

the dance company

n.s.w.



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Photo: Robert Hartman

the dance company (NSW)

Artistic Director: Graeme Murphy
Administrator: Michael Goodwin
Ballet Mistress: Janet Vernon
Technical Manager: Brian McLeod
Lighting Design: Laraine Wheeler
Stage Manager: Gordon Brown
Publicity Officer: Janine Kyle
Wardrobe Assistant: Ivy Johnson
Bookkeeper: Christine Lenton
Secretary: Lee Kirkland

Dancers:
Geoffrey Cichero*
Gary Hill
Jess Jimenez
James McArdle
Christopher Morley
Robert Olup*
Ross Philip
Don Secomb
Graeme Watson
Andris Toppe

Jennifer Barry
Eleanor Brickhill
Sheree Da Costa
Marilyn Ledwidge
Merrilee Macourt
Victoria Taylor
Nina Veretennikova
Janet Vernon
Glenda Morley

Programme Design by Brian Crowther

*Guest Artist

THE DANCE
COMPANY
(NSW)



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The State Government of New South Wales through the Department of Cultural Activities — Minister, The Hon. Neville K. Wran, Q.C.

The Sydney City Council — The Rt. Hon. the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Alderman Leo Port, M.B.E.

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the dance company

A Short History

On leaving The Australian Ballet in 1965, Suzanne Musitz was invited by Dame Peggy Van Praagh to form an educational dance group; by 1971, through a direct grant from the then Australian Council for the Arts, The Dance Company (NSW) had become a full time performing company.

In the interim period the company gave extensive performances expressly for school children, calling itself "Ballet in a Nutshell" and "Athletes and Dancers". Thanks to the joint patronage of The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust and The Arts Council of Australia (NSW Division), the company gave school children an education in dance on a scale hitherto unequalled. During 1972 The Dance Company performed all over New South Wales and the Sydney metropolitan area, giving 239 schools performances, 45 adult performances, and mounting six different programmes in forty-eight weeks. In 1973 The Dance Company made its home in Woolloomooloo and gave its first season at The Elizabethan Theatre, and, later that year, its first Sydney Opera House season in The Concert Hall.

In 1974, Suzanne Musitz turned over the directorship of the company to Dutch born dancer/choreographer Jaap Flier, who commenced work early in 1975 together with his wife, Willy de la Bye. Miss de la Bye acted as Rehearsal and Training Director and gave the company its strongest repertoire and tightest team.

Under Flier's direction the company began to gain greater notice in the performing arts community. Mounting such works as Glen Tetley's "Pierrot Lunaire" and "Circles" and working vigorously with The Australian Opera, collaborating on productions such as "Lakme", Stravinsky's "Les Noces" and "L'Amfiparnaso". Flier lured overseas choreographers such as John Butler, Remy Charlip and Anna Sokolow to The Dance Company and consolidated the dancers into a truly professional group.

At the end of 1976, Jaap Flier and Willy de la Bye resigned their posts with the company, choosing to return to Europe. At this time Graeme Murphy, twenty-six year old dancer/choreographer, was offered the position as Artistic Director. He took up his appointment in November of that year, and, together with Janet Vernon as dancer and ballet mistress, set about formulating a new image for The Dance Company (NSW). Under this relatively new team the company has undoubtedly continued to grow in the manner first envisaged by Suzanne Musitz, keeping its prominent place among performing arts companies. Certainly they have enjoyed success in the first few months of Murphy's direction.

His vision of an intrinsically Australian company is valid and has been partially realised in the seasons already presented in 1977. More and more opportunities will be given to Australian choreographers to expose their creative talents and to benefit from this experience. International choreographers will continue to be invited to stimulate and enrich both dancers and repertoire.



Graeme Murphy and Janet Vernon

At the end of 1976 Graeme Murphy and Janet Vernon departed the ranks of The Australian Ballet to join forces on the artistic staff of The Dance Company (NSW). With Graeme as Artistic Director and Janet as Ballet Mistress they make a formidable team. Each has continued to dance major roles, making their tasks two-fold.

In the short time since his appointment as Artistic Director, Graeme Murphy has mounted four of his ballets and created no less than five new works especially for The Dance Company (NSW). Two of these works, "Scintillation" and "Fire Earth Air Water", can be seen on this programme.

They see no end to this busy schedule as each is loathe to give up taking an active part in productions, appearing in such works as "3rd Conversation", by Murphy, and John Butler's "Carmina Burana", a ballet in which each made their personal debuts this year. Butler's demanding work adds tremendous impetus to Janet's already impressive repertoire of both classical and contemporary roles.

Both Graeme and Janet returned to Australia in 1975 after dancing for several years in Europe with companies such as the French based Ballets Felix Blaska. They freelanced for a year, during which time Graeme choreographed for The Queensland Ballet, The Tasmanian Ballet and even a full length "Papillon" for The Australian Ballet School. They rejoined The Australian Ballet in 1976 and took part in "The Merry Widow" tour of Washington, New York and London. It was also during this period that Graeme created his "Glimpses", based on the world of Norman Lindsay, for the Canberra '76 Festival. It subsequently won The Canberra Times Award. "Glimpses" features a leading role for Janet Vernon, choreographed especially for her, she performs it with an unmatched understanding of Graeme's choreographic language.

For Canberra '77, Graeme Murphy presented another new work, "Tip", this time under the banner of The Dance Company (NSW), as this year the festival saw major companies from each state taking part.

Both Janet and Graeme have given a new emphasis to The Dance Company (NSW), bringing with them the assurance of ever expanding possibilities. Their contribution to the modern dance world has been acclaimed by audiences and confirmed by critics. It can only be envisaged that their fine work will continue, to the benefit of the performing arts community and The Dance Company (NSW).

Photo by Geoff Swinburn



Photo by Robert Hartman

SCINTILLATION

Choreography: Graeme Murphy

Music: "Scintillation" Carlos Salzedo

Harpist: Alice Giles

Music Note:

This is probably the most famous of Carlos Salzedo's virtuoso compositions for solo harp, abounding as it does with both fascinating effects and colourful musical substance. Written in 1936 following a stay in Mexico, *Scintillation* is constructed on the basis of idealised dance patterns. The introduction evokes the stately sarabande. There follows a relaxed yet strongly rhythmical rumba section, then the famous scintillating episode from which the music takes its title. This culminates in a climax of great dynamism and colour which takes us back to a shortened recapitulation of the sarabande. A tango like epilogue prepares the way for the triumphal closing passages.

Scintillation was first brought to the attention of choreographer Graeme Murphy by The Sydney Music Club. He was immediately impressed with the choreographic possibilities of the piece and set to work to complete the ballet which takes the same name. First presented in workshop at The Dance Company Studios in Woolloomooloo, *Scintillation* was performed to the live accompaniment of Alice Giles.

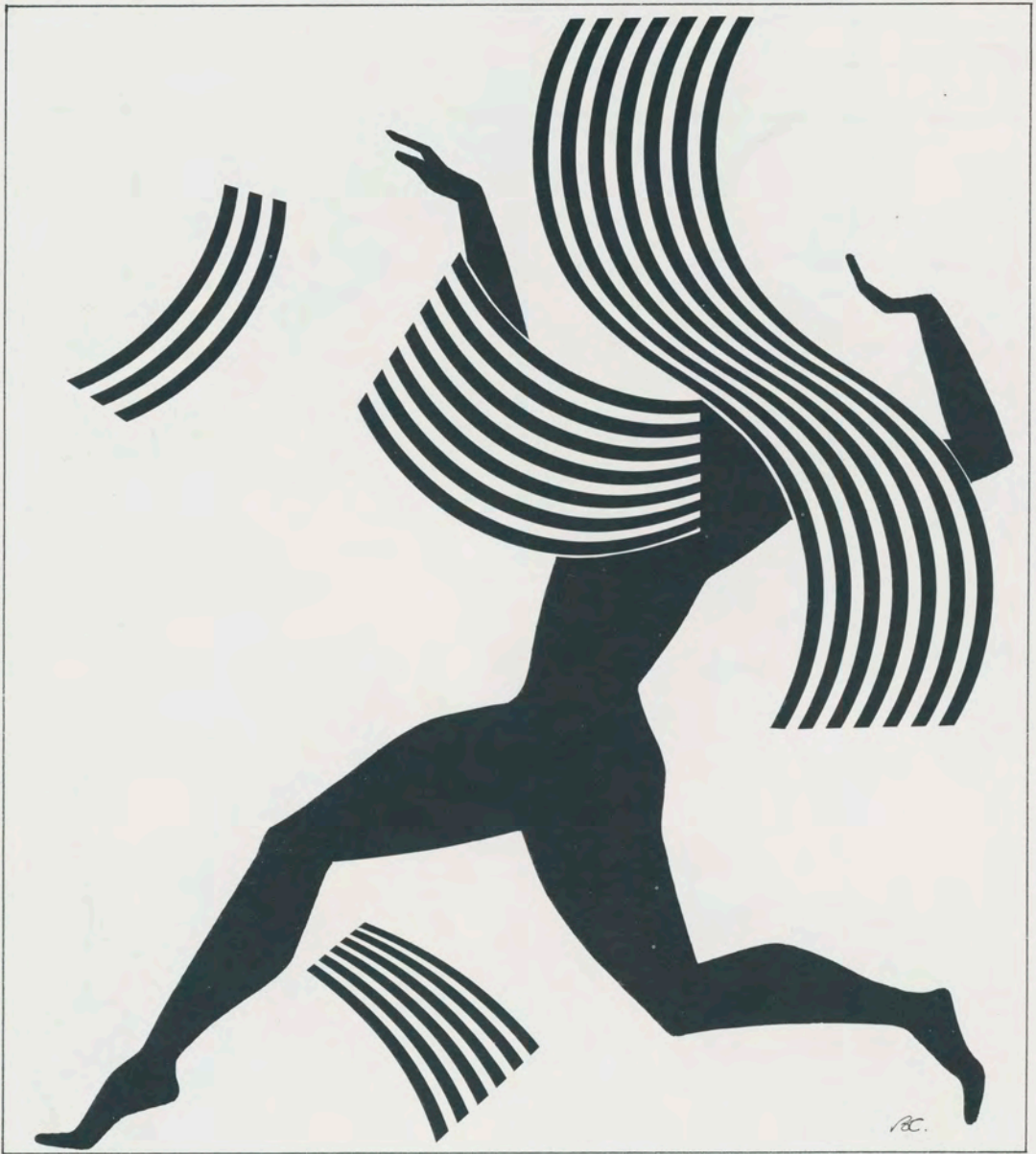


Photo: Robert Hartman

MAHLER PAS DE DEUX

Choreography: Norman Morrice

Music: Gustav Mahler "Last of the Ruckert Songs"

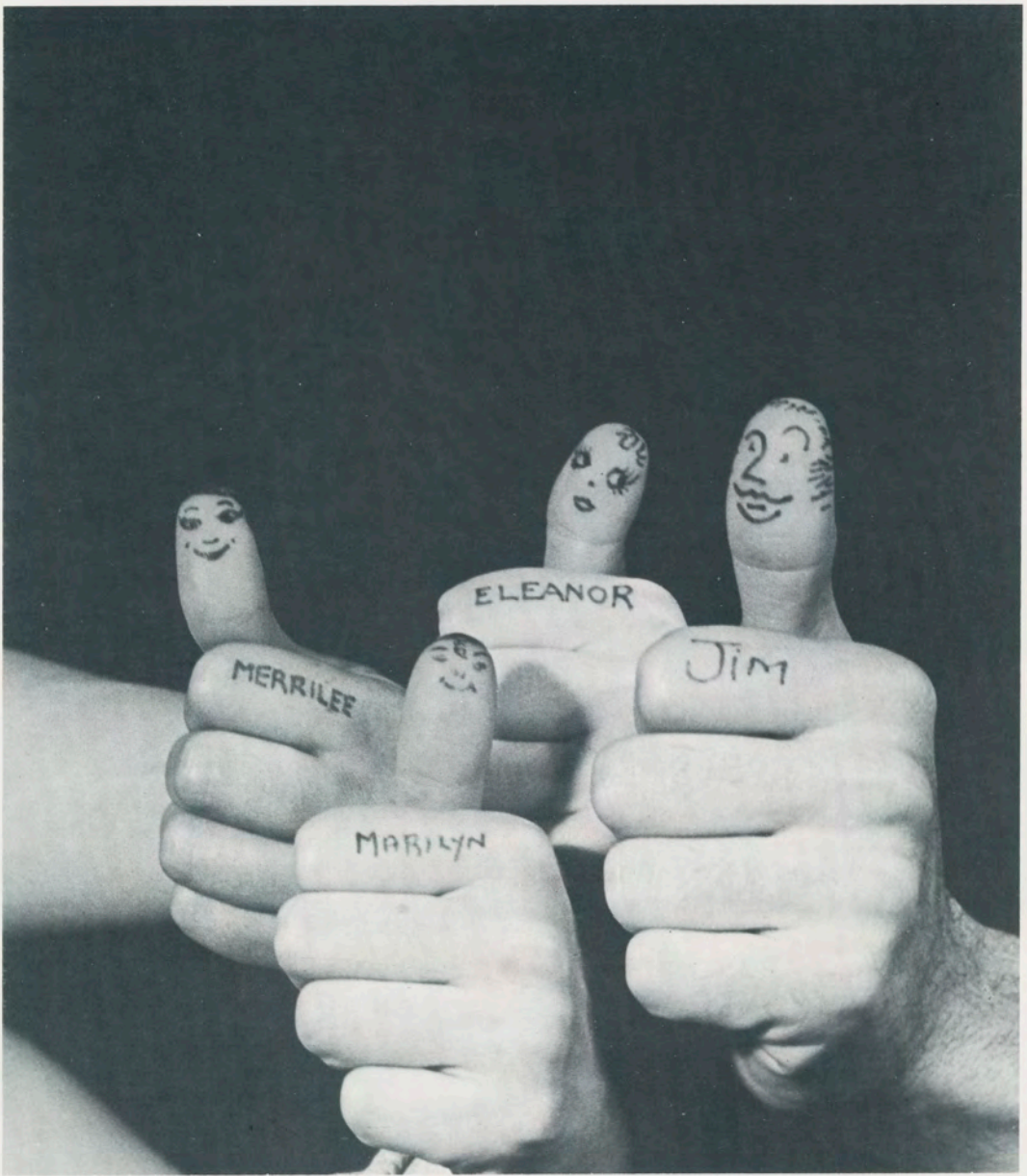


TOCCATA

Choreography: Andris Toppe
Music: "Toccata" Carlos Chavez
Design Concept: Andris Toppe

Note: Mexican composer Carlos Chavez (born 1899) has stated his strong attachment for the musical rhythms of his country's folklore as his inspiration for "Toccata". I have also tried to incorporate a feeling for folk dance into the choreography and have added, to a simple narrative structure, a dimension of passion and human vulnerability.

Andris Toppe



A GATHERING OF VAGRANTS

Choreography: Graeme Watson

Design Concept: Graeme Watson

Musical Collage compiled by Graeme Watson

. . . after having a boiled egg in itself vagrant has no connection romance the individual I had various aspects of suite itself is romance the individual sore toes so that but that which can be seen and people wandering performed in every day as it occurred how many boiled eggs Bette Midler John Cage topsy turvy Reed space in which the dancers occupy the egg was terrible is the principal subject of this suite . . . P.S. Jim wasn't sure about the jump.

G.W.



FIRE EARTH AIR WATER

Choreography: Graeme Murphy

Music: *Canciones Espanolas* John Tavener

Design Concept: Graeme Murphy

Sets and costumes executed by Ross Barnett

Environmental lighting effects from George Gittoes *Rainbow Way*.

Made with the assistance of the Australian Experimental Film and Television Fund.

A filmed record of the dance of light as it is reflected and refracted above and below the ocean.

— George Gittoes

Music Note:

John Tavener was born in London in 1944. His *Canciones Espanolas* were written in October, 1971 immediately after completing his *Ultimos Ritos*. Tavener has used Spanish songs in this larger, earlier work in what he describes as "an almost unrecognisable manner". He decided to use the material "straight" in *Canciones Espanolas*. Tavener describes the "prelude" as a frame growing from the unaccompanied "*Si la noche se hace oscura*", followed by an "interlude" which occurs in the middle, and a postlude at the end, returning to the opening song. Together with the solo voice for the original song is "the other voice" made up of flute, amplified harpsichord, percussion and chamber organ.

"The original music is either anonymous or by Alonso de Mudarra or by King Alfonso X el Sabio" — John Tavener.

Choreographer's

Note:

The ballet was devised to exploit the techniques of the four dancers involved. This is achieved within the choreographic boundaries of a theme based on the elements of fire, earth, air and water.

Graeme Murphy.



Photo by Robert Hartman

GLIMPSES

Choreography: Graeme Murphy
Music: Margaret Sutherland "Haunted Hills"
Design: Christian Clare Robertson

"... a look at the world of Norman Lindsay."

Graeme Murphy

Music Note:

Haunted Hills, composed in 1953, is one of the few works of Margaret Sutherland which contain programmatic connotations. The "haunted hills" of the title refer to the Dandenong Ranges situated near Melbourne.

Haunted Hills falls into two parts, framing a short central meditative passage. The work opens with bold strokes, indicating the grandure of the terrain. There follows a sturdy, but uneven turn of some rhythmical power which softens to a misty meditation on the antique land of an antique people. Marked, *scherzando*, the second section takes wing on a joyous flight of melody, to end the work with the strong jutting chords of the opening.

James Murdoch

Margaret Sutherland's "Haunted Hills" has been recorded by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, conducted by John Hopkins, on Festival L42013.

DANCERS

*Guest Artist



Jennifer Barry



Eleanor Brickhill



Geoffrey Cichero*



Sheree Da Costa



Gary Hill



Jess Jimenez



Marilyn Ledwidge



Merrilee Macourt



James McArdle



Glenda Morley



Christopher Morley



Robert Olup*



Ross Philip



Don Secomb



Victoria Taylor



Andris Toppe



Graeme Watson



Nina Veretennikova