



Animal attraction

A former prima ballerina returns to the stage in a very different role, writes CATHERINE LAMBERT

It has been 12 years since Lisa Pavane last danced on stage and she may not be easy to recognise in her new role. The traditional story ballets that made her famous as a prima ballerina have been cast aside for abstract dance. "I'm hoping people don't come along and expect me to be what I was," Pavane says.

"There won't be any tutus in sight. This is a very different vehicle."

Pavane, 49, is one of five female dancers starring in Jack Productions' first work for the year, *Animal*.

Under the choreography of Lucas Jervies, Pavane has no character to explore or even emotional path to reach. Instead, she has been exploring shapes, dimensions and a very different form of musicality.

"The music is lovely, if you can call it music," she says.

"Like the work, it's often a series of abstract sounds which switch from

a definite, booming drum to Chinese influences."

Jervies initially was inspired by Desmond Morris's book *The Naked Ape*, which outlines the evolutionary process and reminded him that, despite apparent cultural differences, the animal connection between us is undeniable.

He chose to work only with women in a quest to portray a very different type of animalism.

"I thought it would be obvious to do a dance piece on the human animal with men," Jervies says.

"But if I could get a glamorous woman to suggest our primal beginnings it would be much more interesting.

"The material is based on everyday actions such as how we sit in a chair, how we talk with our hands, how we apply make-up.

"When you remove the artifice, our movements suddenly become very animalistic."

The work signals a major landmark for Pavane, who retired in 1999 but has been teaching at the Australian Ballet School since 2007. Though fulfilled in her role, she has missed being part of the creative process more than pining to go back on stage.

"Being on stage again frightens me more than anything," she says.

"I've just been thinking about getting back on stage. That doesn't mean pointe shoes and tutus but I'm most interested in being in the studio and moving in a creative way.

"This work is remotely different to what I have done in the past and that in itself made it particularly interesting and challenging. Now in my non-dancing days, to have the chance to go back and explore movement as a teacher also gives me new experience."

Animal, CUB Malthouse, opens Friday.
Book it: www.m-tix.com.au



Animal magnetism: Lisa Pavane is back on stage. Picture: JAY TOWN