

TEAM RIS *in* 6 WEEKS



VW
GOLF GTI

C Kemp of Thornlie

week 1



ASTRA
CONVERTIBLE

M Roberts of Thornlie

week 2



SUBARU
WRX

DRAWN THIS FRIDAY

week 3



MAZDA
MX5

week 4



HSV
CLUBSPORT

week 5



BMW
320i Executive

ARTS

Edited by Stephen Bevis



6

Youth-savvy take on a web of intrigue

DANCE

Steps Youth Dance Theatre
Nospace
Playhouse Theatre
Review: Naomi Millett

There was literally no space in which to move at Steps' performance headquarters on Thursday. Every seat in the house was filled by enthusiastic teenagers keen to immerse themselves in the sensory overload of Steps Youth Dance director Sam Fox's topical — and ambitious — new work.

Steps is nothing if not up to date with current trends and these days nobody is anybody — from the Prime Minister down — unless their image is "out there" on hot, interactive, user-submitted websites such as MySpace and Facebook.

In this dynamic hour, 23 dancers aged 14 to 23 investigate identity and culture within the "headspace" of online environments. A sophisticated collaborative effort, the production blends experimental and popular street dance styles (hip hop and break) with gymnastics, multimedia and "network inspired" abstract choreography.

The action unfolds to a mind-blowing electronica and techno-inspired score by sound artist Dave Miller. In the first intriguing moments, to the amplified clatter of keyboards, casually dressed dancers hover over desks, tapping user names like Angelized and Freakykid, then phrases, into real laptops. Behind them, text fragments and a kaleidoscope of projected faces scroll across a dominating, suspended screen.

Other dancers surround them executing rapid mime routines suggestive of logging on, with



Sensory overload: Steps Youth Dance Theatre's production is captivating.

individuals propelling themselves swiftly towards other dancers, briefly connecting in a tangle of bodies then abruptly breaking away. Positive and fun aspects of social networking and virtual reality games are depicted, as is the speed, access and availability of shared intellectual property and information.

But it is not long before Fox begins exploring some of the tensions and darker aspects of the phenomenon — questioning issues of power and control, how young people construct their identities, how much choice users have and even the values of digital technology. He seems to be suggesting that the development of web-based communities is a double-edged sword that may in fact limit creative freedom and foster alienation.

In one unsettling sequence, examining the potentially addictive nature of the internet, performers are shown as zombies, operating as if on autopilot. In another, reflecting perhaps on superficial representations of self, Fox has group members

manipulate their bodies and expressions in an attempt to entertain — or titillate — an unseen audience. Complex ensemble routines featuring broken lines (signalling confusion) are contrasted with lyrical, improvised solos as dancers spin and leap in graceful celebrations of freedom.

Taking a swipe at consumerism (particularly the "adbars" matching fashion and music products with youth markets), team members jazz up their plain costumes with glitzy accessories and ascend podiums to preen and pose.

Later, in an especially memorable and symbolic scene they attempt to physically "declutter" their lives and claw back some space; divesting themselves of "stuff" by hurling it into a pit of fire.

Remarkably devised and brilliantly presented, this captivating, youth-savvy experience is guaranteed to inspire debate as it makes tangible the virtual and conceptual worlds of the web.

There's no rest for the wicked