughes. The title, *What’s a Nice Girl Like you Doing in a Place Like this?* really resonated with me. It can be construed in so many ways. I used this as a jumping off point for my creative process.”

What’s a Nice Girl Like You Doing in a Place Like This?

Suddenly apart, deserted, alone,
teetering blindfolded on a tightrope
stretched above vague terrain, between unknown
ends. Shuffling along, a misanthrope
amidst gregarious strangers; a fool
next to witty words, unable to speak.
And every silence a treacherous pool
in which a fool may drown while others shriek
with laughter. A pitfalled, creviced landscape
which mocks tentative steps made to connect
and trips even the wary. No escape
from the need to reach out and be direct.
No escape from the need to join the dance,
to risk rejection and seize every chance.

Nick Hughes

An additional poem to reflect on is Maya Angelou’s ‘Caged Bird’.

MOVEMENT TASK - BIRD CALLS

CREATE THE MOVEMENT

- As a class watch some videos of different bird behaviours.
- Create a specific bird walk individually.
- Picture how the bird walks, flaps wings, grooms itself. Be as bizarre and over the top as possible!
- Create a call for your bird. Be very specific. You don’t want your bird call to get confused with someone else’s.

EXTEND THE MOVEMENT

- Once your bird behaviours and calls are invented, interact with the other birds around you. See what behaviours develop naturally between you.
- Are some birds aggressive, docile?
- Does your bird call when it is happy or threatened?
- Do any of the birds seem to “flock together?”

DEVELOP FURTHER

- Create a sequence of movement by utilising different elements of the bird behaviours. Add the calls in too! Manipulate via the elements of dance.
- A whole class improvisation can also be tried with the bird behaviours task. Put on a piece of music and ask students to stand in a group and move, like they are all dancing at a party. Randomly, students will break out of the group, and perform their bird behaviour. Like they are morphing from human to bird. As they get further from the group, their bird behaviour becomes more dramatic. As they join the group again their bird behaviour gets smaller and smaller until they are once again dancing in the group. (As seen in show)

IMPROVISATION TASK - SHINING MOMENT

An improvisation task that can be developed and manipulated to create solos with specific emotional intent.

CREATE THE MOVEMENT

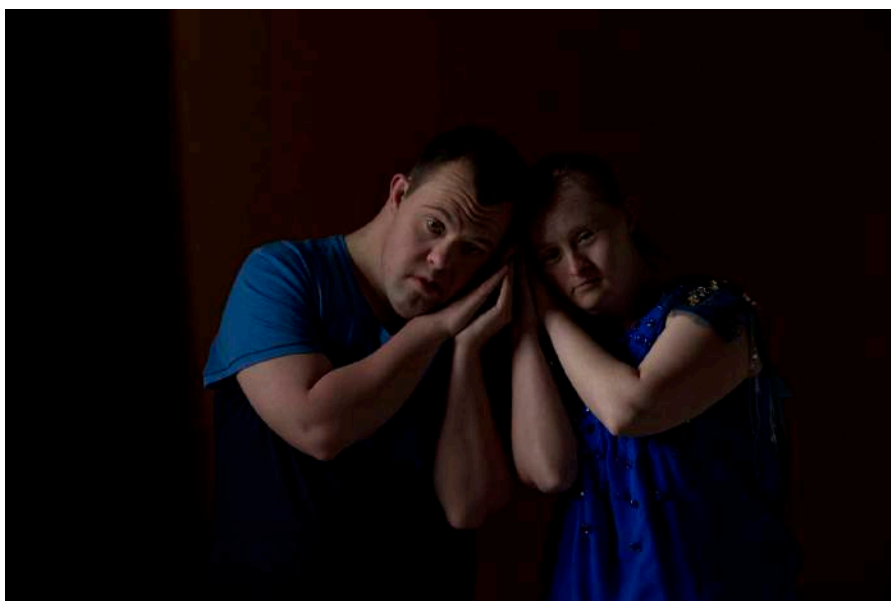
- Think about the moment in your life where you feel truly alive, happy and your truest self. It could be an emotional state or an actual activity. Try and create some movement that communicates this to the audience. It can be abstract or literal movement. This phrase becomes your shining moment.

EXTEND THE MOVEMENT

- Condense the movement created down to a 10-15 second solo. Let each gesture speak with emotional intent and clarity. Allow the movement to be joyous and free.

DEVELOP FURTHER

- Allow each dancer to step forward, individually, as if they are stepping into a giant spotlight. Perform the Shining moment solo, repetitively, until another dancer approaches from behind, cups their ears and slowly and gently drags them from the spotlight. (As seen in show)



8. *Naturally* Sample Lesson Plan (practical)

This lesson plan would ideally suit a double practical lesson and can be adapted in complexity depending upon year level and skill of students. Ideally this lesson would be delivered after viewing *Naturally*.

WARM UP - Round Robin

Divide students into 4 equal groups. Ask students to stand in 4 corners of the room. Assign each corner a movement relating to an “animal behaviour.” Ask students to come up with the movement themselves. Examples would be wing flapping, mountain climbers on floor with wide arms and legs (like a spider crawling), jumping out from a crouched position to plank (like a tiger pouncing) etc. The movement should be large and exaggerated and able to be repeated. Students perform the movement assigned to each corner until a whistle is blown or “change” is called. All students then rotate corners in an anti-clockwise direction, and continue to perform the next consecutive movement. Allow at least two full rotations to give adequate warm up time.

TRAVEL

From the corner. Students work with a partner and improvise different ways to roll across the space. The aim is to not repeat any movement. Close contact must be kept with the floor at all times. Repeat for the following four crossings:

- **First crossing** is open improvisation.
- **Second crossing** the students must imagine they are painters, and their hands and feet are leaving a trail of paint where they roll. Ask them to focus on the trail of paint they are leaving.
- **Third crossing** is an “Up, Down” crossing with partner. One person must continue their travelling roll on the floor. Their partner must try and copy their exact movement, but while they are standing. One person must be on the floor and one standing at all times. If the student on the floor rolls to a stand, their partner must immediately roll down to the floor, where the roles are reversed. Have the student standing really try and replicate the exact movement that is being done on the floor.
- **Fourth crossing** is similar to crossing three. This time though the person standing has more control over when the 2 students will swap from the floor and standing positions. If the person standing would like to go to the floor, they must join their forehead (or another body part for younger year levels) with the dancer on the floor, and slowly lift them to standing with this contact, before they can sink into the floor, and continue their rolling. Repeat so each student gets a turn. (As seen in show)

CREATING MOVEMENT

- Movement and improvisation task from *Touched*
- Movement and improvisation task from *Nice Girl*

SETTING A PHRASE

Assign each dancer a partner and split all partners on opposite sides of the room. Have dancers use the “paint and roll” technique from the travel section of class to roll slowly towards each other. Stagger starts.

When the partners have found each other, slowly join foreheads to stand up.

When both partners are standing partner 1 will perform a wrap and partner 2 dissolves.

Repeat with partner 2 performing a wrap and partner 1 dissolving.

Partner 1’s will all manipulate their dissolve so they can travel to a long straight line, either horizontal or vertical to audience depending on class numbers. Partner 2’s will remain on the spot, with their intent and gaze still on their partner.

Partner 1’s will perform their shining moment solo. Keep repeating until partner 2 approaches from behind, cups the ears and drags them to new position.

Both partners will then perform a slowed down and manipulated version of their bird behaviour, trying to have contact with their partner as much as possible.

This duet will eventually dissolve into the floor where all dancers will slowly roll out of the performance space.

Music suggestion:

- Meditation (from *Thais*) - Nathan Milstein
- Unravel- Bjork
- Boards of Canada- Slow this bird down
- Quantic- Time is the enemy
- Flight Facilities- Heart attack

COOL DOWN

9. Further Resources

Restless-General and articles

[Restless Dance Theatre - Unexpectedly Real](#)

[Arts Access Australia - Making The Journey: Arts and Disability in Australia](#)

[Restless Dance Theatre - Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia](#)

[Arts Access Australia - Access Case Study: Restless Dance Theatre](#)

Disability arts organisations

[Restless Dance Theatre - Unexpectedly Real](#)

<http://www.nostringsattached.org.au/favicon.ico>

<http://rawcus.org.au/favicon.ico>

[Tutti Arts | Tutti is a multi-arts hub](#)

[Candoco Dance Company](#)

[Back to Back Theatre](#)

Restless Clips

[In the Balance - Caitlin and Chris duet](#)

[In the Balance - Jianna and the boys](#)

[In the Balance - Michael and Felicity duet](#)

[Salt 40 sec Promo](#)

[Salt - Short Extract - Dance Sequence - Restless Dance Theatre - YouTube](#)

[The Audreys - Baby, Are You There? - YouTube](#)

[RESTLESS DANCE THEATRE - HOWLING LIKE A WOLF - BEHIND THE SCENES Pt 3 on Vimeo](#)

Michelle Ryan

[Adelaide's Award-Winning Restless Dance Theatre Is "In The Balance" - Interview - The ClotheslineThe Clothesline](#)

[On the Couch with Michelle Ryan | Australian Arts Review](#)

<https://radio.adelaide.edu.au/favicon.ico>

[Intimacy on Vimeo](#)

[Nerve Ending on Vimeo](#)

Emma Stokes

[Emma Stokes, Restless Dance Theatre | Grace Edwards](#)

[POMONA ROAD World Premiere by Katrina Lazaroff on Vimeo](#)



RESTLESS

DANCE THEATRE

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