



Questions answered with SCOPE - Rowan Marchingo

By Andrea Viney

Rowan Marchingo is a performer, a choreographer and a director, with an impressive mix of experience in the dance sector. Right now, Rowan's career in Physical Theatre is exciting and rewarding, allowing him to travel within Australia and abroad.

Performing with Australia's leading Physical Theatre company, *Legs on the Wall*, Rowan has just returned from the 2008 Beijing Games, where he worked as a creative consultant and performer, providing entertainment at the VISA Hospitality Lounge. This year has also seen Rowan direct his first full length work, *Bubble*, in the Sydney Opera House studio.

Rowan was accepted into the SCOPE program in 2007 and for two years, has been seeking guidance, support and professional development. While still actively involved in dance and enjoying the challenges of performing professionally, SCOPE has offered Rowan the opportunity to assess his career and decide on a future in or outside of the industry.

I spoke to Rowan about his involvement in the SCOPE program and how it has assisted him in his career development.

How were you positioned in your career when you started the SCOPE program?

When I started the SCOPE program, my focus was turning to creating my own work and the possibility of working outside of the arts and entertainment sector.

Why did you apply for SCOPE?

I applied to SCOPE in the hope that the program could offer mentorship, advice and support in my endeavors to find work; financial assistance to help me hone my skills; assistance in exploring other opportunities both in and outside of the Performing Arts, and help to develop contacts and find placements.

What is the SCOPE program all about?

For me it's been an opportunity to clarify and focus my career. SCOPE came at a time when I was asking questions about my future. I have been able to investigate the possibilities and think about my five year plan. I can ask those important questions about what I'll be doing and if I'll still be dancing. Before SCOPE, I'd never had the structure and discipline to ask those questions of myself.

What is involved in the SCOPE program for you?

In 2007 my focus was to address short-term employment issues, gain experience in the Corporate Events industry, reignite my passion and direction within the Arts and establish further employment opportunities in 2008. In 2008 I have been focused on fulfilling these opportunities and am currently seeking work in both the arts and events sectors.

What are you currently getting out of SCOPE?

The SCOPE program currently provides me with a sense of support and reassurance in my career as I continue to move forward. It has meant I have been able to see how my skills might transfer outside the dance sector and also look within it and evaluate where I'm at, at this moment. I am currently trying to confirm my employment opportunities for 2009.



Where do you plan/hope your participation in the program will lead you?

I am hoping the SCOPE program will help lead me to a balanced working life in which I can continue to be creative but also make enough money to support myself and my family.

What are the most valuable skills you will take away from the SCOPE program?

The ability to recognise my skills and depth of experience. Also how to articulate and frame these skills in a way that makes me employable in multiple areas.

How has SCOPE benefited you in your career development?

By contributing to the development of the aforementioned skills, and through the support of my SCOPE advisors. It's great to have a sounding board to discuss options and ask those questions about your career. You really get out as much as you put in with SCOPE. If you want to get the most out of the program, the advisors are a great resource and support to you.

What sort of funding have you applied for through SCOPE?

I've applied for training through SCOPE's Professional Development Fund. This has assisted me in a number of ways.

I was given the opportunity to consult with a business manager and write a 'Capability Statement' which articulates my creative skills and makes them accessible to the business sector. This is a really valuable tool, as I've been able to send it out and get work in the events industry.

SCOPE also funded a Barista course to assist with my short-term financial issues. I was able to gain casual employment through this course.

I also completed a short course in 'Running a Creative Business', which was a really useful overview of setting up your own business, from the simple stuff to marketing strategies. It helped me to reframe what I'm doing now and gave me the skills to start my own business if I decide on that option.

I did a Dance Theatre workshop with Kate Champion/Force Majeure which was great professional development. I did it at a time when I was questioning if I wanted to stay in the industry and it really helped to clarify where I was and where I was going.

What are some of your career/life goals that have been realised through the program?

An ability to look forward in my life and create a flexible structure to grow within. This has assisted in identifying my goals and embarking on a journey to achieve them.

Have your outlook/priorities altered or changed since taking the program?

I realised I did not want to be an events manager exclusively, but was searching for a parallel career that I could sink my teeth into and wouldn't diminish the things I still dream of achieving in the Performing Arts.

What would you say to other dancers considering applying for the SCOPE program?

I recommend it for dancers later in their careers. It's a great opportunity to analyse your career and recognise the skills you possess.