

Transcending to faraway places

CHANTAL ABITBOL

HOSPITAL patients confined to a bed often crave to break free of their surroundings. So Sydney artist Rhonda Dee is hoping to give them one form of escape – through art.

Selected to be part of the international art project *Faraway Places* – which aims to use art to transport patients to a more comforting space – Dee’s artwork is set to showcase with nine other international artists in the intensive care unit at Hadassah Ein Karem Hospital in Jerusalem next year.

A preview of Dee’s work is currently on show with fellow Australian artist, Judith Duquemin, in *The Only Moving Things* exhibition at Horus & Deloris Contemporary Art Space in Pyrmont.

“[I’m] so thrilled,” says American-born Dee, 44, who is married to Israeli photographer Zaki Permann and a member of North Shore Temple Emanuel in Chatswood.

“[I’ve always had] an interest in exhibiting in Israel and the Hadassah installation provided a unique opportunity for this international exchange.”

Transcendence and metamorphosis have always been key themes in her landscape-oriented works, added Dee, who paints using acrylic on translucent Mylar film creating “surreal-scapes ... [and] a sense of floating and a desire to break free”.

“The fluid marks and erosions of paint and collage form layered spaces reflective of the passage of time,” she says. “There are a lot of spatial openings visually and psychologically.”

Originally from Texas, Dee has lived in



Using art as a means of escape ... Sydney artist Rhonda Dee playing with her son, Jakob.

Photo: Zaki Permann.

Australia for the past several years – but says the landscapes of both countries have influenced her work. “I grew up in the border-zone of Texas and Mexico. The rich, often explosive mix of circumstances associated with that region definitely influenced the way I looked at the world. I took away an attitude toward life, creativity and art-making that is expansive, all encompassing and a bit raw,” she says. “Since living in Australia, I continue to be fueled and delighted by the shifting

cultural and physical landscape.”

Ultimately, she says, she wants people to come away from her art feeling “something unexpected. I would like to create an opening in their imagination,” she says.

The *Only Moving Thing* is currently on exhibit until November 19 at the Horus & Deloris Contemporary Art Space in Pyrmont. Enquiries: (02) 9660 6071 or email: caz@horusanddeloris.com.au.

Taking the stage after the altar

LEXI LANDSMAN

JEWISH actor Lindsay Moss is only a month into married life, but for three weeks, he will reprise his role as a promiscuous gay man.

For the second time this year, Moss is starring as one of the lead actors in *Blowing Whistles*, which is currently showing at Darlinghurst Theatre until November 15.

The play, written by Matthew Todd, is a comedy set over one weekend, when the 10-year anniversary of a gay couple over Mardi Gras takes a turn for the worse.

“A straight man trying to be gay is a fairly large challenge. There’s lots of difficult things in acting you wouldn’t do in everyday life, so you take it as another challenge and a new experience,” Moss said.

“The play is funny, moving and it’s for straight, gay or bisexual people. Everyone will find it enjoyable, and they’ll be surprised it.”

Moss has appeared in numerous film and television productions, including *Jukebox Boys*; *Together Forever*; *Father knows Best*; *Postcard Bandit*; *All Saints* and *Home and Away*.

Blowing Whistles shows at Darlinghurst Theatre until November 15. Bookings: (02) 8356 9987; www.darlinghursttheatre.com.



Lindsay Moss stars as Nigel in *Blowing Whistles*.

Longing for more

Concert review

THE BOOK OF LONGING

Reviewed by Shoshana Rubock

COMPOSER Philip Glass’ two-night engagement at the Sydney Opera House offered audiences a glimpse into the diverging world of two gifted and renowned Jewish artists.

Six years ago, poet and musician Leonard Cohen divulged to Glass his newly crafted manuscript of a poetry book, later to be known as *The Book of Longing*. Glass, well known for his compositions for film scores and operas, began to translate Cohen’s poetry into a sensual night of music, art and poetry. The connection Cohen draws in his work is one between the erotic and the divine, and was captured flawlessly through Glass’ evocative composition.

During the concert, Glass, on keyboard, led an accomplished ensemble of eight musicians and four vocalists through a haunting 90-minute performance that soared through the Opera House Concert Hall on October 11 and 12.

With *The Book Of Longing*, Glass has produced a supple, expansive work that blends seamlessly with the dry humour and other-

worldly ambitions of Cohen’s poetry.

Exceptionally striking about the performance was the contribution by award-winning choreographer Susan Marshall. Fifteen pieces of Cohen’s artwork created a backdrop, at the centre of which hung a projected screen featuring rotated paintings, which changed colour through visual effects.

Recordings of Cohen reciting his own verse punctuated the performance and almost always drew chuckles from the audience.

The heavily theatrical performance, fronted by a quartet of highly dramatic vocalists, at times became a bit schmaltzy. But as the audience began to experience the symptoms of yearning for Cohen’s earthly and divine pleasures, the dramatics became tolerable, even appropriate.

The rich musical score was elevated by emotional renderings on the part of the ensemble, which performed solos that told Cohen’s story of longing as effectively as the lyrics themselves.

In this new performance, Glass has created a sensational and thoroughly enjoyable contemporary composition that has thrilled Cohen and Glass fans alike. It was a very worthy addition to Glass’ musical repertoire of which both artists can be proud.



Masters of music ... Leonard Cohen (left) and Philip Glass

Photo: Lorca Cohen

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