

DECADE'S JOURNEY CAPTURED WITH ENTHUSIASM AND COMMITMENT

[Circus 10](#)

TRiPLe8FuNk Dance Company and The Company of University Dancers

at [Maidment](#), Auckland

From 2 Oct 2009 to 3 Oct 2009

[1 hour, 45 minutes approx]

Reviewed by Sue Cheesman, 4 Oct 2009 (www.theatreview.org.nz)

Triple8Funk, who define themselves as a strong Hip Hop/urban dance company, celebrate a decade of dance with their show *Circus 10*. This group, also known as the Company of University Dancers (CUDZ), was founded by Joel Fuentes Gallarde, an immigrant from the Philippines who loved to dance and wanted to share that passion with others.

I certainly got the impression, during the show, of a group that over the ten years valued a sense of community and fellowship amongst its large cast from children to young adults.

The circus theme is used as a vehicle to join the twelve different items together from previous years. This works well, making for a more cohesive show. The performers take advantage of some of the well known circus conventions, especially the element of clowning complete with large feet and slapstick tricks, much to the amusement of most of the young adult audience.

Featured in the themes are countries - namely Japan, India and Egypt - and two fairy tales. The big screen projections act like a backdrop and add to the overall ambience, particularly supporting the ideas chosen.

Alice in the underground (2007) captures my attention with quirky outfits, red heart on tea shirts and net skirts and surreal garden projection. The way the groups reconfigure in this piece is particularly striking. This is one of the many and varied costumes with their different textures and colours that enhance each of the different themes.

Hip hop is the main movement vocabulary of this group, however *Cleopatra* (2004) features a strongly performed contemporary partnering quartet. I particularly notice the relationships changing through the interesting well executed lifts and subsequent resolution.

In *Japan* (2009), a surprise assisted leap from behind and over all the dancers, by a female

dancer who definitely has stage presence and a strong technique, is especially spectacular. (Unfortunately the programme gives no information on the dancers.)

A many-legged group shape that moves in a stop-start action is very successful. The music cuts and sharp movement changes mirror each other to comic effect with hilarious results. The song 'Kung Foo Fighting' will never be the same.

The intricacy and speed of the changes of hand gestures (mudras) in *India* (2009) is polished and dexterous.

The group hip hop numbers are danced with clarity and precision throughout the show. Loko Motion Bboy Crew have a guest appearance, battling with each member individually showing their skills whether that be flips, spins and balances, all vying for the winning spot.

First night gremlins were around; the show started 10 minutes late and some of the scene changes particularly towards the end of the show needed to be quicker to keep the overall pace in tact. However the variety of numbers certainly captures this group's journey, enthusiasm and commitment to hip hop over the last ten years.