



Ten Minutes with Jason Lam

Where did you grow up?

I was born in Hong Kong and my family moved to the beige suburbs of Sydney's North Shore.

What is your first dance memory?

I was captivated by the 'Gold Ballerina' at my sisters Rock Eisteddfod, who I incidentally took to my year 11 formal. Alas she had no such interest in me and I have since developed a pathologic suspicion of all golden ballerinas.

When did you begin dancing?

I started ballet at age 16 or so. It seemed like a good idea at the time. It wasn't. I was entirely crap and spent more time falling over rather than displaying any innate grace. For some reason I continued dancing and after four or five rejections from the Australian Ballet School, I took the hint and went to university instead. However I continued classes and gradually moved into contemporary dance where my ability to hurl myself into the ground was a desirable quality.

What is the highlight of your dance career so far?

I'd have to say the creation and performance of Jason Pitt's Inasmuch with Marnie Palomares. As well as performing I was responsible for the complex multi-screen projections. It was a wonderful intimate, collaborative creative experience, a joy to create and perform. Also the creation of my poetic dance film, unfed, which has since done quite well on the festival circuit.

How did you hear about the SCOPE project?

Through the Ausdance Newsletter

What inspired you to apply?

I had recently achieved a spontaneous pneumothorax (collapsed lung and a good name for a band) and needed to, at the very least, prepare a backup plan. Also there were show bags at the talk. I love show bags.

What do you feel you have achieved with the SCOPE program so far?

I wanted to transition into the study of medicine, talking things over with Emily confirmed that and clarified my thoughts about what a transition entails. Prior to taking part in the SCOPE program I had been studying chemistry and physics in preparation for the GAMSAT, the horrible six hour graduate medicine entrance exam. I managed to score unexpectedly decent results (compared to my dire predictions of abject, single digit failure). I am currently preparing for the next barrier – interview preparation and competition elimination. Recently through SCOPE I was able to shadow a consultant and fellow anaesthetist at a major Melbourne hospital and run around in scrubs.

What was the shadowing experience like for you?

It was great fun, but highly unrealistic, which I fully realise. The people I followed are very senior and I wouldn't expect to have a routine or job like that for at least 11 years. It gave me an idea of what I'm working towards though which is great.

What would you like to get out of the SCOPE program?

I'll be well pleased if I get into medical school, and if during that time SCOPE could help me maintain some sort of balance between study and my own artistic practice.

If I was able to grant you any wish what would it be?

I'd love to be the unhinged despot of a small pacific island tending to my army of vampiric bunnies with which to rule Easter and thence the world. Or...I'd love to be taller and quite a bit smarter. Realistically, I'd like a scholarship of money and time, so I can afford the next four years of study, and also pursue my artistic interests. Can I have an extra forty points on my IQ?

What tip would you give someone just starting their dance career?

I was young once and I know that nothing I can say will change their mind or influence them in any way whatsoever. The best thing I can say is to keep your interests wide – you never know where opportunity may come from. It also makes you a more interesting artist. On an unrelated note, the worst or at least oddest advice I was ever given was 'if you see something hanging, pull it'. Highly ill advised.