




# Monday May 31

## tv preview John Mangan

### Dance Academy

ABC1, 5.20pm

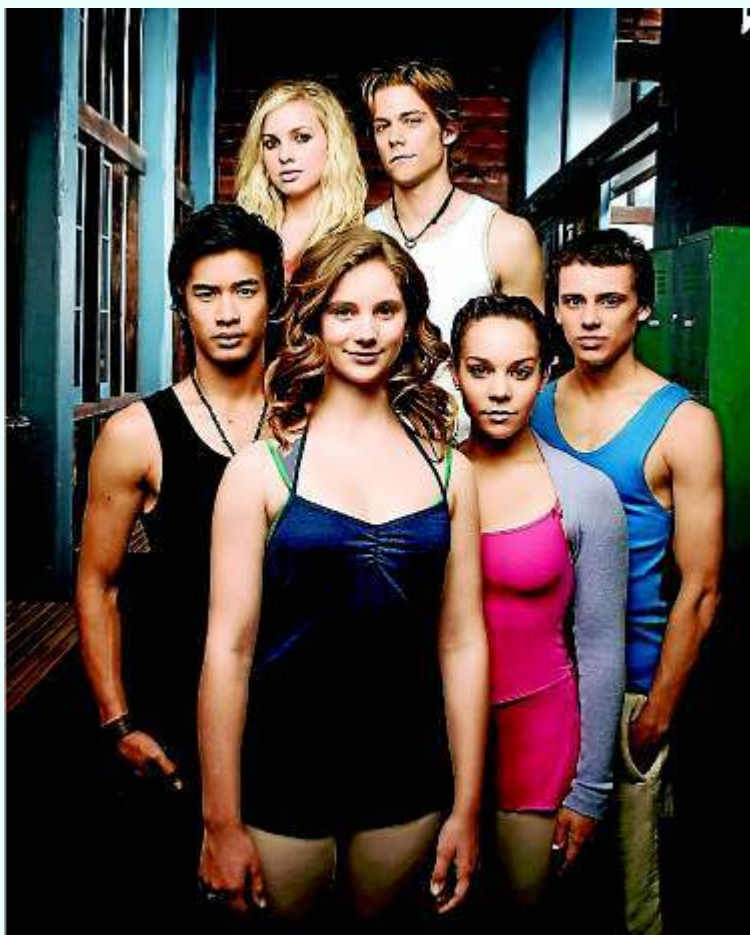
 Ballet, like war, is hell and if you don't believe it, look no further than *Dance Academy*, the ABC's hard-hitting new 26-part teenage drama about life at the coalface of the classical dance industry. It's the story of Tara (Xenia Goodwin), a country teenager with a rare gift of grace and a deep-seated desire to fly through the air.

Achieving her dream of getting into the National Academy of Dance, a ballet boot camp picturesquely positioned on a pier beneath the Harbour Bridge, she confronts a battalion of mean teens and a bullying sergeant-major of a teacher (a gloriously stern Tara Morice) determined to induct her into their bleeding-toed world of pain.

This is a lesson for every Disney princess who has ever donned a tutu and dreamt of pirouetting across the main stage, as Tara finds herself teased by the ballet school boys and undermined by the uber-competitive girls. Fortunately, she's made of tough stuff.

For all the pretending to be ducks turning into swans and so forth, these adolescents love normal modern things like parties and grungy rock'n'roll and, within minutes, Tara has developed a crush on the academy's hottest youth.

It's a co-production with German television and while they've overdone the sweeping picture-postcard shots of the Bridge and the Opera House, *Dance Academy* is well paced and beautifully filmed.



On their toes ... the cast of *Dance Academy*.