



Mark of Kane

Shelley dancer embraces differences explored in company's latest show on gender identity

By **CAROLINE SMITH**

SHELLEY'S Alexandra Kane is bringing her own ideas about gender identity to the fore in Steps Dance Company's new production *Moonwebs and Scorched Thongs*, which will be ready to inspire at the Playhouse Theatre from April 3.

Ms Kane said the discussion which was encouraged among dancers involved in the show – 15 boys and 15 girls – was one of the most dynamic aspects of Steps, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year.

"I like a lot of the group collaboration, and talking about the relevant social issues which come out in the show," she said.

"Much of our audience will be high school students, so we're

Alexandra Kane is enjoying the "delicate and feminine" work by the girls in *Moonwebs and Scorched Thongs*.

hoping to make the show thought-provoking to them.

"I'm really happy to be involved in something that's not just dance for dance's sake."

Moonwebs and Scorched Thongs was initiated by new project artistic director Alice Lee Holland, who said she wanted to examine the stereotypes attached to young men and women, and what they mean.

Ms Kane said she particularly liked the contrast between the soft feminine part of the show, and the more aggressive, fast male aspect.

"I like the work we're doing in the female group – it's very delicate and feminine, but I'm impressed by the energy and emotion that the guys put into it – you can see it's about more than just showing off their strength," she said.

Steps general manager Cassandra Lake said the students' collaborative approach set Steps apart.

"I think it's great for the audience to see people of their own age performing and working creatively," she said.

"Alice had the idea to work around gender, but she wanted the dancers to contribute their own ideas.

"They had a storyboard with pictures and quotes which they brought in."

Ms Lake said that opportunities for dancers in Perth were in greater abundance, as the performing arts community developed.

"There's a great dance community in Perth, and we've seen it grow," she said.

"Dancers are staying in Perth now, and companies like Strut, Steps, Buzz and Dance Oz are like a big family.

"There's also the Future Move Committee, which is aiming for an injection of cash from the State Government to build dance in Perth."

Moonwebs and Scorched Thongs runs from April 3 to 6.