
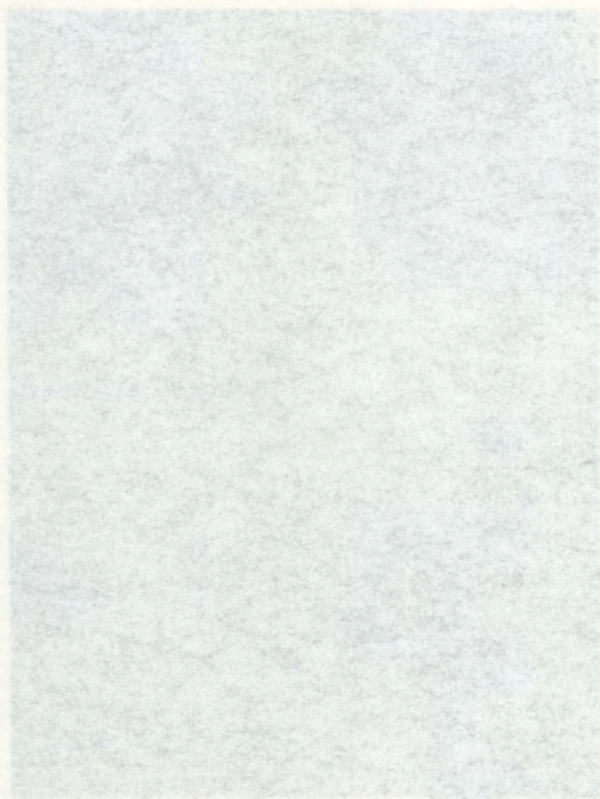


WANG GALA PERFORMANCE
NOVEMBER 2, 1990
IN CELEBRATION OF GRAEME MURPHY'S 40TH BIRTHDAY




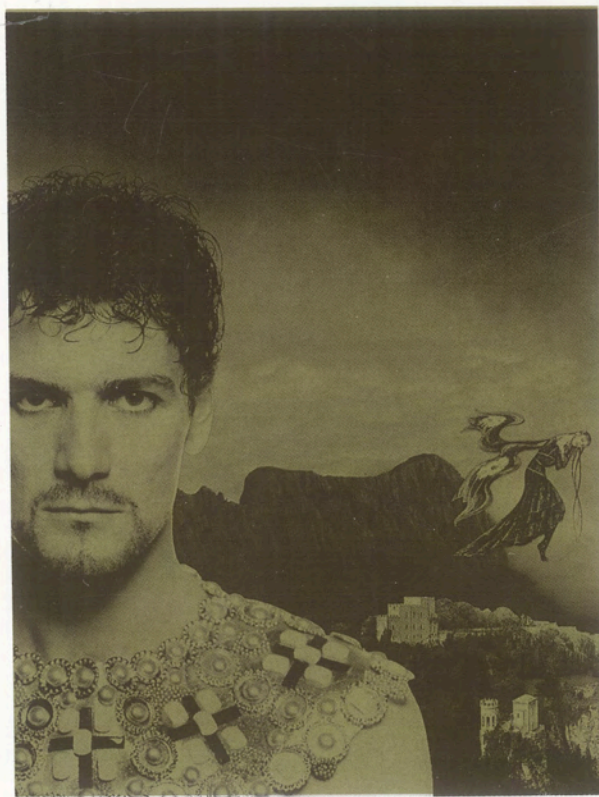
KING
ROGER



the
Regent
SYDNEY

SYDNEY DANCE COMPANY


**KING
ROGER**



SYDNEY DANCE COMPANY

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**KING
ROGER**



SYDNEY DANCE COMPANY

CHOREOGRAPHY
MUSIC 'KING ROGER'
LIBRETTO

SET AND COSTUME DESIGN
LIGHTING DESIGN

OPERA THEATRE

GRAEME MURPHY
KAROL SZYMANOWSKI
JAROSLAW IWASZKIEWICZ
and KAROL SZYMANOWSKI
KRISTIAN FREDRIKSON
RODERICK VAN GELDER

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE

SEASON NOVEMBER 3-24, 1990

PRESENTED BY WANG AUSTRALIA



KING ROGER

Sicily in the 12th Century AD

Act I The Cathedral in Palermo

The Archbishop of Palermo has summoned an ecclesiastical council, attended by priests, nuns and courtiers, before whom he celebrates a dedicatory High Mass. King Roger II, his Queen, Roxana, and his chief counsellor, the Arabian Edrisi, arrive in state and are blessed by the Archbishop who, seconded by the Abbess, demands the King's intervention in a case of supposed heresy. A shepherd has been travelling through the land hymning the praises of an unknown god, and undermining the teaching of the established church. The ecclesiastics demand the shepherd's imprisonment, but Roxana and Edrisi urge the King to see him. The shepherd is admitted and Roger questions him about his god. 'He is young and fair as I,' replies the Shepherd, 'A good shepherd who seeks out the lambs that stray. He will bring joy to those who languish in darkness.' Roxana and many of the congregation are impressed by the Shepherd, but the King and the ecclesiastics are outraged by the blasphemy of the Shepherd's apparent identification with Christ. They demand his imprisonment and death, to which Roger at first agrees, but as he too begins to respond to the charms of the Shepherd he twice changes his mind: at first he banishes him from the island, and then orders him to come that night to the royal palace. Roxana and Edrisi are delighted at the decision; the Archbishop and the Abbess are outraged that the King should ignore ecclesiastic and public opinion, and Roger himself is conscious that by deciding to see the Shepherd again he may have involved himself more deeply than he intended.

King Roger ROSS PHILIP
Roxana, his Wife JANET VERNON
Edrisi, his Sage PAUL MERCURIO
The Shepherd ALFRED WILLIAMS
The Archbishop ADRIAN BATCHELOR
The Abbess LEA FRANCIS
Deacons DALE PENGELLY, STEVEN SUGGITT, JUSTIN RUTZOU
Nuns LOUISE DELEUR, KATHRYN DUNN, CYNTHIA LOCHARD, JAN PINKERTON
Acolytes STEPHEN PAGE, CARL PLAISTED, DAVID PRUDHAM
Roxana's Handmaidens TONIA KELLY, GEORGIA SHEPHERD
King Roger's Guards GLEN MURRAY, GIDEON OBARZANEK

INTERVAL

Act II The Royal Palace

As Roger waits for the arrival of the Shepherd, he confesses his doubts and uncertainties to Edrisi. His first meeting with the Shepherd has exposed for him the insecurity of a power founded on inflexibility and dogma, and the inadequacies of a marriage from which mutual understanding has long been banished. Roxana's voice in the distance reminds him how little personal contact he has lately had with his wife: she urges him to tolerance and understanding of what the Shepherd's philosophy can offer. Guards announce the arrival of the Shepherd and exchange with him the password proposed by the King: 'Password Shepherd — password Roger'. The Shepherd arrives with his four companions. Once again Roger questions him about his origins and intentions. The Shepherd describes his journey from the East, bringing greetings to Roger from India and Asia. God himself summoned him to life and gave him being. At this renewed blasphemy, Roger threatens him with the wrath of heaven, but Roxana's voice intervenes, asking for mercy. The room begins to fill with Roger's courtiers, mesmerised and fascinated by the words of the Shepherd, who now claims to be their saviour and liberator. He and his companions lead the willing people into a joyful dance. Roger, though secretly also fascinated by the Shepherd, is outraged when his wife joins in the dance, and orders the arrest of the Shepherd. He is fettered by the guards but scornfully breaks his chains and summons everyone to follow him to his own land of freedom and delight. Roger appeals to Roxana to stay with him, but she leaves with the Shepherd, followed by the whole court, leaving Roger alone with Edrisi. The call is too strong even for Roger: he casts off the attributes of royalty and decides to follow the Shepherd, but as a pilgrim, not a king.

King Roger ROSS PHILIP

Roxana JANET VERNON

Edrisi PAUL MERCURIO

The Shepherd ALFRED WILLIAMS

The Shepherd's Companions STEPHEN PAGE, CARL PLAISTED, DAVID PRUDHAM, STEVEN SUGGITT

Courtiers ADRIAN BATCHELOR, NICK ROWE, JUSTIN RUTZOU

Court ladies LOUISE DELEUR, KATHRYN DUNN, LEA FRANCIS, CYNTHIA LOCHARD, JAN PINKERTON

Roxana's Handmaidens TONIA KELLY, GEORGIA SHEPHERD

King Roger's Guards GLEN MURRAY, GIDEON OBARZANEK

INTERVAL

Act III The Ruins of a Greek Theatre

Roger's search for Roxana and the shepherd has brought him to the ruins of a Greek theatre high on a Sicilian mountain-top. He arrives before dawn, now almost without hope that he will ever find them, or reach a resolution to his personal dilemma. Edrisi urges him to put aside his doubts and call out for Roxana. When Roger does so he seems to hear in the distance at first her voice and then the Shepherd's. Roxana comes to find him: if he can accept all that the Shepherd has to offer, he can fill up the voids in his life and spirit. Together they kindle a fire on the theatre altar and as the flames rise in sacrifice the Shepherd appears for the first time in his true guise — as Dionysus, the god of beauty, sensuality and freedom. His attendants join in mystic celebration, and Roxana encourages him to follow. As the dawn breaks over Sicily Roger offers up a hymn to the sun, able at last to accept both the Apollonian light of reason and the Dionysian forces, which he now sees as inseparable from his life both as a man and a king.

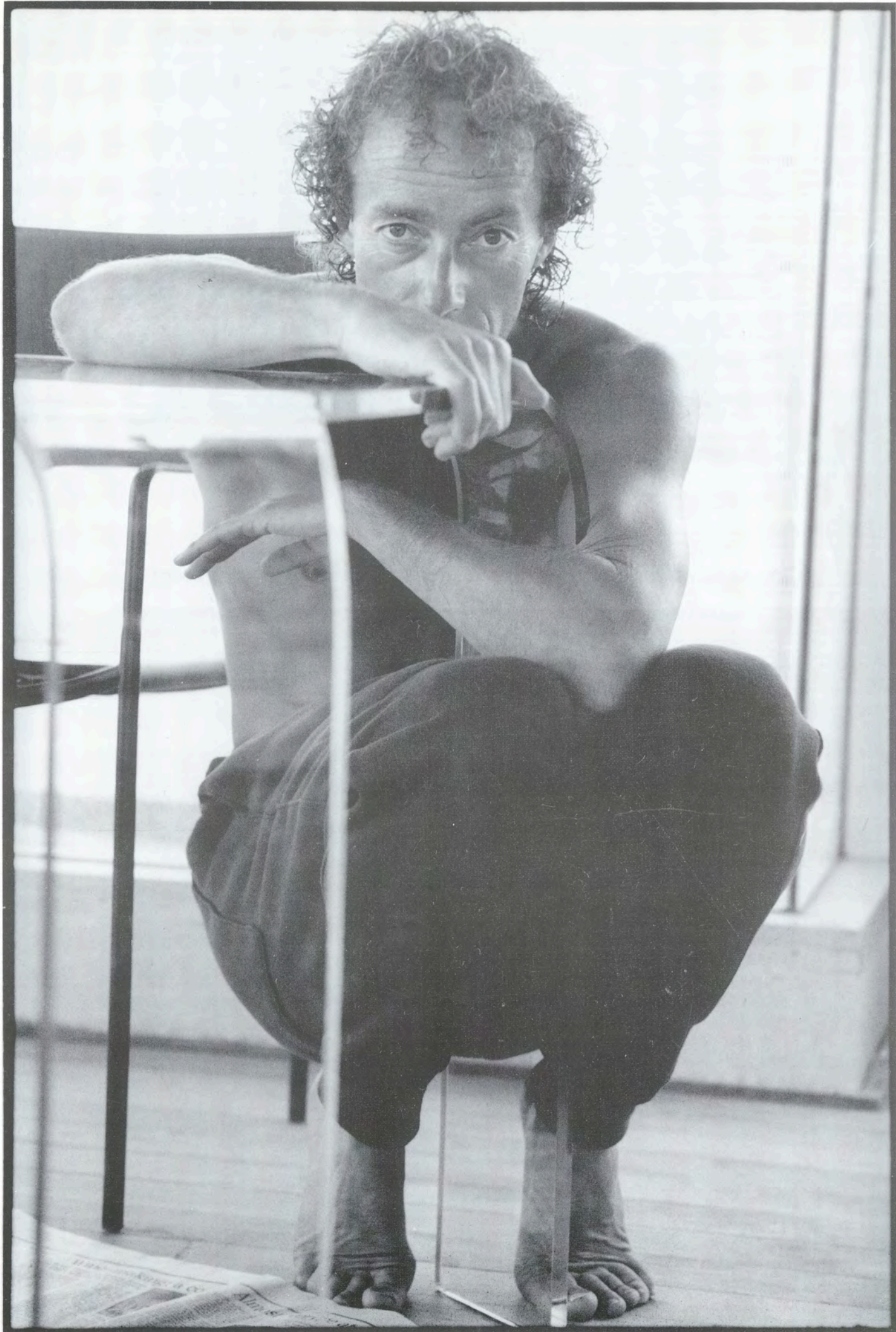
King Roger ROSS PHILIP

Roxana JANET VERNON

The Shepherd ALFRED WILLIAMS

Edrisi PAUL MERCURIO

Bacchantes ARTISTS OF SYDNEY DANCE COMPANY



Robert Erdmann

GRAEME MURPHY

Artistic Director
Choreographer of *King Roger*

JANET VERNON

Associate Artistic Director

The career of choreographer Graeme Murphy and the success of Sydney Dance Company have run a parallel course since November 1976, when Murphy was appointed Artistic Director of what was then called The Dance Company (N.S.W.). It was to become an important occurrence in the history of Australian dance. At the time, Graeme Murphy was only twenty-six years old and still a relatively unknown choreographer, moreover, Sydney audiences had not yet shown a broad interest in contemporary dance. Classical ballet however, had flourished since the foundation of The Australian Ballet in 1962, enjoying wide popularity throughout the country. The excellent training at the Melbourne-based Australian Ballet School has produced a plethora of talented young dancers over the years, among them Graeme Murphy and Janet Vernon, each of whom aspired as students to dance with The Australian Ballet. After graduation, they joined The Australian Ballet where they remained for several years, but in 1971, following an eye-opening forty city tour of the United States, Graeme Murphy left the company and headed for New York to broaden his knowledge of other dance forms and other companies. From New York, he went on to England, where work permits were less complicated than in the U.S., and danced for six months with the Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet before settling in France, where he then worked for two years with the Grenoble-based company, Ballets Felix Blaska.

This very European, very contemporary group of dancers working under choreographer Felix Blaska, appealed to Murphy simply because it was a choreographer's company touring busily in Europe, and the works, mostly by Blaska, explored contemporary music with stimulating originality. Soon after,

Murphy was joined at Blaska's company by Janet Vernon, by now regarded as an exciting young soloist from The Australian Ballet — in fact he had choreographed his first piece for her — *Ecco* — at a workshop in Melbourne. Working together first in Australia under Dame Peggy Van Praagh at The Australian Ballet and then in Europe with Blaska, they developed the knowledge, the ideas and the standards upon which they would eventually build the reputation of Sydney Dance Company.

In 1975, after returning to Australia with Janet at his side, Graeme Murphy began to choreograph full-time. He created works for several state companies most notably *3 Conversations* for The Queensland Ballet and *Papillon* for The Australian Ballet School's graduation performance. Sometimes they danced as guests in the new works, but by 1976, Graeme and Janet both longed to perform more regularly and to work again with a professional organisation. They rejoined The Australian Ballet and danced throughout Australia and on tour to the United States and England under the Artistic Direction of Anne Woolliams. Later that year, Graeme Murphy applied for positions as Artistic Director of The Dance Company (N.S.W.) and of The West Australian Ballet Company. Fortunately for Sydney, as it turns out, he chose to accept the position offered by the Board of The Dance Company (N.S.W.).

Looking back to 1977, the beginning of their years at Sydney Dance, it's now clear that it wasn't long at all before Graeme Murphy's brand of dance began to take hold of the public's imagination, giving Australians the choreographer's company of which it is now so proud. It is fourteen years since Murphy and Vernon first brought their integrity up the rickety stairs of an old air-conditioner

factory in Bourke Street, Woolloomooloo to begin the task of building one of the most talked about success stories in the performing arts in this country. They also brought an impressive mix of imagination, open-mindedness and tireless enthusiasm.

Their artistic policies, stated at the time of their appointments, were founded on a simple and uncluttered vision. Basically, Graeme and Janet set out to assemble the finest group of young dancers possible to perform in fresh and original new dance works. Many of the works were created by Murphy but a vast number in those early years were commissioned from other Australian choreographers with a potent dance language to communicate. Almost overnight, a new audience was found and developed. That audience, still growing today, is typically Australian in its eager response to intelligent and unpretentious theatre, to theatricality and to the high technical standards the Sydney Dance Company always strives to present on stage. Along with this mix of assets there has always been glamour at Sydney Dance Company, as well as a healthy dose of youth, beauty and energy — always abundant in young Australian dancers.

Like many contemporary dance companies in Europe and America, Sydney Dance Company is led by a choreographer who has found a socially relevant yet sometimes extremely personal way of using dance as a theatrical means of expression. Graeme Murphy's repertoire of works is noticeably varied. Throughout the 1980's, for example, each new production was markedly different in style and approach to his two milestone works of the 70's — *Poppy* and *Rumours*. Perhaps it is this measure of unpredictability that continues to fascinate the audience and the critics. Through Murphy and Vernon, Sydney Dance Company has been a champion of contemporary music, introducing the work of many composers to a curious and fascinated public. The work of Australian composers is always prominent — composers such as Barry Conyngham (*Rumours*, *VAST*), Carl Vine (*Tip*, *Poppy*), Richard Meale (*Viridian*, *An Evening*) and Graeme Koehne (*Nearly Beloved*) will always be associated with Sydney Dance Company because of the works created by Graeme Murphy to their music.

Along with a selection of music by Europe's most avant-garde composers — Iannis Xenakis (*Kraanerg*) and Steve Martland (*soft bruising*), Graeme Murphy has also choreographed to some of this century's most romantic music such as Maurice Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloé* and *Sheherazade*, Debussy's *L'Après-midi d'un faune*, Leos Janáček's *Intimate Pages* and Karol Szymanowski's *3rd and 4th*

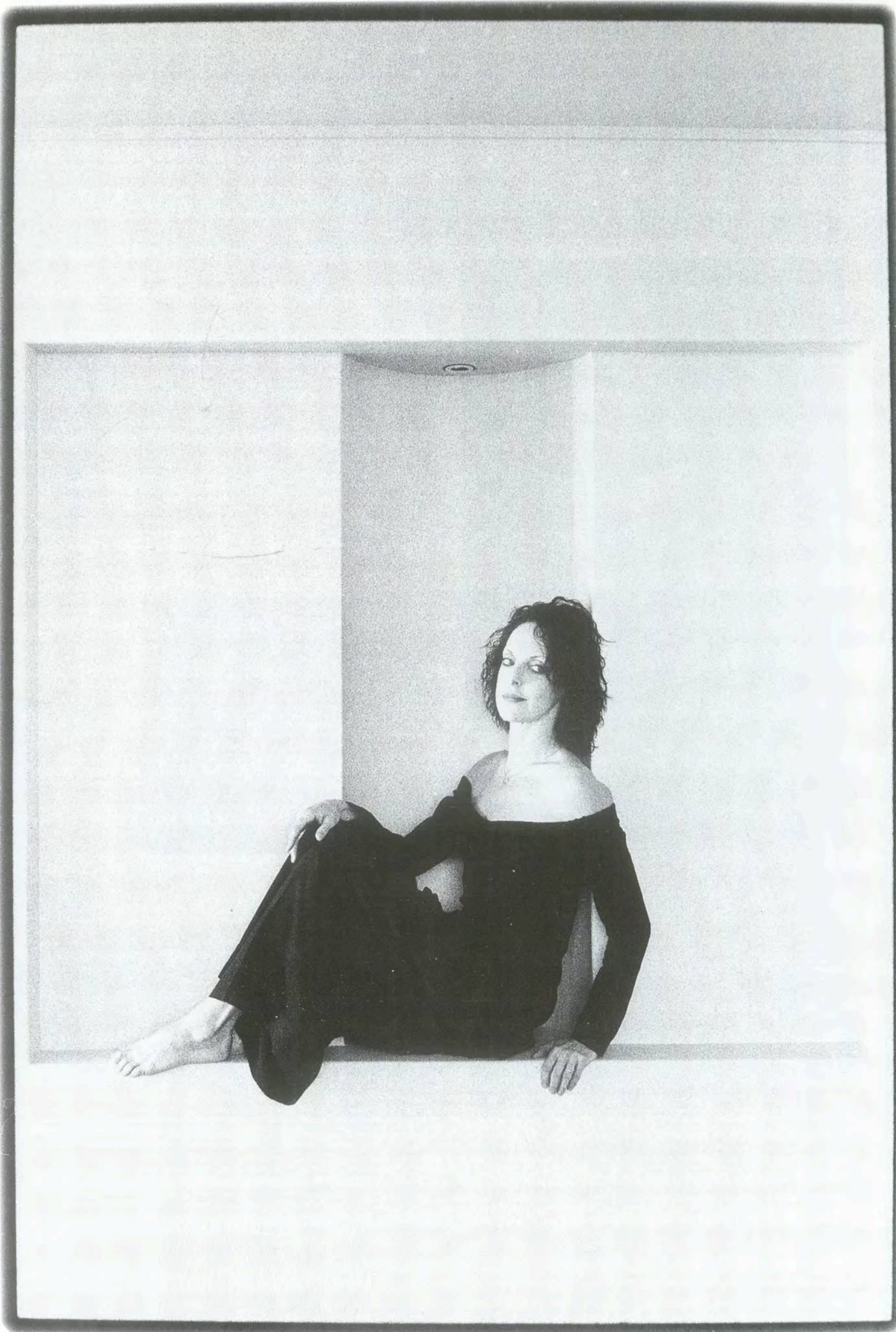
Symphonies, *Mythes Opus 30* and *1st Violin Concerto*.

When Murphy is creating a new work, Janet Vernon's role has three facets — that of performer, associate director and co-producer. She works closely on the planning, moulding and casting of his works from the first rehearsal to the last. It is she he turns to for the most honest and accurate appraisal of his choreographic progress on a day to day basis. She has always totally involved herself in every facet of each project, contributing to the development of a work while simultaneously perfecting her own dancing role.

In the early years of Sydney Dance Company, Janet Vernon and Graeme Murphy often danced together in many of the works from repertoire including *Sequenza VII*, *3rd Conversation*, *Tip*, *Poppy*, *Carmina Burana*, *Sheherazade*, *Daphnis and Chloé* and *An Evening*. As Graeme began to dance less, their appearances together became a rare and special treat. In recent years their special partnership has been glimpsed only in *Shining*, *Late Afternoon of a Faun* and *Evening Suite*, for the 1989 Gala Performance of *The Choreographer Dances*. Janet's pairing with dancer Ross Philip emerged as early as 1977 in Murphy's *Tip*, and developed fully in later works such as *Deadly Sins*, *Sirens*, *Nearly Beloved*, *Some Rooms* and *VAST*. She also counts Kim Walker among her most memorable partners from works such as *Homelands*, *Boxes*, *Daisy Bates* and *Black and Blue*.

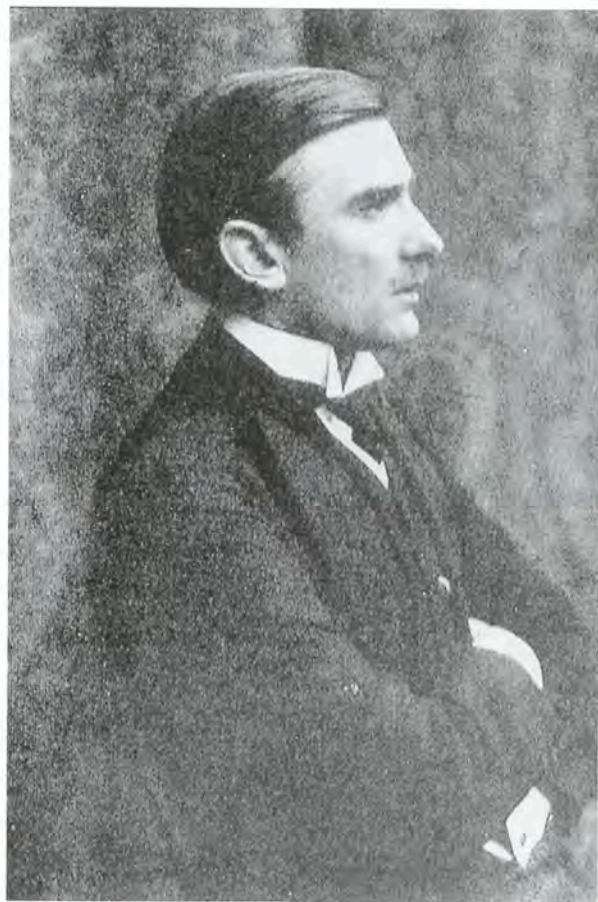
Sydney Dance Company has undertaken eleven international tours since its first, to Italy, in 1980. Such opportunities, cementing the reputation of Australian dance abroad, spring from the international thirst for new talent and new choreographers. Highlights from these tours include three seasons at New York's City Center Theater, a season in conjunction with The Australian Ballet at the Royal Opera House in London, a Command Performance at the Royal Palace in Madrid, and seasons at the top performing arts festivals of the world including those held in Athens, Amsterdam, Istanbul, Lisbon, Madrid, Santander, San Antonio and Spoleto. It is Sydney Dance Company's claim to an original repertoire that has made these opportunities possible, along with its reputation as an ensemble of skilled and charismatic dancers.

As Graeme and Janet look ahead to their fifteenth anniversary with the company, it is clear that Graeme Murphy's choreographic output will continue to be prolific. In 1990, as well as directing *Turandot* for The Australian Opera, he has created three full-evening works for Sydney Dance Company — *soft bruising*, *King Roger* and *In the Company of Wo/Men*, which he choreographed in collaboration with Paul Mercurio, a company dancer who has emerged as an outstanding Australian choreographer from a new generation.



KAROL SZYMANOWSKI 1882-1937

Composer of **King Roger**



Karol Szymanowski was born in the Ukraine on October 6, 1882 at Tymoszwka, his family estate near Elisawetgrad. The landlords of this part of the Ukraine were mostly of Polish origin, and in spite of the wars and changing political regimes, succeeded in preserving the Polish language and culture pertaining to the upper classes. Karol's father, Stanisław Szymanowski, married Baroness Taube, whose family was of Swedish origin though established in Poland for centuries. Their home, Tymoszwka, was known in the region as a centre of culture and arts, and was an open house to all artists.

Karol Szymanowski, along with his three sisters and one brother, enjoyed constant encouragement from his family of a musical talent which emerged in no uncertain terms while he was still a child. Karol composed his first piece at the age of twelve. His brother Felix later developed into a very good pianist and his sister Stanisława into a first class singer. The happy days of childhood at Tymoszwka were interrupted by an accident which affected his growth and influenced his health forever. Falling, he injured one of his legs so severely that a protracted illness followed. Karol was immobilised for several years. Forced into a sedentary life, he devoted himself at an early age to books and music. Though by maturity he had made a recovery he was still

obliged to use a cane. At the end of his life he was severely weakened by tuberculosis. He died in Switzerland on Easter Sunday, March 28, 1937, in the presence of his sister Stanisława and his devoted secretary.

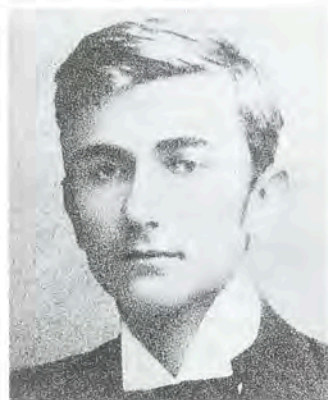
Despite his youthful loneliness brought about by illness, Karol Szymanowski learned to 'escape' through his creative work. He left Tymoszwka for Warsaw in 1903 and remained there for two years, taking private lessons from Zygmunt Noskowski, then considered the most outstanding Polish composer and pedagogue. In 1905, fascinated by the technical virtuosity of modern German composers, he went to Berlin to immerse himself in the musical life of the city and observe new trends. He formed a society called *Young Poland in Music* with other young Polish composers, Fitelberg, Rozycki and Szeluto. After leaving Berlin, he began to travel extensively, his journeys peppered with regular extended stays at Tymoszwka.

The main field of Szymanowski's activity was naturally music, but during some periods of his life he found literary work a necessary artistic outlet. He was also interested in painting and sculpture, and indeed loved beauty in all its manifestations. He had a particularly strong inclination towards literature and was known to express regret that he could not devote himself entirely to it. His interest in oriental philosophy and

mysticism led to the composition of his first opera *Hagith Opus 24* (1912-13; performed in 1922). He began work on *King Roger* in 1918, his second and only other opera, inspired by a visit to Sicily and North Africa four years earlier.

Szymanowski's innovative music is found in various forms: instrumental works for piano or violin and piano, Preludes, Mazurkas, Sonatas, Etudes, Metopes, Masques, Variations, Mythes, String Quartets, Symphonies, Violin Concertos, opera, ballet and songs. His early works were derived from several discernible influences which later fused together to produce in his later years an extremely personal national style which almost certainly went on to influence other composers after him. His works form the most important accession to Polish music between those of Chopin and the present day modern composers of his native country such as Lutoslawski and Penderecki. Even so, Karol Szymanowski could never claim serious attention for his work in his own lifetime. It was not until his death that his music began to receive the recognition it truly deserved. Szymanowski's music is rich and dramatic, often touched with a mystic quality. The *4th Symphony*, or *Symphonie Concertante for Piano and Orchestra, Opus 60*, which is heard in the opening scene of Graeme Murphy's *Shining*, is now considered the peak of the composer's output from the final years. Essentially lyrical, this *4th Symphony* is at the same time symbolic of all Szymanowski's work.

The works composed in 1915 — including *Metopes, Opus 29*, for



piano, *Mythes Opus 30*, for violin and piano (heard in Act 2 of Graeme Murphy's *Shining*), and his *Songs of a fairy tale princess, Opus 31* — mark the beginning of Szymanowski's stylistic maturity. In these and subsequent works the impact of new styles and techniques was successfully absorbed by an evolving musical language of striking individuality. The years 1915-1920 represent his most fertile period, marked by the influence of oriental culture on his subject matter and of Debussy, Ravel and Scriabin on his musical language. Stylistically the opera *King Roger* belongs within this the richest creative period of Szymanowski's life.

The music of his final years possesses a universal dignity, without losing personal style and Polish character. Starting under the influence of German post-romantic composers, he liberated himself through contact with French impressionism and finally succeeded in creating his own style, drawn from the roots of Polish folk music. He was no doubt influenced by strong patriotic feelings when, just after the First World War, Poland regained her independence. Szymanowski found himself in an atmosphere of general exaltation and he was imbued with a sense of dedication to the people and civilisation of his country. In his own words: 'Each man must go back to the earth from which he derives. Today I have developed into a national composer, not only subconsciously, but with

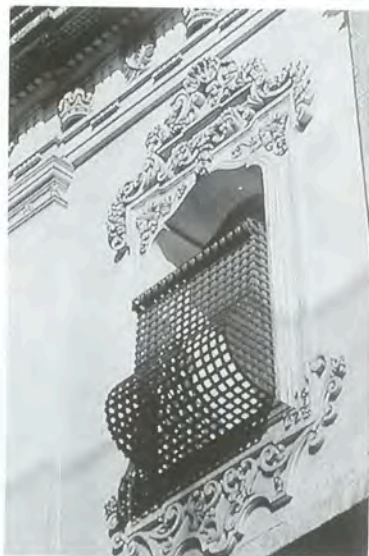
a thorough conviction.' His music demonstrates the crucial distinction between nationalism and the provincialism of other late 19th century Polish composers. He recognised that to become a significant Polish composer he must first become a significant composer and, in reaching this plateau, he could rebuild Polish music from the highest vantage point enhanced by an understanding of the great achievements of Western music.

MUSIC NOTE

Karol Szymanowski's *King Roger* was begun in 1918 but finished only in 1924. The opera was first performed on June 19, 1926 at the Warsaw Teatr Wielki. Emil Mlynarski conducted, Adolf Popawski directed and Wincenty Drabik designed the sets. On August 10, 1926 a review appeared in the *Przegląd Muzyczny*: 'This work will certainly hold a prominent place in our relatively modest operatic literature — but this will only happen after some time, when the evolution of the public taste will have progressed to the point of understanding its beauties and appreciating its true worth.'



The setting of the opera is the 12th Century and the theme is a conflict between the Christian Church and a pagan creed of beauty and pleasure proclaimed by a young shepherd-prophet. Szymanowski was fascinated by the culture of the Sicilian kingdom of Roger II; its blending of oriental thought and art with Christianity, the Norman civilization with remnants of the Greek and Roman influences, as well as by the character of Roger himself. In Szymanowski's story, Queen Roxana is seduced by the allurements of the Shepherd's faith and leaves the palace with him and his followers. Roger, despite a profound inner struggle, withstands the temptation to follow Roxana and the Shepherd. This provides the framework for a reworking of Euripides' *Bacchae* — Roger



emerges 'strong enough for freedom' having overcome the enriching but dangerous Dionysian forces within himself (the identification of the Shepherd with Dionysus is made explicit in the final act). *King Roger* represents the pull of the Dionysian and the Apollonian within each of us.

'Just imagine,' wrote Szymanowski to his cousin Jaroslaw Iwaskiewicz, 'dull gold and the rigid patterns of mosaics as a background, or Moorish filigree — dances — what a wealth of "barbaric" delicious splendour.' The composer's cousin, the poet and novelist who collaborated in the preparation of the libretto, wrote an early draft that corresponded in broad outline to the first and third acts of the final version of *King Roger* as it is now heard. Then, at Szymanowski's request, a central act including Arabian and Indian elements was introduced.

In the course of composition, Szymanowski made a number of revisions, mainly in the 3rd Act, giving importance to Roger's recognition of the power of Dionysus represented by the Shepherd and thereby providing the final denouement with its dramatic significance. Iwaskiewicz's first draft was completed in 1920. In this version, the story ended with the king's surrender, showing Roger following Dionysus and flinging himself willingly into the chaos of the mysterious cult, leaving the sage, Edrisi, alone with Roxana. In Szymanowski's preferred version of events, it is Roger who is left alone, abandoned by his subjects, with the exception of Edrisi, the embodiment of rationality throughout the opera.

The 3rd Act then is firmly centred on the character of Roger himself. It is fascinating that his is the only part in the opera which grows musically. He emerges only inconclusively in the 1st Act, travels through his 'dark night of the soul' in the 2nd, to his final hymn to the sun in the 3rd, when the 'beautiful illusion' has passed and he remains alone but fulfilled.

The opera's ultimate rejection of the hedonistic creed of the Shepherd as an end in itself represents a significant step beyond the 'withdrawal from the world,' much in the spirit of *Young Poland* which is embodied in Szymanowski's earlier songs and music. Yet the richness of *King Roger* lies in the fact that the exoticisms of earlier works, far from being eliminated, are rather placed within a new and broader perspective.

Surviving letters between the two cousins reveal that from the work's earliest stages the element of spectacle was given a particularly important role. In the finished opera this is very clear, both superficially through the notes on scenery that Szymanowski provided, and musically and dramatically through the static nature of the plot and the statuesque, almost archetypal quality of the main characters.

The work indeed may almost be regarded as a series of tableaux, the first Byzantine, the second Arabic-Indian, the last Hellenic, while the choice of Sicily as the setting for this unhistorical and fantastical mystery play in itself confirms the extent of Szymanowski's interest in this Mediterranean civilization.

SICILY UNDER KING ROGER

BY JOHN JULIUS NORWICH

It is always dangerous to read too much of a character into a portrait, particularly when the sitter is already familiar and the portraitist unknown. Dangerous, but irresistible. And even in something so hieratic and formalised as the Martorana mosaic, there are certain inspired touches, certain infinitesimal adjustments and gradations of the tesserae, that bring King Roger to life again before us. Here, surely, is the southerner and the oriental, the ruler of subtle mind and limitless flexibility whose life is spent playing one faction off against another; the statesman to whom diplomacy, however tortuous, is a more natural weapon than the sword, and gold, however corrupting, a more effective currency than blood. Here is the patron of the sciences, the lover of the arts who could stop in the middle of a desperate campaign to admire the beauty of Alife, stronghold of his arch-enemy. Here, finally, is the intellectual who has thought deeply about the science of government and rules with the head and not the heart; the idealist without delusions; the despot, by nature just and merciful, who has learned, sadly, that even mercy must sometimes be tempered in the interests of justice . . .

Already at the time of his coronation Roger had inherited from his father a civil service, based eclectically on Norman, Greek, Latin and Arab models, which compared favourably with that of any Western nation. When he died, he left his successors a governmental machine that was the wonder and envy of Europe . . .

The King: always, everywhere, his people were reminded of his presence, his power, his paradoxical combination of accessibility and remoteness. Himself half-way to Heaven, there was no abuse, no miscarriage of justice too insignificant for his attention, if it could not be settled by those empowered to act in his name. However ubiquitous his representatives, however efficient his machine, neither they nor it were ever permitted to come between himself and the day-to-day work of administration, still less to detract from the mystique that surrounded him, that aura of divine majesty on which, he well knew, the cohesion of his Kingdom depended. It was not for nothing that he had been depicted, in the Martorana, as being crowned by Christ himself.

Emirs, scneschals, archons, logothetes, *protonotarii*, *protonobilissimi* — even the titles of the high palace dignitaries seemed to add to the pervading splendour. Yet it takes more than civil servants, whatever their disguise, to give brilliance to a court; and Roger's court at Palermo was easily the most brilliant of 12th-century Europe. The King himself was famous for his insatiable intellectual curiosity and his passion for facts. With this curiosity went a profound respect for learning, unique among his fellow-princes. By the 1140s he had given a permanent home in Palermo to many of the foremost scholars and scientists, doctors and philosophers, geographers and mathematicians of Europe and the Arab world; and as the years went by he would spend more and more of his time in their company. Outside his immediate family — and he had been many years a widower — it was with them above all that he was able to cast off some of his regality; we are told that whenever any scholar entered the royal presence, Roger would rise from his chair and move forward to meet him, then take him by the hand and sit him down at his side. During the learned discussions that followed, whether in French, Latin, Greek or Arabic, he seems to have been well able to hold his own.

'In mathematics, as in the political sphere, the extent of his learning cannot be described. Nor is there any limit to his knowledge of the sciences, so deeply and wisely has he studied them in every particular. He is responsible for singular innovations and for marvellous inventions, such as no prince has ever before realised.'

Those words were written by Abu Abdullah Mohammed al-Edrisi, Roger's close friend and, of all the palace scholars, the one whom he most admired. Edrisi had arrived in Palermo in 1139; he was to remain there during

much of his life, for fifteen years heading a commission set up by order of the King to gather geographical information from all quarters, correlate it, record it in orderly form, and so ultimately to produce one compendious work which would contain the sum total of all contemporary knowledge of the physical world. Sicily, standing at the crossroads of three continents, her ports as busy and as cosmopolitan as any in Europe, made an ideal centre from which such a work could be undertaken, and for all those fifteen years scarcely a ship put in at Palermo or Messina, Catania or Syracuse, without those on board being examined as to every place they had ever visited, its climate and its people. Their interrogators in the first instance were most likely to be official agents of the commission, but any traveller who had outstandingly valuable information to impart was liable to find himself conducted forthwith to the royal palace, there to be further cross-questioned by Edrisi or even, on occasion, by Roger himself . . .

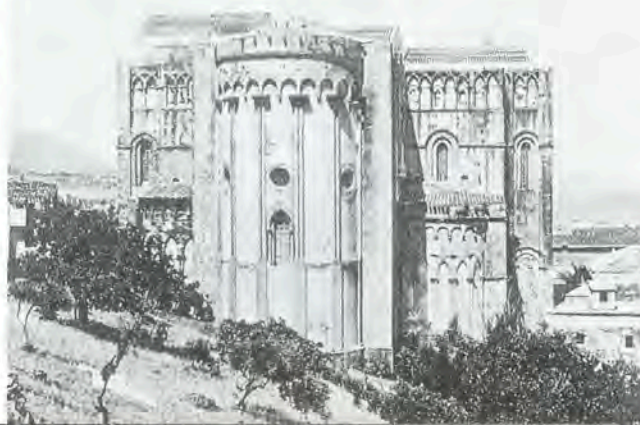
Though Roger's court circle was by no means entirely composed of Arabs like Edrisi, they probably constituted the largest single group; while among the Europeans there were many who had been attracted to Palermo by very reason of its predominantly Arab flavour. There was nothing new in this. Unlike Christianity, Islam had never drawn a distinction between sacred and profane knowledge. During the Dark Ages, when the Church of Rome — following the dire example of Gregory the Great — feared and even actively discouraged secular studies, good Muslims remembered how the Prophet himself had enjoined his Faithful to pursue knowledge all their lives, 'even if the quest led them to China', for 'he who travels in search of learning travels along Allah's path to Paradise'. Muslim civilisation had thus for years been recognised in the West as superior to anything that Christian Europe could boast, especially in the field of mathematics and the physical sciences. Arabic had become the international scientific language *par excellence*. Moreover there were a number of classical works of learning, both Greek and Latin, which had been lost to Christendom through the barbarian invasions or the engulfing tide of Islam and survived only in Arabic translation. By the 12th century, owing largely to the work of Sephardic Jews of Spain, some of these were beginning to reappear in Western languages; but this did not appreciably diminish the need for any serious student of science to master Arabic for himself . . .

Roger has been accused of being himself uncreative, in contrast to his grandson Frederick II for example, or even to Richard Coeur de Lion, a troubadour poet of considerable ability. It is true that he left no literary compositions of his own; it would have been remarkable if he had, since that marvellous flowering of European vernacular literature that had already begun in Provence had not yet spread further afield. Such poets as flourished in Palermo in his day — and there were many — were nearly all Arabs. Besides, the King's personal preference was for the sciences. Beauty he loved, but splendour too; and one suspects that he did not find it easy in every case to distinguish one from the other. Anyway, he loved knowledge more.

Yet to say that he was not creative is to ignore the fact that without him the unique cultural phenomenon that was 12th-century Sicily could never have occurred. So diversified a nation needed a guiding hand to give it purpose, to weld its various elements into one. Intellectually as well as politically, Roger provided that hand. In a very real sense, he was Sicily. His was the conception,

his the incentive; he and only he could have created the favourable climate that was a precondition of all the rest. Enlightened yet always discriminating, he was the first royal patron, focusing the efforts and energies of those around him, never once losing sight of his eternal objective — the greatness and glory of the Kingdom.

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KRISTIAN FREDRIKSON

Set and Costume Designer

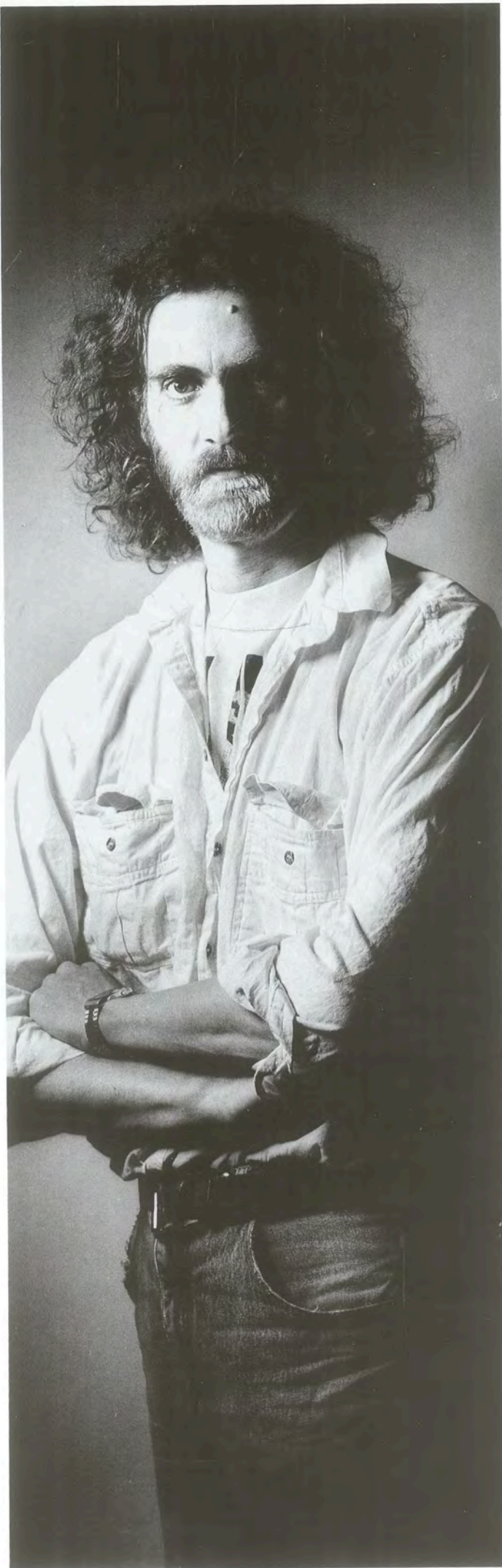
Kristian Fredrikson is noted for the broad range of his work as a production and costume designer through a career that has involved him in opera, dance, theatre and film. Born in Wellington, New Zealand, Kristian began as a journalist and theatre critic before making his debut as a designer in a production of Strauss's *A Night in Venice*. He first came to Australia on the invitation of Dame Peggy Van Praagh to design *Aurora's Wedding* for The Australian Ballet. This was followed by eight years as Resident Designer with the Melbourne Theatre Company in the late sixties. He then began a freelance career prompted by the demands of numerous commissions from a variety of companies. He soon consolidated his reputation for the lavish and intricate beauty of his work for opera and ballet. For The Australian Opera, Kristian has designed *Il Seraglio*, *Falstaff*, *Don Giovanni*, *Manon*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Lucrezia Borgia*, *The Merry Widow*, *Otello* and, most recently, *Turandot*. He has also designed for the Victoria State Opera, The West Australian Opera and the New Zealand Opera. For The Australian Ballet he has also designed *Swan Lake Act II*, *Cinderella*, *Coppélia*, *Night Encounter*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and Graeme Murphy's *Gallery*. For The Royal New Zealand Ballet he has designed *Orpheus*, *Swan Lake*, *The Firebird*, *Tell Me a Tale*, *Winter Garden*, *A Servant of Two Masters* and *Jean Batten*.

Kristian Fredrikson's first costume design for film was *Undercover*, for which

he was nominated in the 1983 AFI Awards. He was production designer for the feature films *Sky Pirates*, *The Magic Telescope* and *Short-Changed*, as well as the television mini-series *The Shiralee*. He created costume designs for two highly successful Kennedy Miller television productions — *Vietnam* and *Dirtwater Dynasty*.

Shéhérazade in 1979 was Kristian Fredrikson's first design commission from Graeme Murphy for Sydney Dance Company. He went on to design *Daphnis and Chloé* in 1980, and then *An Evening*, his first full-length collaboration with Graeme Murphy in 1981. This was followed by an invitation to rework the set and costume designs for *Poppy* for Sydney Dance Company's first New York season. In 1984 Kristian designed Graeme Murphy's *Orpheus* for The Royal New Zealand Ballet and, soon after, created sets and costumes for Murphy's *After Venice*. In 1987 he designed Murphy's *Late Afternoon of a Faun*.

The works in collaboration with Graeme Murphy are thought to be among his finest creations, especially following the success of *Turandot* for The Australian Opera's 1990 season, a production which the company will remount for the 1991 Summer Season at the Sydney Opera House. Kristian's current projects include *The Magic Flute* for The New Zealand Opera and *Cinderella* for The Royal New Zealand Ballet with choreography by Jack Carter.



RODERICK VAN GELDER

Lighting Designer

I see light as a manifestation of feelings,' says Dutch lighting designer Roderick Van Gelder. As a result, the designer says, 'my approach to lighting design is to visualise the emotions prevalent within a production and achieve those emotions by transforming the space and forms onstage.'

Van Gelder has been achieving such transformations with increasing success over the last dozen or so years, working within the disciplines of contemporary dance, classical ballet, musical theatre, rock and roll, and unusual outdoor spectacles. In a major career move that has taken him to the other side of the world, he recently began a residency as production manager and lighting designer for Sydney Dance Company.

He brings a very practical yet intuitive approach to his work. Although never formally trained in any of its disciplines, he began his career in the theatre early, at the age of nineteen, with the Dutch National Ballet as a stage-hand, working his way up the ladder, so to speak, as an electrician, sound engineer, stage manager and technical director before becoming a full-fledged lighting designer in the late 1970's. 'I learned my craft as a lighting designer just by doing it and by watching other designers' work,' he says. One of his more unusual projects was to light the outdoor choreography for a massive spectacle involving large harbour cranes in Amsterdam in 1985.

His career has taken him throughout Europe and the United States with a long list of theatre, dance and opera companies in many capacities — from production manager and technical director to stage manager and lighting designer. Before coming to Australia he was resident lighting designer with the Dutch National Ballet where he worked with Europe's leading choreographers including Rudi van Dantzig and Hans Van Manen. His first lighting design assignment for Sydney Dance Company was for *In the Company of Wo/Men* at The Wharf Studio in August. *King Roger* is his first design for a major Sydney Opera House season.



fr. Dille

- ROGER II -
'KING ROGER' ACT II



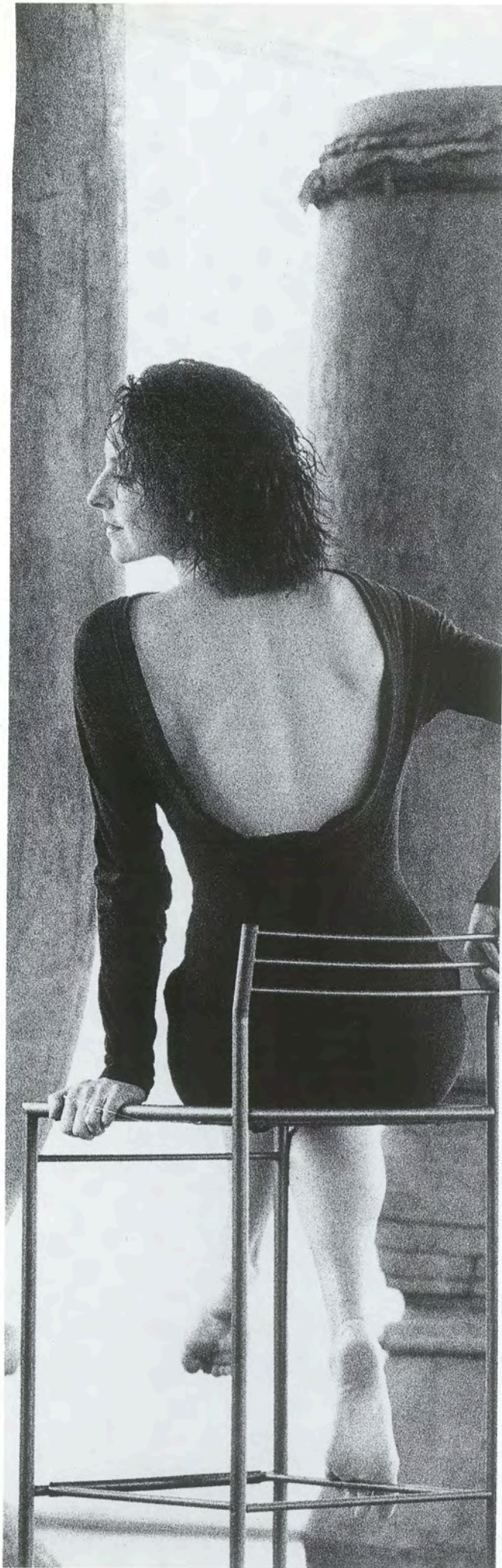
BILL PENGELLY

Dance Master

Bill Pengelly joined Sydney Dance Company as a dancer in January, 1980. He was appointed as Dance Master to the Company early in 1986. Born in Townsville, Bill commenced his professional dancing career with The Queensland Ballet in Brisbane, at that time under the Artistic Direction of Harry Haythorne. He first danced in a work by Graeme Murphy in 1975, when the choreographer was invited to create an original piece, *3 Conversations*, for The Queensland Ballet. In his first year as a dancer at Sydney Dance Company Bill was cast as Dorcon in the premiere season of *Daphnis and Chloé* at the Sydney Opera House. He danced in a variety of works in repertoire during that busy touring year including *Viridian* and *Rumours*. Bill has performed with the company on many of its international tours, beginning with the first tour to Italy in September, 1980. He has created an impressive number of principal roles including The Giant in Murphy's production of Oscar Wilde's *The Selfish Giant*, Raymond Radiguet in *Poppy*, the Young Aschenbach in *After Venice*, the Best Man in *Nearly Beloved*, the Priest in *Some Rooms (The Bathroom)* and in *Wilderness*, *Janiculum*, *Mansions* and *Black and Blue*.

In his role as Dance Master Bill is responsible for the teaching of daily classes as well as the scheduling of guest teachers. In 1988, Bill was assigned the task of Rehearsal Director for VAST, co-ordinating the complex rehearsal schedule for the four dance companies involved in the National Bicentennial Dance Event. Bill assists in the remounting of repertoire for Sydney Dance Company seasons and is often called upon to re-teach the works of Graeme Murphy for interstate and overseas companies, such as Singapore Dance Theatre for which he has reproduced Graeme Murphy's *Sequenza VII* and *Wilderness pas de deux*.

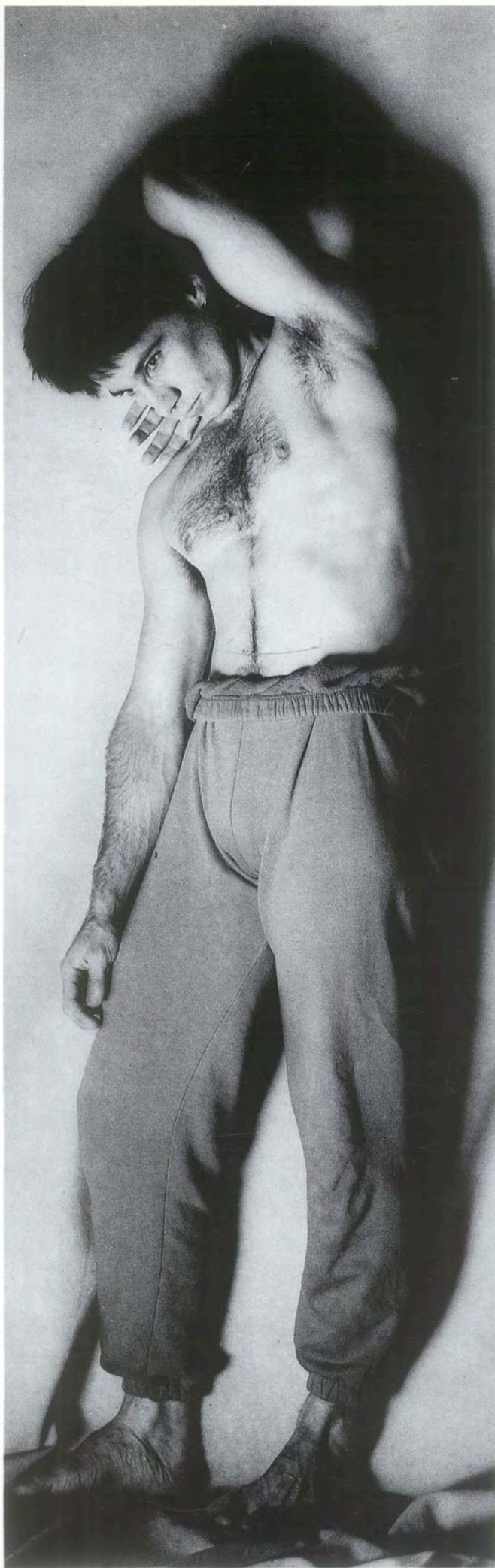
Since becoming Dance Master he has continued to perform in special roles such as Young Aschenbach in *After Venice*, which he danced in New York, San Antonio, Madrid and at the Santander Festival during the Sydney Dance Company Bicentennial World Tour. In 1989, he was cast as Enrico the cafe-owner in Paul Mercurio and Kim Walker's highly successful production, *Cafe*, which was subsequently revived for a return Sydney season in January and a Melbourne season in August this year. He recently danced the role of the proprietor of the brothel in Graeme Murphy's and Paul Mercurio's *In the Company of Wo/Men* for its premiere season at The Wharf Studio in Sydney.



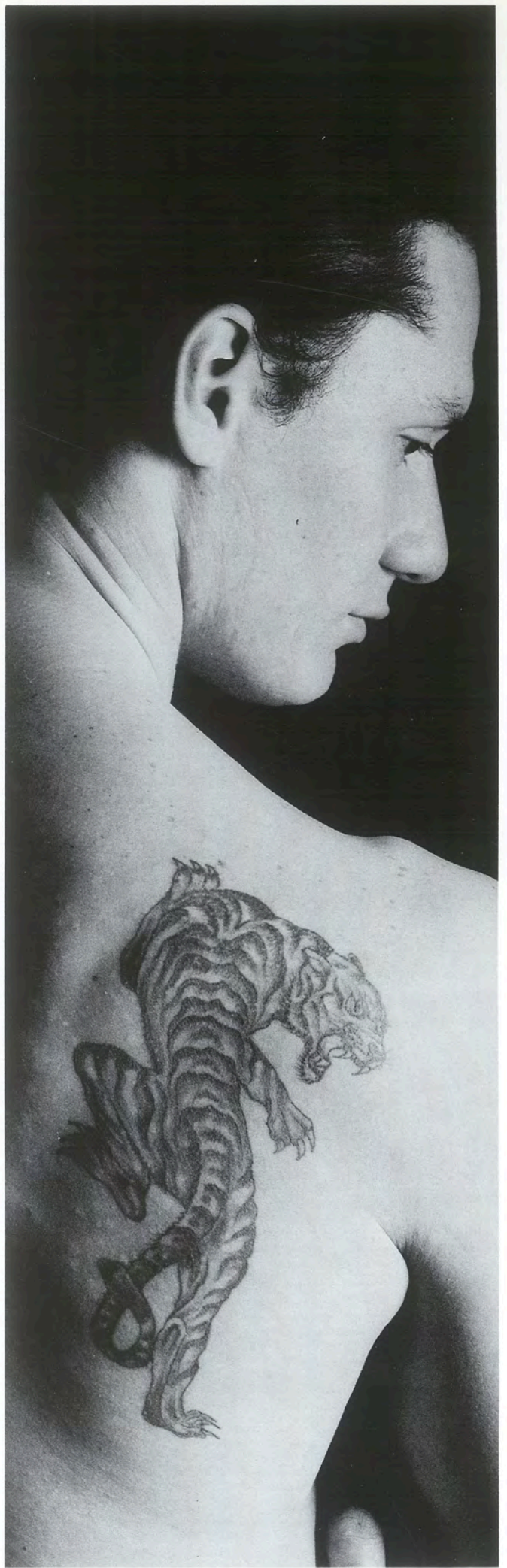
JANET VERNON



ROSS PHILIP



PAUL MERCURIO



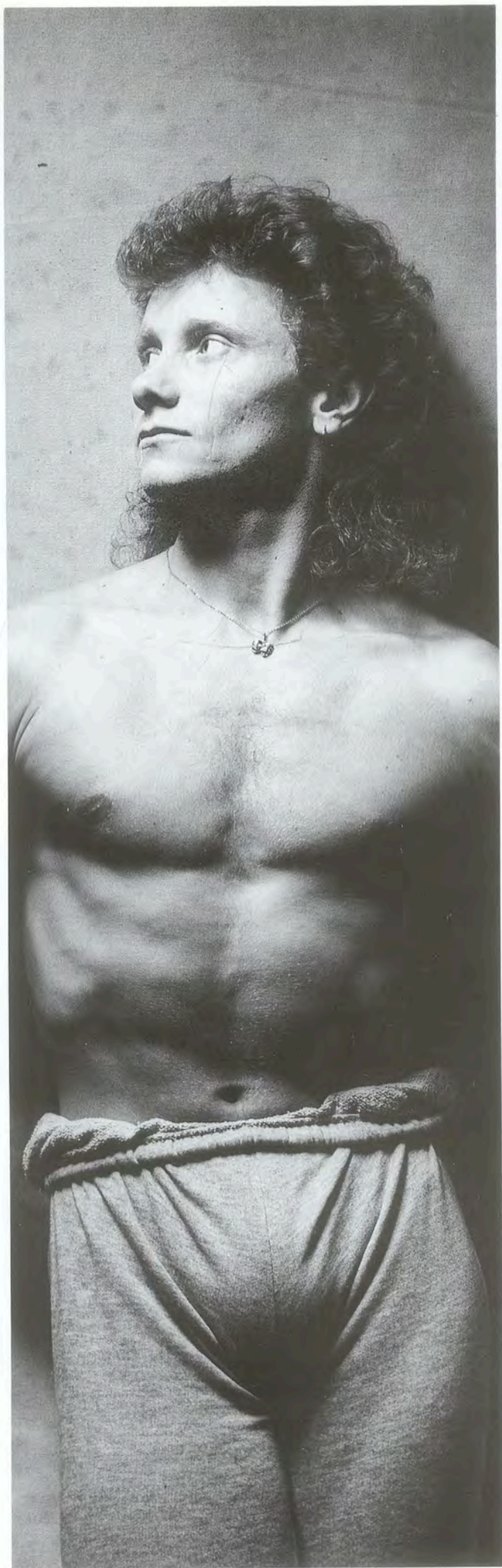
ALFRED WILLIAMS



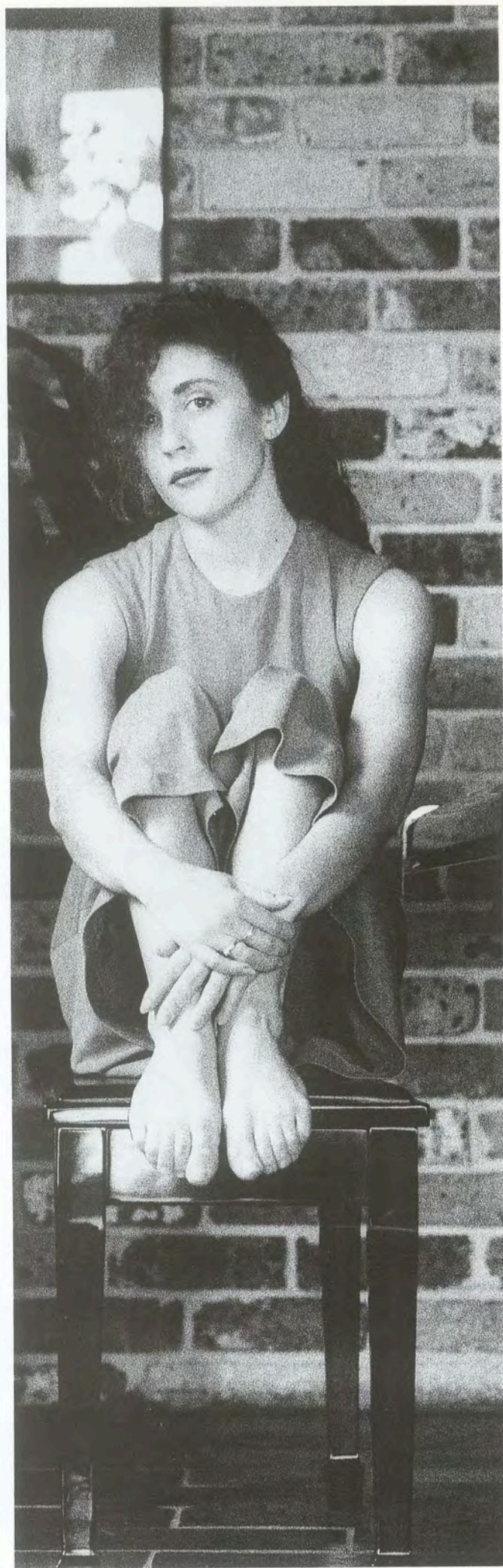
ADRIAN BATCHELOR



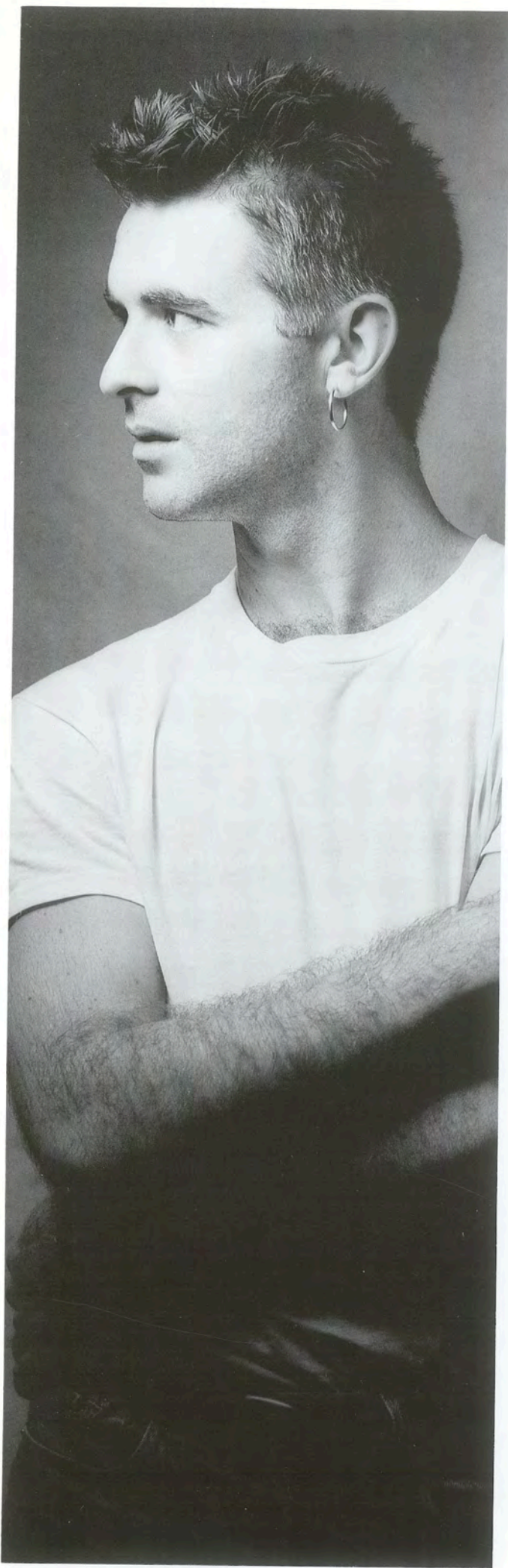
LEA FRANCIS



DAVID PRUDHAM



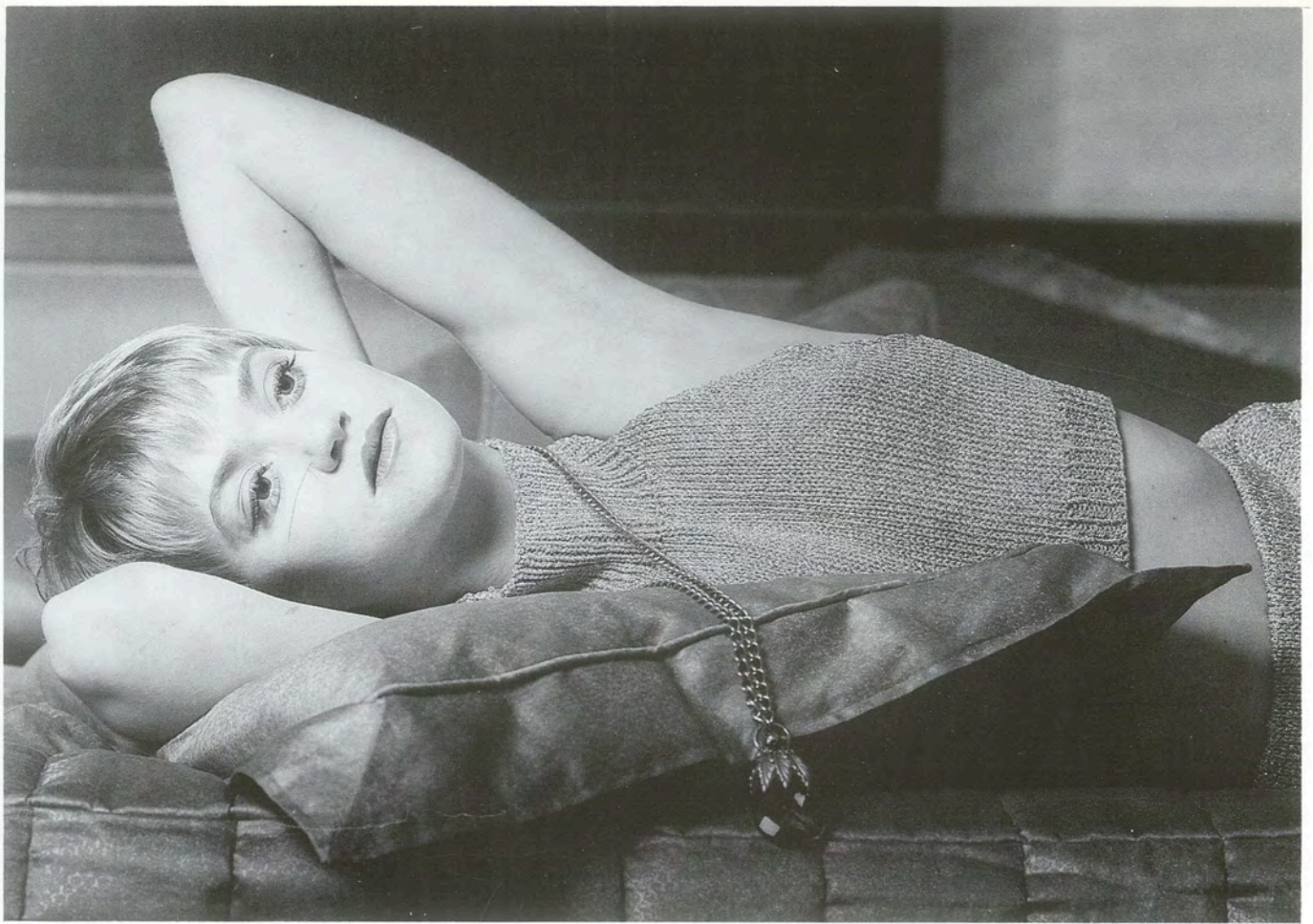
TONIA KELLY



DALE PENGELLY



JAN PINKERTON



GEORGIA SHEPHERD



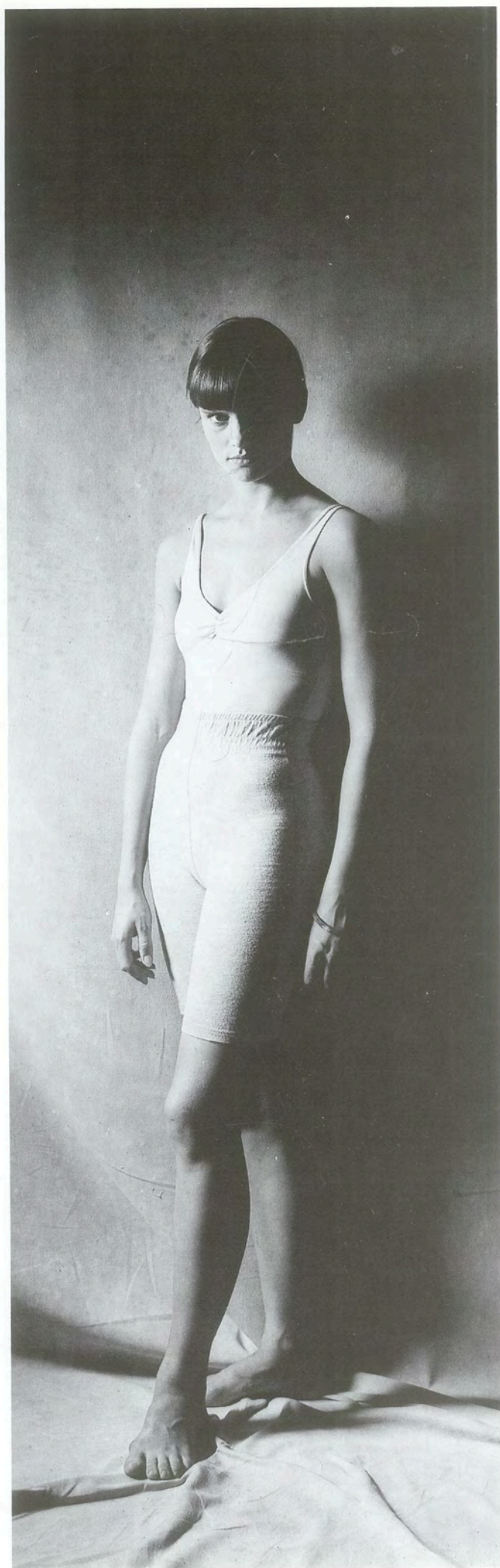
GLEN MURRAY



GIDEON OBARZANEK



LOUISE DELEUR



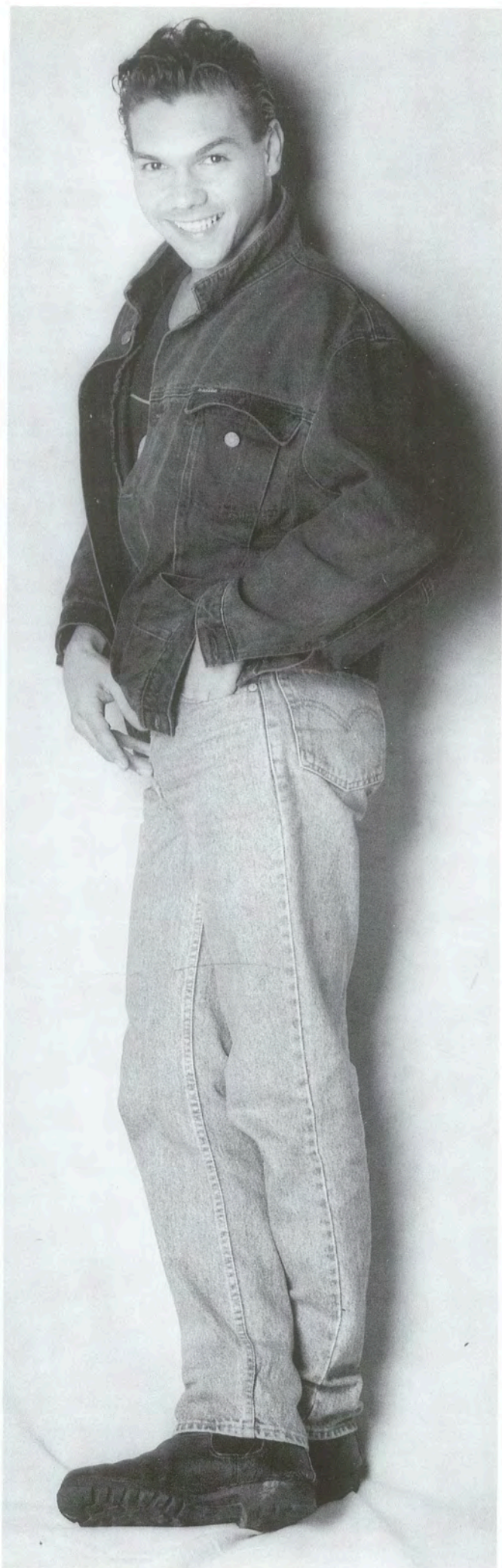
KATHRYN DUNN



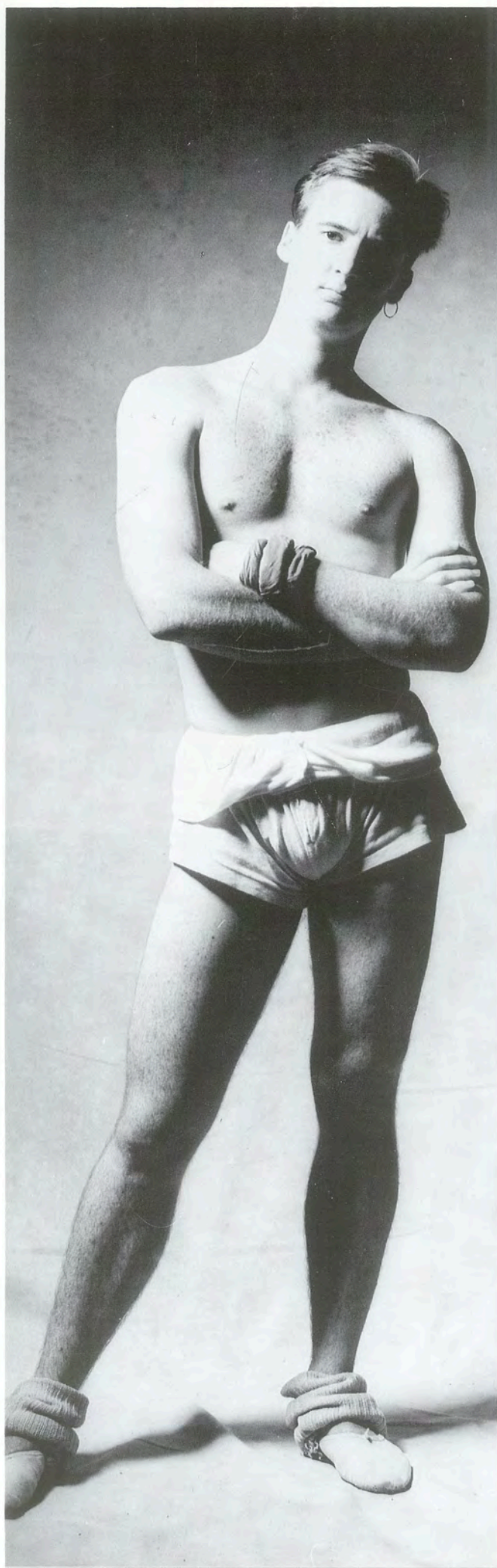
CARL PLAISTED



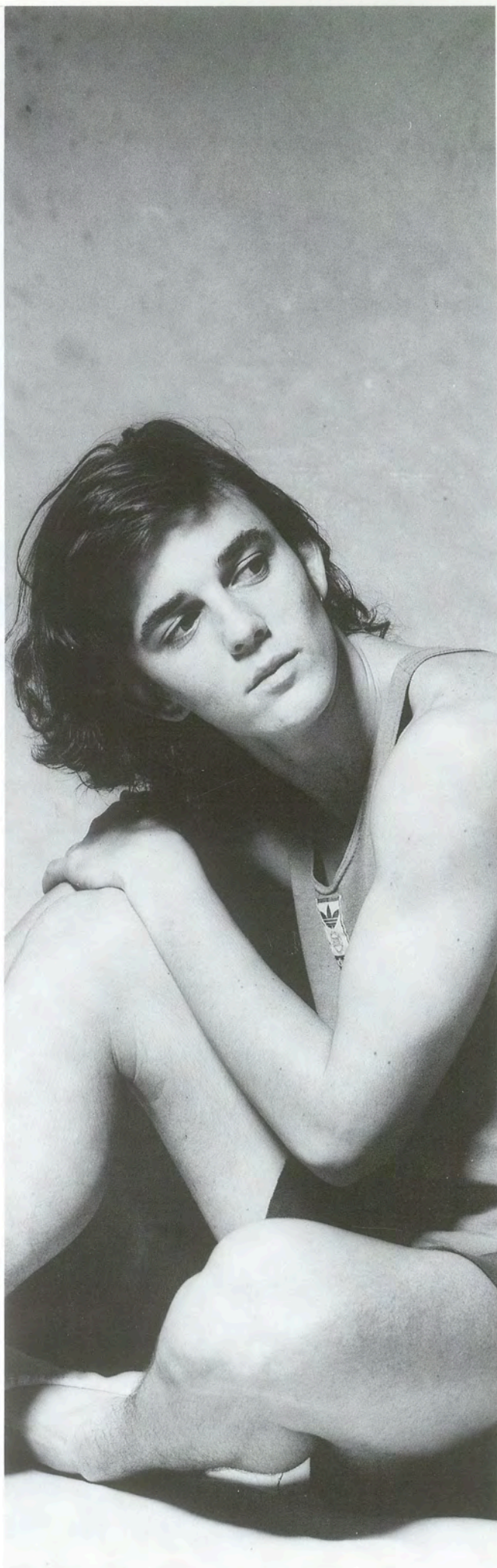
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STEPHEN PAGE



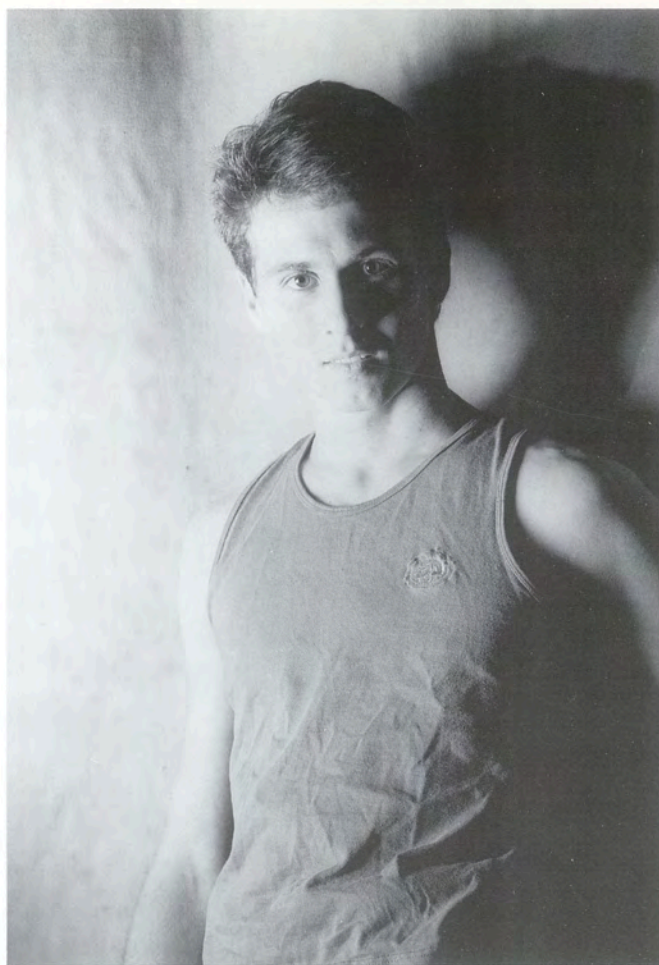
STEVEN SUGGITT



GREG TREDINNICK



WAKAKO ASANO



NICK ROWE



TRACEY-LEE HEILBRONN



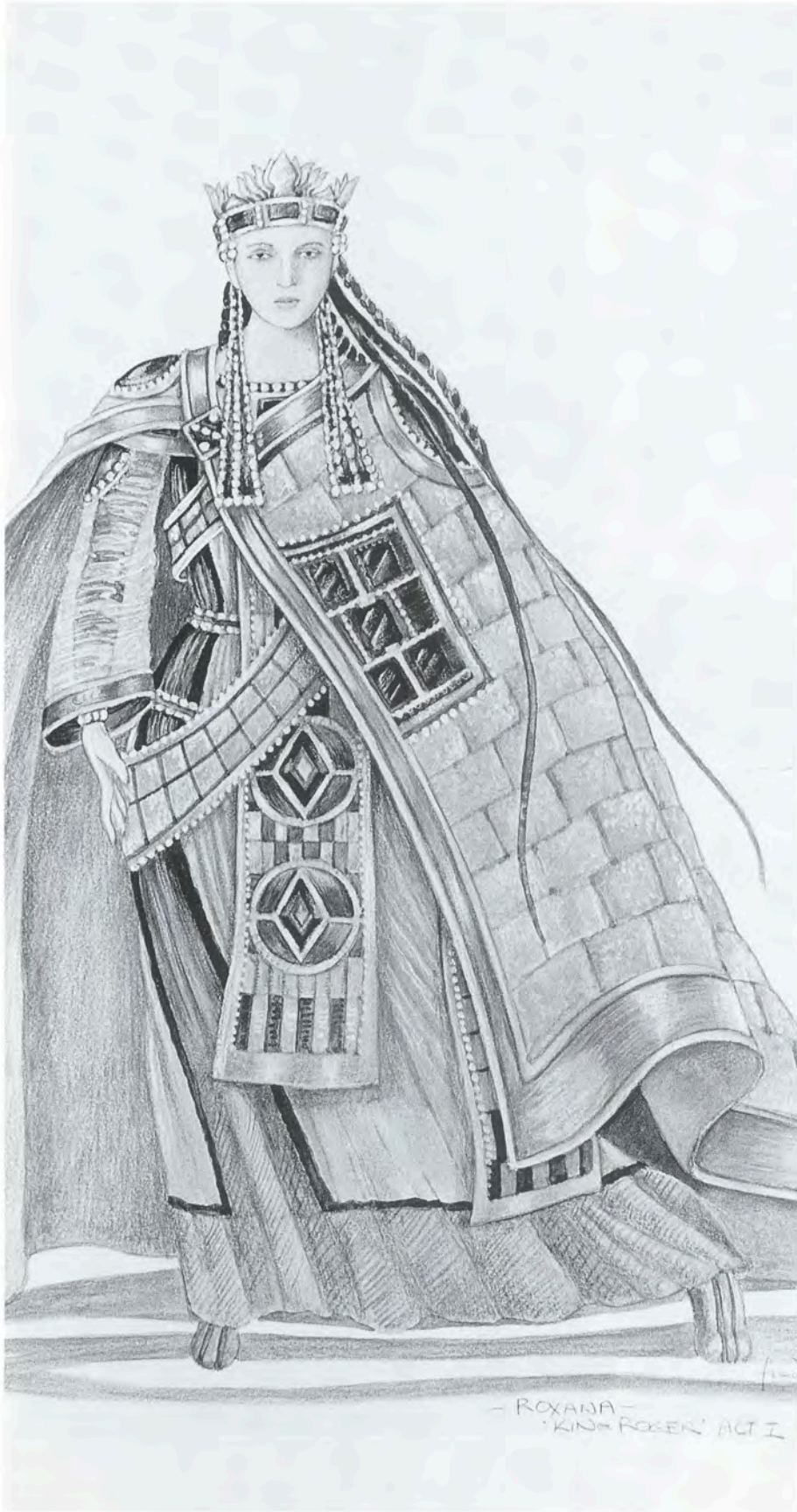
JUSTIN RÜTZOU

Special thanks to The Australian Ballet School for enabling these four final year students to participate in the premiere season of King Roger.



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KING ROGER

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Choreographer and Director *Graeme Murphy*
 Associate Director *Janet Vernon*
 Dance Master *Bill Pengelly*
 Set and Costume Designer *Kristian Fredrikson*
 Composer 'King Roger' *Karol Szymanowski*
 Libretto *Jaroslav Iwaszkiewicz and Karol Szymanowski*
 Lighting Designer *Roderick van Gelder*

Assistant to Mr. Fredrikson *Jennifer Irwin*
 Production Manager *Roderick van Gelder*
 Stage Manager *Melinda Fedorow*
 Assistant Stage Manager *Cynthia Haynes*
 Costumes Supervisor *Rosemary Grant*
 Head Mechanist *Matthew Serventy*
 Head Electrician *Angus Denton*
 NIDA Secondment *Phillip Serjeant*

Costumes made by
Jennifer Irwin
Rosemary Grant
Sheryl Pilkinton
Jamella Hassan
Judith Meschke
John Power
Steven Vella

Sets built by
Big City Production Services Pty. Ltd.
Matthew Serventy, Iain Anderson, Marcus Kelson

Props made by *Jeff Hardy*
 Crowns made by *Marjorie Head*

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Noel Staunton & Derek Coultts

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I wish to thank all those at Sydney Dance Company whose contributions to the staging of *King Roger* have been exemplary, in particular, Bill Pengelly, for his personal commitment to the arduous rehearsals required by the production.

Graeme Murphy

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