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WANDERLUST – A MOVING CELEBRATION OF A 30 YEAR FRIENDSHIP

South Australian choreographer Leigh Warren and two of his company's most experienced dancers head to Japan this Saturday (September 16) in the lead-up to the October premiere of *Wanderlust* - a cross-cultural dance work which teams the Adelaide trio with one of Japan's most distinguished choreographers and two of its top contemporary dance figures.

Two years in the making, *Wanderlust* is a collaborative piece by Warren, celebrated Japanese director/choreographer **Uno Man** & talented screen media designer, **Tetsutoshi Tabata**. Featuring four dancers – **Jo Roads** & **Deon Hastie** from Leigh Warren & Dancers and **Mako Kawano** & **Kaiji Moriyama** – two of Asia's most prominent dance figures – the production is a fusion of dance theatre and contemporary technologies, drawing upon the cultural traditions of both Australia & Japan.

With the two contingents based in different hemispheres – the initial creative development of *Wanderlust* presented both choreographers with a number of challenges.

"We were only physically all in the same studio on two separate occasions," said Warren. "The first time was in October last year when I took my dancers over to Japan – and then again this June when the Japanese contingent spent a fantastic few weeks here in Adelaide. On top of that – we had the language barrier to overcome – but those challenges only pushed us further creatively and we're all thrilled with the end result."

Wanderlust will premiere on October 7 in Yamaguchi (on Japan's Honshu Island) as part of the 2006 Australia-Japan Dance Exchange program which celebrates the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Basic Treaty of Friendship & Cooperation between the two countries. A further two performances will be presented in Tokyo on October 11 & 12 and plans are underway to present the production in Australia next year.

Adelaide's **India Flint** has designed a number of unique **costumes** for *Wanderlust*. Known for developing the highly distinctive eco-print – an ecologically sustainable plant-based printing process giving brilliant colour to cloth without chemical adjuncts – Flint's costumes are artworks themselves. Adelaide **multi-instrumentalist Stuart Day** has composed the music for *Wanderlust* and **Nic Mollison** (also Adelaide-based) will join Leigh in Japan as the production's **lighting designer**.

Leigh Warren & Uno Man have a ten year history, first working together on a 1996 production for the Hakushu Art Camp. They met again during Leigh Warren & Dancers' debut tour to Japan in September 2004. It was at this meeting that the idea for *Wanderlust* was born.

Uno Man is particularly acknowledged for the way he expresses pathos & humour in his dramatic structures through oriental movements. His own company, **Uno Man + Company**, has performed many works on the international stage. Tetsutoshi Tabata studied the Japanese dance form butoh - before becoming deeply involved with dance performance & stage art. The co-founder of "performance unit 66b", combining body movement & multimedia - Tabata set up the visual & sound component of the group under the name, "media drive unit cell", using real time & pre-recorded computer graphics & animation to create different textures, lighting & kinetic effects.

Wanderlust – Japan Performance Details

7 October, 2006: Yamaguchi Centre for Arts & Media, Yamaguchi

11 & 12 October, 2006: Theatre Tram, Setagaya Theatre, Tokyo

Background on Uno Man (choreographer/director)

Uno Man's dance, first influenced by Tatsumi Hijikata's Butoh, has been transformed by performance. Today he has established his own world of dance that can no longer be classified as Butoh. Uno Man's unique style began to take shape around 1985; he expresses pathos and humour in his dramatic structures through oriental movements. Uno Man joined Dai Rakuda-Kan, led by Akaji Maro in 1974. He performed in all of the company's works until 1980 – when he left to start solo activities. In 1982 he formed "Budo-Dan" - forerunner of Uno Man + Company. While presenting over ten works, Uno Man was energetically engaged in "School of Human's Mind and Body". With the company's tour to the USA, Mexico and Canada in 1992 the company name was changed to Uno Man + Company and has been internationally active ever since. His recent works include: Hot Key (1992), Henbai (1994), Megami-N (1995), Shizuku (1997), Doc/Co (1999), Mure no Ao (2000), To be (2001) and Manma (2002).

Background on Mako Kawano (dancer)

Mako Kawano began dancing as a child and has become one of Japan's pre-eminent modern dancers. She studied modern dance under Mizuomi Ikeda, ballet under Emiko Suzuki, and received a domestic internship from the Agency for Cultural Affairs. Since 1987 she has been a member of the Natural Dance Theatre, a company led by Shinji Nakamura, who is a backbone choreographer in Japan, and performs a vital role as a soloist for Nakamura's work.

Background on Kaiji Moriyama (dancer)

Kaiji Moriyama first began his career with a musical theatre company in Japan and then moved to the world of professional choreography. He has worked with a number of leading contemporary dance companies and innovative Japanese choreographers such as Kota Yamazaki, Yukio Ueshima, and Aki Nagatani. He was acclaimed for his performance at the 2001 Edinburgh Fringe Festival, where he was described by Kelly Apter of The Scotsman as "One of the most talented dancers at this year's Fringe. It's worth going for him alone." He has also toured to Australia, Hong Kong, Taipei, Seoul and Tokyo. In January 2005, his U.S. solo debut "katana"(sword) was reviewed by Anna Kisselgoff of The New York Times as "a dance of amazing concentration by an amazing dancer". Kaiji is unique as an artist in that he has expanded his creative horizons and branched into other fields. He has appeared in high-profile TV commercial films, and his first film project, Cha no Aji (The Taste of Tea), directed by Katsuhito Ishii, was the first Japanese film to open Director's Week at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival. Since April 2004, he has appeared on NHK, Japan's public broadcasting station, "karada de asobo (let's play by body)", which is an innovative TV program for kids, broadcast nationwide everyday. Kaiji's style has been likened to a sword, tearing through space with a smoothness and sensitivity which crosses over generational boundaries.

Background on Tetsutoshi Tabata (visual design/screen media)

Originally from Osaka, Tetsutoshi Tabata initially worked in editorial graphics and game design. From the early 1990s, he began working as an installation artist projecting computer graphics onto large kinetic sculptures. Studying the Japanese dance form butoh with Yoshito Ohno and Akiko Motofuji from 1992- 1996, he became deeply involved with dance performance and stage art. In 1994, he co-founded "performance unit 66b" as a result of work combining body movement and multimedia. In 1995, he set up the visual and sound component of the group under the name, "media drive unit cell". Cell uses real time and pre-recorded computer graphics and animation to create different, textures, lighting and kinetic effects. Since 2001, cell and 66b have been developing wearable motion sensor devices to synchronise body movement to the visual and sound media. Tetsutoshi's more recent work involves the design and image creation for PIGI system large format slide projectors. Presentations and performances include the media arts festival Ars Electronica, the Japan Virtual Reality Society, the Adelaide Festival and the Seoul International Dance Festival.

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Issued for Leigh Warren & Dancers by Foster Hill PR & Marketing.

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