

MELISSA TOOGOOD



MELISSA TOOGOOD is an award winning, internationally recognised Dancer and Master Teacher, hailed as “superlative” by *The New York Times*.⁽¹⁾ Having spent 22 years abroad, she recently returned to Sydney, Australia but continues to work between NYC and Sydney. Melissa was a member of the esteemed Merce Cunningham Dance Company. One of the final few who worked directly with the dance legend, she has taught Cunningham Technique internationally since 2007. Melissa is a 2013 & 2015 Merce Cunningham Fellow and an official Stager for the Merce Cunningham Trust.

She maintains her role as Dancer, Rehearsal Director and Artistic Associate for Pam Tanowitz Dance, NYC. She has assisted Tanowitz on numerous creations including works for the Australian Ballet, Ballet Austin, Paul Taylor American Modern Dance, The Martha Graham Dance Company, the Juilliard School, Fall for Dance Festival, the Royal Ballet London, Vail Dance Festival and others.

“Ms. Toogood has had a prolific freelance dance career since the disbanding of Cunningham’s troupe in 2012.”⁽²⁾
— *The New York Times*.

She has performed with Kyle Abraham/Abraham.In.Motion, Kimberly Bartosik, Wally Cardona, Michelle Dorrance, Rosie Herrera Dance Theater, Rashaun Mitchell + Silas Riener, Miro Dance Theater, Jodi Melnick, the Stephen Petronio Company, Sally Silvers & Dancers, The Bang Group: Tap Lab, Christopher Williams, Bill Young, Michael Uthoff Dance Theater, and many others. She has been on faculty at Bard College, Barnard College, Dance New Amsterdam, New York Theater Ballet School and regularly teaches for the Merce Cunningham Trust. She has staged Cunningham’s work on the Stephen Petronio Company, New World School of the Arts, The Washington Ballet, Vail Dance Festival, Harkness Dance Festival and Bard College; and Tanowitz’s work at Princeton University, Rutgers University and on L.A. Dance Project. Toogood’s own work has been commissioned by the Boston Ballet, New York Theater Ballet, Vail Dance Festival as well as choreographing the fragrance launch for Issey Miyake’s *Pure d’Issey*. With her sister Jodie Toogood, she created an evening of work titled *Set A|Part* in collaboration with visual artist Kenneth E. Parris III, presented at The Space Dance and Arts Center, Melbourne and again at Newtown High School of the Performing Arts in 2019. She was a choreographic mentor to Juilliard students during *Unavailable Memory: In conversation between Cunningham & Cage*, presented at Baryshnikov Arts Center, NYC 2022. *Dance Magazine* named her in their *25 to Watch* in 2014 and featured her in the inaugural episode of *Behind the Curtain*, 2015. Melissa has been a contributor for publications such as *Dance Magazine* and *Modern Painters*, and hosted David Vaughn’s *The Dance Historian Is In* at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts 2020. She is featured in Richard Daniel’s *Dances for an iPhone*, and in various films that have been screened internationally including *Cunningham* a 3D film by Alla Kovgan, *Tesseract* a 3D film by Charles Atlas, *I Was Waiting for the Echo of a Better Day* by Jeremy Jacob, and *Every Money Alters and Dancers (slightly out of shape)* by Liz Sargent which screened at the Venice Biennale in 2022 & 2021 subsequently.

Melissa is currently teaching Cunningham Technique for Sydney Dance Company’s Advanced Training Program, and open classes at various locations including ReadyMade Works, Sydney, and Lionheart Dance Company, Melbourne. Most recently she staged Merce Cunningham’s *Field Dances 1963* on young dancers from Seet Dance, presented as part of March Dance Sydney Festival 2023.

Melissa grew up in Campbelltown, attended Newtown High School of the Performing Arts in Sydney, Australia, and holds a BFA in Dance Performance from New World School of the Arts, Miami, FL U.S.A. She now resides in Sydney, NSW Australia.

1. Kourlas, G., (2015, March 23). [Review 'Acatal Size Plus' Sally Silvers's Hitchcock-Inspired Work](#), *The New York Times*.
2. Burke, S., (2019, March 3). [Review: An Abundance of Cunningham at Harkness Festival](#), *The New York Times*.