

# ALL OF ME

- A Legs on the Wall production -

*"All of Me is special... It'll take your breath away."* The Sydney Morning Herald, 1994



All of Me is a shattering portrait of the workings of the family – the passion and intensities, the loves and hatreds, the enduring bonds of love and the subtle violence that make families the most complex of human organisms. The tensions, struggles and joys of life are evoked through a physical language – body thrown against body, balances, lifts, and leaps into space: a seamless cohesion of acrobatics, dance and characterisation.

All Of Me is a story about a family, Mother, Father, Son and Daughter. The characters are introduced at the time of the birth of the daughter: she is

suspended in an aerial image subtly moving down to earth as the mother writhes in pain, attached to and counter weighting the baby.

From here the narrative unfolds in sequences out of chronological order – the first monologue hints of the child's death. The narrative is expressed through a series of physical scenes drawing primarily on balance acrobatics, and the set of ladders and vertical bed frames that establish an abstract yet easily recognisable sense of the family home.

The tension between the mother and father is both violently emotional and physically alarming. The story is set in Australia in the 50s, with the parents struggling with their roles of stoic breadwinner and caregiver – reflecting both the social constraints of conventional gender roles, and the fear with which we approach such challenges. In All of Me, gender politics never override the power of the characters. It is their relationships that command our attention and compassion.

Created in 1993, All of Me has become a classic of physical theatre. It has toured extensively throughout Australia and Europe, including the 1996 Edinburgh Fringe where it won the prestigious Herald Angel Award for the most outstanding theatre show across all genres. Recent audience and critical response shows that All of Me still speaks powerfully of our world.

On first coming to LOTW's notorious Hut 24, I found something strangely moving about their daily training regimen, as they placed their bodies, bones and safety in each other's hands, amongst the debris of Chinese takeaways and hamburgers left behind by the previous night's Chinese Badminton players. There seemed something so direct and honest about the impact of flesh upon bone, the sweat and effort as they struggled to maintain their balances. It appeared to offer a fascinating vehicle to explore the intricacies of our most personal relationships, so we began to dredge our personal histories, starting with our earliest memories of childhood love and rejection and exploring the way they reverberated in our adult lives. We explored bonding and bondage, the conflicting desires of wanting to be held and wanting space, of love and loss. To keep the emotion as raw as possible we tried to work on the edge of exhaustion, with bodies gasping for breath, clasping at one another for support. We wanted to create something fresh and honest, which for all its extremity would strike chords in people's lives for years on. We hope the show will continue to do so.

**Nigel Jamieson**, Director

## REVIEWS

I spent the whole performance on the edge of my emotional seat... It's exhilarating stuff... All of Me should travel the world for years to come.

**The Australian, 10/9/93**

Legs on the Wall blasts physical theatre into a new, triumphant dimension... All of Me is a pell-mell, dive, leap and pummel, startling and exultant production... A work of punch, passion and grand delight.

**The Sun Herald, Sydney, 12/9/93**



All of Me is special... It'll take your breath away.

**Sydney Morning Herald, 5/8/94**

It is an honest production, restrained, synchronised, experimental, almost perfect... This is a production that gives us hope and challenges what we are.

**El Tiempo, Colombia, 1994**

Just extraordinary... a gravity defying spectacle that combines physical theatre skills with a rare emotional experience.

**The Guardian, UK, 1996**

A powerfully distressing, delicately poignant, psychologically probing piece of physical theatre that grapples with a child's never-quite-explained death and the aftermath of grief, guilt, remembered love and rage ... What is phenomenal about this company is that their acrobatic feats are searingly charged with emotion and dramatic meaning.

**The Times, UK, 24/8/96**

All of Me is now nearly a decade old but its theme is a perennial. There is a family, a great deal of love, an inevitable amount of conflict, a rift and a tragedy. What might take a playwright two or three hours to express takes Legs on the Wall little more than an hour. Brevity is a distinct virtue when ideas are distilled as powerfully and poetically as they are here... It is a huge credit to the performers that rarely do their physical skills become more important than the ideas they are conveying... Nothing is ever done for show.

**The Australian, 22/6/01**

## PRODUCTION HISTORY

- 1993 Premiered at The Performance Space in Sydney
- Various Australian & New Zealand Tours, including the New Zealand International Festival of the Arts
- IV Festival Iberoamericano de Teatro de Bogota, Colombia
- 1994 Edinburgh Fringe Festival (won Angel Award)
- 1996 UK & European tour including The Oxford Playhouse, Oxford, UK The Galway Arts Festival, Scotland; The Cambridge Arts Theatre, Ireland
- Tollwood Festival, Munich, Germany
- Sydney Opera House 2001
- 2002 Shanghai International Arts Festival



### Artistic Team

Director	Nigel Jamieson
Writer	Mary Morris
Composer	Peter Kennard
Design	Sue Field
LX Design	Geoff Cobham
Devisors and original cast	Beth Kayes, Brian Keogh, Thor Blomfield, Bernadette Regan

### Production Information

Touring Company	7 (4 performers, 2 technicians, director)
Venue:	Theatre. Flexible, minimum 8m x 8m stage, rigging points above stage
Capacity	Small to medium sized theatre
Set	Fits in 3 tonne truck
Technical Notes	Standard theatre lighting and audio playback
Set-up	Can open on second night
Duration	One hour, no interval

## **Booking information / Technical specifications / Quotations:**

### **Arts Asia Pacific Pty Ltd**

Suite 1

Level 1 / 24 Bay Street

Double Bay NSW 2028

AUSTRALIA

Tel: +61 (0)2 9328 6788

Fax: +61 (0)2 9328 3810

Email: [info@artsap.com](mailto:info@artsap.com)

Website: [www.artsap.com](http://www.artsap.com)