

Sparks as two arts rub together

Few things travel as fast in the Territory as the news of fresh talent arriving. **LYNN FERGUSON** has leapt hemispheres to plunge into the creative pools of the Top End.

TEXT
Row Booker

IMAGE
Julianne Osborne

CAPTION
Lynn Ferguson works on a costume destined for Tracks Dance Company's latest project, "Endurance".

When British costumier, Lynn Ferguson made the move to Darwin, she had little idea of how the decision would play out.

With a rich theatre background including 14 years in the wardrobe department of the renowned Scottish theatre company, Traverse, and three years as head of wardrobe at the revered Bristol Old Vic Theatre, alongside many freelance projects, Lynn was uncertain initially about what relocating to Darwin would herald for her career.

But when an opportunity opened at Charles Darwin University, she decided to return to her roots and took up a post as VET lecturer in fashion. Now, two and a half years on, she's about to bring together her present and past lives when she collaborates with arguably the Northern Territory's premier dance company, Tracks.

It's a partnership that's been much anticipated by both parties. Co Artistic Director of Tracks Dance Company, Tim Newth said he had heard about Lynn and her theatrical background as soon as she arrived in Darwin and had been looking for an opportunity to work with her.

"It's great to have people like Lynn here in the Territory as they have such an enormous skill set to bring to the table. Her work is very organic in style and beautifully detailed. We're certainly looking forward to seeing the end result on stage," Tim said.

That stage will be the Velodrome during this year's Darwin Festival, involving a promenade-style performance during which the audience will walk around three different stages where separate dance choreographies will be performed simultaneously.

Entitled "Endurance", Lynn said the show has been an exciting project. "There are three separate stories to each of the choreographies and, without giving too much away, I've had to design rugged outdoor farming-style clothing, corporate city-slicker wear and even superhero costumes. And with changes happening during the dances, it's certainly been a challenging project to work on," Lynn said.

A self-confessed perfectionist, Lynn is hand-dyeing pieces of fabric and stitching most of the costumes. She does have some dedicated help, though. She has captured the imaginations and enthusiasm of her fashion students, who have volunteered to help on the project outside of university hours.

"Each of them is really happy to help. It's very useful work experience for them. By working on a live project, they're getting to see the importance of teamwork in a wardrobe department, to experience the restraints that budgets and deadlines can place on designs and, perhaps most importantly, getting to experience the forward planning that has to be involved when you're working in a remote setting such as Darwin. They can't just nip to Sydney or Melbourne to source materials. They have to plan weeks in advance and factor in postage time," she said.

By the sound of it, the Top End creative pool just became a whole lot deeper.



WEB BYTE
To see more of Lynn's work, visit [W: www.costumesnt.net.au/home](http://www.costumesnt.net.au/home). Find out more about Tracks Dance Company. [W: www.tracksdance.com.au](http://www.tracksdance.com.au).