

Helen Herbertson

Helen Herbertson was born in Brisbane where she studied ballet from an early age with Jill Cadden. She received her early performance experience with the Ballet Theatre of Queensland under the direction of Phyllis Danaher. She later studied at Queensland University and performed with the Queensland Modern and Contemporary Dance Company.

Herbertson moved to Sydney in 1973 to perform with the Dance Company (NSW) in *Something to do with a Circle on the Floor*, which was choreographed by Jacqui Carroll for the opening season of the Sydney Opera House. In Sydney she studied with Margaret Chapple at the Bodenwieser Studio. A period of time teaching and choreographing in Perth and Adelaide followed.

Herbertson began regularly creating works as a freelance choreographer in 1981 initially making works for TasDance, Dance North, and Australian Dance Theatre. Her works for TasDance included *Solo-Echo* (1981), *September Shuffle* (1982), *Watercourse* (1985), *Progressive Manoeuvres* (1987), *Pick Up Sticks* (1988), and *Footsteps (Angels in Reeboks)* (1989). For Dance North she created *Two Views*, and for Australian Dance Theatre she choreographed *Scorched Earth* (1986).

As co- artistic director with Beth Shelton of Dance Works from 1989 to 1991, and sole artistic director between 1992 and 1997, Herbertson choreographed many new works for the company including *Descansos...resting places* (1996) which won the 1996 Betty Ponder Award for original choreography. Other works for Dance Works included *No Physical Injury*, *Physical Business* (1992), *Human to Human* (1992), and *Particular Touches*.

Herbertson was artistic director of Dancehouse in Melbourne from 2001 to 2003. She has received a number of scholarships and residencies, including the Australian Bicentennial Travel Scholarship (1988), residency at the Paris Studio, Cite International des Arts (1994), artist in residence at Dance Department, University of Western Sydney (1995), fellowship from the Dance Board, Australia Council (1997-1998), and an Asialink Residency in Singapore with Theatreworks (2000) where she worked as a collaborator on *Spirits* by Kuo Pao Kun. Herbertson also participated in Theatreworks' *Flying Circus Project* in December 2000. She was joint recipient with Ben Cobham of an Australian Dance Award for outstanding achievement in independent dance for their production *Morphia Series* in 2003.