

FIREBIRD AND OTHER LEGENDS

FIREBIRD
LES SYLPHIDES
PETROUCHKA

2009 SEASON

Adelaide 24 – 28 February
Festival Theatre, Adelaide Festival Centre
with Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

Melbourne 13 – 24 March
the Arts Centre, State Theatre
with Orchestra Victoria

Sydney 2 – 22 April
Opera Theatre, Sydney Opera House
with Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra



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Cover Liana Jones pictured in the style
of Fokine's original *Firebird*
Photography—Tim Richardson.
Above artists of The Australian Ballet in
Les Sylphides—Photography—Jim McFarlane

BALLETS
RUSSES
IN AUSTRALIA OUR
CULTURAL REVOLUTION



The
Australian
Ballet

Telstra

NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Our season at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris last year was a landmark for The Australian Ballet. It was on this stage in 1909 that Nijinsky, Pavlova, and Karsavina performed in the inaugural Paris Ballets Russes season presented by famed impresario Sergei Diaghilev. The poster from that season, featuring *Les Sylphides*, hangs in the theatre foyer and it was such a thrill to see it as we went into the theatre each day. We began our four-year Ballets Russes celebrations with a season of *Les Sylphides* in 2006 which was lovingly staged by legendary ballerinas Irina Baronova, Anna Volkova and Valrene Tweedie. We now complete the circle by including *Les Sylphides* in our *Firebird and other legends* season, which begins the final year of our celebrations. Sadly, Irina and Valrene are no longer with us, but their spirit and knowledge is alive with us each night as we pay tribute to their memory.

Firebird and other legends features three works that were performed in the first years of Diaghilev's Paris seasons and later made a huge impact in Australia on the first tour by Colonel De Basil's Ballets Russes in 1936. Originally choreographed within three years of each other, *The Firebird*, *Les Sylphides* and *Petrouchka* are a testimony to the versatility and creativity of the amazing Ballets Russes companies.

In his first commission for The Australian Ballet since *Swan Lake*, choreographer Graeme Murphy has collaborated with creative associate Janet Vernon and designer Leon Krasenstein to create a brand-new *Firebird*. Following in the footsteps of Fokine, Bakst and later Gontcharova, this new production gives us a powerful new interpretation of Stravinsky's magnificent score. *Firebird* was renowned for its perfect union of choreography, music and design; also one of the hallmarks of Graeme's works. The creation of a new work is always

incredibly inspiring, particularly when overseen by one of the world's leading choreographers. The dancers have relished this opportunity to work with Graeme and Janet again and I can't wait to see this new vision of *Firebird* on stage.

John Auld also worked with us in 2006 on *Schéhérazade* and *Le Spectre de la rose*. This time he has returned to produce his hugely successful production of *Petrouchka*. This production was first staged for Birmingham Royal Ballet and I would like to thank them for making the magnificent reconstruction of the Benois sets and costumes available to us for this season. John's brilliant direction has inspired the company and has transported the dancers back in time to bring all the gaiety and splendour of this Russian fair to life.

In the 25th year of our relationship with our Principal Sponsor Telstra, I would like to thank them for their amazing support in bringing this huge production to the stage. I would also like to thank Media Sponsor Ovation, The Friends of The Australian Ballet South Australia, who supported the staging of *Petrouchka*, and Ken Reed whose generosity made the dream of a new *Firebird* a reality.

I hope you will join us for the rest of our Ballet Russes celebrations both in and around theatres across Australia. Find out about upcoming events inside this programme or online at australianballet.com.au

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David McAllister".

David McAllister AM



Lana Jones pictured in the style of Fokine's original *Firebird* • Photography—Tim Richardson.

FIREBIRD

for Mum & Dad
With all our love
Janet x
Graeme x
1/3/09

Concept and choreography Graeme Murphy

Creative associate Janet Vernon

Music Igor Stravinsky's *The Firebird Suite* (1945)*

Set and costume design Leon Krasenstein

Lighting design Damien Cooper

*These performances of *The Firebird Suite* by Igor Stravinsky are given by permission of Schott Music Ltd and Chester Music Ltd

World premiere given on 25 June 1910 by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes at Théâtre de l'Opéra, Paris

Australian premiere given on 28 November 1936 by Monte Carlo Russian Ballet at His Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne

World premiere of Graeme Murphy's *Firebird* given on 24 February 2009 by The Australian Ballet at Adelaide Festival Centre, Adelaide

In creating this new production of *Firebird*, I could not help but be historically aware of all that had gone before. Above all, the weight of Stravinsky's musical masterpiece dominated, but equally I was ever-alert to audiences' expectations and appetite for this legendary exotic fare – deviate too far and risk dashing an audience's dreams like a delicate porcelain egg. Consequently, I have adhered fairly closely to the original synopsis, which celebrates the triumph of good over evil. My version, though, suggests that evil seems inevitably to return, in the same way that spring inevitably follows winter. The quasi-religious symbols of apples and eggs (with their pagan/Christian reference to sin and rebirth) are retained. As both birds and snakes come from eggs, my evil protagonist is more serpent-like than the original Enchanter, The Immortal Kostchei. But the Phoenix-like Firebird is, happily, his positive equal.

Graeme Murphy

Cast of characters

Firebird

Tsarevna

Ivan Tsarevich

Kostchei

The Enslaved

Synopsis

The evil Kostchei dominates a barren and wintry world. The only warmth and light is generated by the magical Firebird. When Ivan Tsarevich enters this icy realm and encounters the Firebird, his hunter desire wants only to capture this exotic creature. He succeeds, and when the Firebird begs to be released, he acquiesces in exchange for her gift – a magical feather. This feather is to become his talisman. Kostchei has enslaved the very souls of his subjects, among them the princesses who Ivan encounters. Encaged in their midst is one who he must free, if he is to experience a love which could break Kostchei's hold. In the inevitable battle that ensues, it is the Firebird who enables Ivan to overcome Kostchei and release the entrapped souls. On this elliptical journey, once again the garden blooms – but even in Eden, hidden within, a spectre of evil has already built its nest ...



LES SYLPHIDES

Choreography Mikhail Fokine

Music Frédéric Chopin

Arranged by Roy Douglas*

Décor Paul Kathner

Lighting design Francis Croese

reproduced by John Berrett

*These performances of *Les Sylphides* by Frédéric Chopin arranged by Roy Douglas are given by permission of Hal Leonard Australia Pty Ltd, exclusive agents for Boosey and Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd of London

World premiere under its original Russian name, *Chopiniana*, given on 23 February 1907 by students of The Imperial Ballet School at the Maryinsky Theatre, St Petersburg

World premiere as *Les Sylphides* given on 2 June 1909 by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes at Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris

Australian premieres given in 1907 by the Imperial Russian Ballet and on 13 October 1936 by Colonel W de Basil's Monte Carlo Russian Ballet at Theatre Royal, Adelaide

The Australian Ballet premiere given on 11 November 1962 at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney

Dances

Nocturne

Valse

Mazurka I

Mazurka II

Prelude

Pas de deux

Grande Valse Brillante

Les Sylphides was one of Sergei Diaghilev's favourite ballets, and he selected it for the premiere season of his Ballets Russes company in Paris in 1909. Despite its signature Ballets Russes status, the work actually premiered at a charity function in 1907, two years before it celebrated its great success with the Ballets Russes. Fokine had originally created it for his female students at the Imperial Ballet School in St Petersburg.

Its ethereal beauty and flowing white costumes are undeniably linked to the Romantic classic *La Sylphide*, which was indeed Fokine's inspiration. However, under Fokine the ballet was known as *Chopiniana* – as the movements were inspired by the music of composer Frédéric Chopin – and it is said that he at first resisted Diaghilev's intention to change its name to sound more poetic.

An admirer of the great Romantic ballerinas Marie Taglioni (the first Sylphide) and Carlotta Grisi (the first Giselle), Fokine wanted to revive the spirit of the Sylph in a more abstract form, marrying the different moods

of Frédéric Chopin's music with free flowing movement, rather than adhering to a storyline. Also enthused by Isadora Duncan's drive for a new freedom of movement, he conceived the work as a statement of his belief in the expressive nature of dance, doing away with a plot where he considered it redundant. With *Les Sylphides*, Fokine promoted the now ubiquitous form of the plotless abstract ballet in one act.

Considered a "meditation on beauty", the ballet consists of a series of dramatic dances. Initially much shorter, it soon evolved into an entire ballet. Today, the work is known as a "supreme test of a classical dancer's abilities", with performers required not only to dance with perfection of line, musicality and feeling, but also in absolute unity with the ensemble. The setting of *Les Sylphides* is – just like that of *La Sylphide* – a glade bathed in moonlight. Although Fokine generally discouraged excessive pointe work, the dancers in this ballet are seen on pointe, since he considered it to add meaning to their roles.

After its acclaim with Diaghilev's company, *Les Sylphides* also became a staple classic with Colonel W de Basil's Ballets Russes companies, and – with 175 performances – was the most performed work of their three Australian tours. Peggy van Praagh's production entered the repertoire of The Australian Ballet in its first national season of 1962/63.



PETROUCHKA

Choreography Mikhail Fokine

Producer John Auld

Music Igor Stravinsky's *Petrouchka* (1947)*

Design Alexandre Benois**

Lighting John Berrett

*These performances of *Petrouchka* by Igor Stravinsky are given by permission of Hal Leonard Australia Pty Ltd, exclusive agents for Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd of London

**The Australian Ballet wishes to thank Birmingham Royal Ballet for the use of their sets and costumes

World premiere given on 13 June 1911 by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes at Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris

Australian premieres given on 18 July 1936 by First Australian Ballet at Conservatorium of Music, Sydney, and on 14 November 1936 given by the Monte Carlo Russian Ballet in Melbourne

The Australian Ballet premiere given on 24 April 1970 at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney

Scene 1:

The Butter Week Fair, St Petersburg 1830

It is night with snow covering Admiralty Square, where the bustling carnival takes place. St Isaac's Cathedral is in the background. The traditional 'grandfather' of the fair keeps up a stream of coarse jokes; dancing girls display their skills to the crowd; gingerbread sellers and others hawk wares. An old Showman dressed as a magician announces that he is about to exhibit some animated dolls, and the illusion has in truth something miraculous about it. For these dolls – Petrouchka (a simple-minded Punch figure), a Moor and a Ballerina – dance with such verve as to suggest they are living creatures.

Scene 2:

Petrouchka's compartment in the Booth

In the privacy of his compartment, Petrouchka dances, dreams and suffers; he is in love with the Ballerina and jealous of the Moor. He curses his fate and the old wizard who possesses him. The Showman taunts Petrouchka by pushing the Ballerina into his cell. Petrouchka is delighted but the Ballerina, realising she is in Petrouchka's compartment rather than the Moor's, soon leaves.

Scene 3:

The Moor's compartment

More favoured than Petrouchka is the Moor, a robust fellow who thinks of nothing but his material needs. The Ballerina comes to visit him and exerts herself to charm him. She finally succeeds, but in the middle of their duet Petrouchka forces his way in. He overwhelms the lovers with reproaches but is kicked out by his rival.

Scene 4:

The fair

The fair is at its height. Dance succeeds dance: nursemaids, coachmen, then gypsy girls. A mad round is danced by some men disguised as animals – 'a devil's diversion'. Suddenly the songs and dances are interrupted by shrieks from the magician's booth. Petrouchka emerges, pursued by the Moor, whom the Ballerina tries without success to restrain. The Moor overtakes his rival and strikes him with his sword. Petrouchka falls to the ground, his skull shattered. The onlookers refuse to believe that they are merely dolls. The police are called and arrest the Showman. But he calmly picks up Petrouchka's corpse which, to the vast astonishment of the crowd, is seen to be nothing but a doll stuffed with sawdust. The people disperse. Left alone, the old Showman, in horror, sees the spirit of Petrouchka rising from the roof of the booth.

MIKHAIL FOKINE (1880 – 1942)

One often wonders when the golden bloom of youth and naiveté of a creative genius gives way to the vision that turns imagination and intellectual curiosity into artistic expression. In the case of Mikhail Fokine, born into a brilliant, convivial St Petersburg family which welcomed the arts, sport and adventure, the transition was swift and decisive, writes Lee Christofis.

Fokine's years from nine to eighteen in the Imperial Theatres Ballet School became progressively frustrating and he suddenly railed against the School's inflexible discipline by skipping classes to immerse himself in museums, painting and playing music with friends. Even after graduating into the Maryinsky Theatre, home of Marius Petipa's great works, he found most of the new repertoire wanting, and he became even more dissatisfied. Although he was much happier when invited to teach in the school in 1902, his elevation to a much admired first soloist in 1904 did nothing to dispel any sense of alienation.

In part, Fokine's dissatisfaction stemmed from the knowledge that a living theatre need not be dull or staid. He learnt this at the knee of his brothers – Kolia, who created colourful, impromptu pantomimes, and Vladimir, a delightful comic actor in experimental theatre. Above all he discovered that authentic expression of a work's content was essential to conveying theatrical ideas, especially in dance. 1905 proved a watershed year on two fronts. Fokine fell in love with and married Vera Antonova, a former student who had been smitten by Fokine's graduation performance. Little could he imagine that this reticent girl would become his rock, dancing partner and sharpest critic, pressing him on to reach his aspirations when he was ready to let them go. Then in December that year, he was swept away by American proto-Modernist Isadora Duncan and the deep, free-flowing expressivity of her 'natural' movement. He took up the effect of Duncan's dance but not her rejection of technique.

Throughout these years Fokine began compiling what became a manifesto about how ballet should be made and performed. He postulated that dancers ignore and discourage applause between numbers; that music, dance and design accurately reflect period, locale and plot; that all the arts be equal in new ballets; and that they be no longer than an hour. But it was not until 1907, after a handful of small, conventional productions, that he fully tested these theories on stage. First came *Chopiniana*, which he transformed into *Les Sylphides* with designs by Alexandre Benois. Its basis was a simple poetic impression, which, while dance for dance's sake, paid tribute to the Romantic epoch of *Giselle* and *La Sylphide*. Next was *Le Pavillon d'Armide*, which Benois set in a leafy, Versailles-inspired park, and *Le Cygne* for the remarkable Anna Pavlova. In this *Dying Swan* he demonstrated how even in a conventional costume, the dance would read authentically. He invested it with controlled physical plasticity and palpable emotion, with Pavlova curling into herself and embracing death even as she tried to defy it. Stylised as it was, choreographer and ballerina created a dramatic impression of naturalness. Fokine's ideas found sympathetic ears amongst the Nevsky Pickwickians, an informal group that published the prestigious polemical magazine *Mir Iskusstva* or *World of Art*. Its members included designer-painters Benois and Léon Bakst, writer and art-lover Walter Nouvel, Sergei Diaghilev and others. They argued art and culture over a steaming samovar, many cups of tea and cakes in Benois' picture-filled flat, and later at Diaghilev's.

Le Pavillon d'Armide made the Pickwickians – Diaghilev in particular – take Fokine seriously. Fokine was the needed catalyst to trigger the Ballets Russes. "It was no accident," Benois wrote in his memoirs, "that what was afterwards known as the Ballets Russes was originally conceived not by professionals of the dance, but by a circle of artists, linked together by the idea of Art as an entity. Ballet was the natural theatrical expression of the World of Art ideology, with its indifference to realism or representation, its love of the decorative, the exotic, the magical, above all, its enthusiasm for a kind of Wagnerian 'Gesamtkunstwerk' in which every element would contribute in equal measure to a complete rounded artistic impression."

And what fantastic impressions they created: Nijinsky's breathtaking transformation in *Le Spectre de la rose*, seeming to hang in the air covered in rosy silk petals in Bakst's Biedermeier sitting room; *Schéhérazade's* brilliant orgiastic scene of writhing slaves swathed in silks and pearls against Bakst's explosion of Oriental colours, and the shimmering night-world of *L'Oiseau de feu*, *The Firebird*. Finest of all was *Petrouchka*, where Fokine eradicated formality and old-fashioned mime to create a throbbing town fair in 1830s Russia, where nursemaids and coachmen, burghers and gypsies provided a vigorous visual cacophony before the miraculous metamorphosis of Benois's stage into a magical place where puppets danced, fell in love and fought to the death. Here, at last, was the first truly integrated collaboration Diaghilev presented.



For all Fokine's choreographic achievements, however, it was Stravinsky and his unique musical idioms in *Petrouchka* that the company needed to underpin and arrive at the World of Art ideal. From the start, music had been the company's consistent weakness, relying on various Russian compositions cut-and-pasted into arrangements which Nouvel wickedly called "salades russes".

Worse yet for Fokine, Igor Stravinsky had raised the bar of Modernism and suddenly at the end of this rosy establishment period, Fokine's ideas began to look old to Diaghilev and his wiser critics. In any case, Diaghilev devoted himself to grooming Vaslav Nijinsky – the greatest star of his company and his lover – as his next choreographer. He began to undermine Fokine when Maurice Ravel failed to deliver his long-awaited *Daphnis et Chloé* in time for May 1911. On top of the planned premieres of *Spectre*, the underwater ballet in the opera *Sadko*, and *Petrouchka*, Diaghilev now demanded a new *Narcisse*, also by Fokine, but used Bakst's existing *Daphnis* designs for it.

Petrouchka's illustrious debut did nothing to prevent Fokine's unhappiness the following year. Preparations for Nijinsky's *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* – 90 rehearsals, 'ugly' movement Fokine regarded as "not ballet" and its so-called obscene ending – used up dancers Fokine wanted for *Daphnis*. Diaghilev now wilfully sabotaged *Daphnis* by scheduling the premiere at an unannounced starting time of 7.00 pm, when no one would be in the theatre. Fokine

argued vehemently with Diaghilev, told him that he'd compromised himself by favouring the untried Nijinsky, and insulted him to the core by calling him a bugger. *Daphnis* was not the success Fokine anticipated at the end of four seasons as the company's sole choreographer. Years later he wrote "[*Daphnis*] was destined to remain the most sorrowful work of my entire life." He resigned from the Ballets Russes embittered, like Benois, by the knowledge that it was he, Fokine, who gave Diaghilev the ballets, the basis for his enterprise and his own career.

Things between Diaghilev and Fokine seemed irreparable, but Nijinsky's precipitate marriage in September 1913, during the company's South American tour brought on a new crisis. An emotionally shattered Diaghilev severed all relations with his lover and left the company without a choreographer. With soothing phrases Diaghilev cajoled Fokine to return for two more seasons, and once again Fokine was superseded by a Diaghilev protégé, Léonide Massine. Then in 1916 Diaghilev left for America without telling Fokine or paying him for his last season, or for his wife Vera's many performances in it. One last Diaghilev betrayal lay in store. He invited Fokine to rejoin the company in 1919. Fokine cabled Diaghilev that he would not discuss any arrangements until Diaghilev honoured his previous contract. Diaghilev did not and they never worked together again.

The Fokines made a long and fruitful career right up to Mikhail's death in 1942. They created new ballets for the Ballets Russes companies

after Diaghilev died in 1929, and even joined Wassily de Basil's dancers briefly in Australia. They worked in opera houses, stadiums, even New York's Ziegfeld Follies, and made a secure teaching life in New York where they raised their only child, Vitale.

Mikhail Fokine remained perennially mercurial – difficult, exorbitant in his demands, but personally refined, charming and kind – a paradoxical personality, not unlike many other creative giants of the Ballets Russes.

Lee Christofis is Curator of Dance at the National Library of Australia

Clockwise from top:

Margot Fonteyn (1919 - 1991) in *The Firebird* circa 1956. (Photo by Baron/Getty Images)

Matthew Lawrence and Rachel Rawlins in *Le Spectre de la rose* • Photography—Jim McFarlane

Damien Welch with artists of The Australian Ballet in *Les Sylphides* • Photography—Jim McFarlane

Birmingham Royal Ballet performing in *Petrouchka* Photography—Bill Cooper

Robert Curran and Lynette Willis in *Schéhérazade* Photography—Jim McFarlane



Anna Volkova as the Golden Cockerel
in Fokine's *Le Coq d'Or*.

With their grace, beauty and elusive power of flight, magical birds have been a rich source of inspiration for ballet, from *Firebird* to *Swan Lake*, writes Martyn Pedler.

BIRDS OF SPEED AND LIGHT

Throughout the history of ballet, the evolution of the pointe shoe can be seen as an ongoing attempt to better defy gravity, helping dancers to rise up from the bounds of the stage floor and linger in the air. It seems only fitting that choreographers have found inspiration in the myths and folktales of magical birds from around the world, too, transforming their dancers into new creatures of grace, beauty and power.

The most surprising thing about the Russian folktales of the Firebird is that she is such a passive creature. As recorded by Aleksandr Nikolayevich Afanasev – Russia’s counterpart to the Brothers Grimm – the creature acts as little more than a beautiful trophy, with “golden wings” and eyes like “oriental crystals”. In *Prince Ivan, the Firebird, and the Gray Wolf*, Ivan and his brothers are told to capture the Firebird to prevent her from stealing the King’s precious apples; it’s just the beginning of a much longer tale featuring wise wolves and last-minute surprise resurrections. In another tale, the Firebird appears simply as a mode of magical transportation, keeping the hero out of the clutches of evil but lacking the strength to fly him across the kingdom to his destiny.

Once the Firebird stepped onto the Ballets Russes stage in 1910, however, she was transformed. Stravinsky’s specially commissioned score and Michail Fokine’s choreography broke with many of the ballet conventions of the time: the expected pas de deux is placed near the beginning of the ballet, rather than at the end, and danced between

Prince Ivan and the Firebird rather than the supposed romantic leads. *Firebird* ends with a coronation rather than the conventional wedding, and in fact the Princess Tsarevna is only one of twelve dancing princesses. The Firebird, by contrast, is utterly unique.

Ballet Russes mastermind Sergei Diaghilev never intended the ballet of *Firebird* to be an accurate portrayal of Russian folklore. Instead, it reshaped the particularly Russian folktales into art for an international audience. Graeme Murphy approaches his *Firebird* in much the same way. “In a sense we’re moving a little bit away from pagan Russia, and bringing in the myth of Adam and Eve,” says Murphy. He considered many possible influences for his retelling, even an Australian point of view based around the Min-Min lights, an Aboriginal phenomenon of bright balls of light which hover above the ground; one theory holds that it is actually a barn owl, capable under certain conditions of luminosity. However, he found that Stravinsky’s score has an “intrinsic sense of Russia about it” that kept drawing him back to the ballet’s origins.

Nevertheless, within the myth of the Firebird lie the seeds of dozens of variations of magical birds from around the world. A symbolic relative of the Firebird appeared in *Le Coq d’Or*, or *The Golden Cockerel*. Originally produced by the Ballets Russes four years after *Firebird*, it featured a particularly technically demanding role for the Cockerel – a fantastical bird that takes final, fatal revenge on the story’s jealous

King. It is one of only two performances danced on pointe, to contrast with the more burlesque performances around them. When it was restaged in 1937 the flames of this particular ‘firebird’ were made more obvious as the Cockerel’s costume was infamously woven with real gold thread.

The Russian Firebird, or Zhar-Ptitsa, is a variation of the Phoenix, of course – a magical bird forever guaranteed a place in popular culture for its ability to rise again from its own ashes. It is associated with the all-powerful forces of life, death, and the ancient worship of the sun. These fiery birds can be found across many cultures, including the Egyptian Bennu, the symbolic soul of the sun-god Ra; the Persian dog-headed Simurgh; the Chinese Fenghuang, the mystical composite of a half-dozen birds; and the Indian Garuda bird, mount of the god Vishnu. It is this potent tradition that is seen at the climax of *Firebird*, as Ivan calls on the creature to stop the evil sorcerer-king Kostchei. Now, the Firebird is far from just a trophy. She is a being of uncontrollable power, cursing Kostchei’s minions to dance until they are defeated.

A brief ornithological survey of art shows not just mythical birds, but the seemingly mundane as well. Take the swan: Murphy is no stranger to these birds after his recent reimagining of *Swan Lake*, but explains that the swan and the Firebird are very different creatures. “The Firebird is swift-flying. You think of swans and the way they move, with the strength of their neck and wings. You think of the Firebird and it’s



“The Firebird is swift-flying. You think of swans and the way they move, with the strength of their neck and wings. You think of the Firebird and it’s all speed and light.”

all speed and light.” She is a bird that has the power of not only flight, but of fire – a creature that can not only take to the air, but transform into light itself. The original production of *Swan Lake* showed the beautiful Odette transformed into a swan by the evil magician von Rothbart; Murphy’s version transformed the transformation itself, from the magical to the psychological.

There is something fascinatingly mercurial about the fluid forms of birds in mythology, and it is a theme that artists return to again and again. Amongst dozens of others, both Leonardo da Vinci and William Butler Yeats produced art inspired by the story of *Leda and the Swan*. Here Zeus, head of the pantheon of Greek gods, takes the form of a swan to seduce (or, more accurately, to rape) the mortal maiden Leda. It is this dissonant combination of beauty and brutality, of elegance and raw sexuality, that arises from the often complicated relationship between mortals and magical birds in myth; it is echoed in *Firebird’s* aggressively seductive pas de deux. Noted Ballets Russes scholar Lynn Garafola finds this mix of sensuality and strength in the Firebird. She describes the Firebird’s movements as strong, open, and quick – with broad leaps implying both flight and freedom, and her fingers creating the sense of “feathers beating against the air and the rays of the sun”.

The Australian Ballet cast a similarly forceful spell with Robert Helpmann’s *The Display*, premiering in 1964. As was common practice

for the Ballets Russes, artists from different spheres came together to combine their various areas of expertise. *The Display* features lush costumes and sets by Sidney Nolan, with one reviewer describing them as creating “the deep, rich mysterious gloom of a sunlight shafted Australian rainforest”. Contrasting with this beauty, the choreography again proved that the use of bird-imagery does not require a conventionally ‘feminine’ subject. Helpmann instead used the mating dance of the lyrebird as a metaphor for the sexually predatory side of Australian culture, resulting in a dark, provocative production.

The delicate Bluebird made its ballet debut in *Sleeping Beauty*, the second of Tchaikovsky’s three ballets, first performed in 1890. The most familiar version *Bluebird’s Story* comes from the fairytale *L’Oiseau Bleu* by Madame d’Aulnoy, telling the story of a King – King Charming, no less – who is turned into a Bluebird by a magic spell. It seems only fitting, then, that this role would be later danced by the Ballet Russes’ greatest male star, Vaslav Nijinsky. Nijinsky reportedly also begged to be given the titular role of the Firebird – if the Bluebird can be a man, why not the Firebird? Maurice Béjart’s interpretation of *Firebird* from 1970 used Stravinsky’s score to explore political concerns raised by the 1968 Paris riots; his Firebird was most definitely male, danced by Michael Denard. While Murphy’s Firebird is female, he agrees that there’s nothing inherently feminine about the magical birds of ballet. “Interestingly, if you look at the evil von Rothbart from the original

Swan Lake,” Murphy explains, “he is a magician by day, but becomes an owl by night.” In fact, he points out that the desire to simulate flight often leads one to first look to the “gigantic leaps” of the company’s male dancers. “We’ve got girls with phenomenal jumps, too,” he says. “The sexes are no longer in conflict; they are, in dance, equal. It’s nice to have girls who can fly.” He ruefully acknowledges the Sisyphean struggle of dancers struggling against gravity. With their leaps and jumps, they can seem so close to finally taking flight, but always must return to earth, just like the ballet’s final curtain.

Perhaps it is not these Firebirds that dancers wish to embody, but the equally mythical Bird of Paradise: a bird that comes to earth from heaven itself, but has no feet, only wings – because it never once touches the ground.

Martyn Pedler is a Melbourne writer and pop-cultural critic

Above from left:

Tamara Toumanova in the title role of *The Firebird*, Original Ballet Russe • Photographer unknown

Kathleen Gorham and Barry Kitcher in Robert Helpmann’s *The Display* • Photography—James Robinson

Rachel Rawlins in Graeme Murphy’s *Swan Lake* Photography—Jim McFarlane

CREATIVES



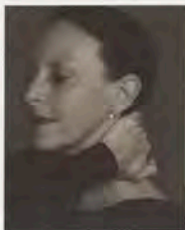
Graeme Murphy AM
Concept and choreography,
Firebird

Graeme Murphy was born in Melbourne and studied at The Australian Ballet School. He has danced with The Australian Ballet, Sadler's Wells Ballet

(London) and Ballets Félix Blaska (France). In 1971, he received an Australia Council Grant to study overseas. He returned to Australia in 1975 as a freelance choreographer. The following year, he was appointed Artistic Director of Sydney Dance Company (then known as The Dance Company NSW), a position he held until 2007. During his 31-year tenure, he created more than 50 works, including 30 full-length productions.

Graeme is the recipient of the Order of Australia (1982 for his Services to Dance) and three honorary doctorates – Hon. D Litt Tas (1990), Hon. D Phil Qld (1992) and Hon. D Litt UNSW (1999). He was honoured at the Inaugural Sydney Opera House Honours (1993) and named a National Living Treasure (1999) by the National Trust of Australia. He has received a Helpmann Award (2001 for Best Choreography for *Body of Work – a Retrospective*), the prestigious James Cassius Award (2002), a Centenary Medal (2003) and the Dame Elisabeth Murdoch Award (2004). He was named Cultural Leader of the Year (2004) by the Australia Business Arts Foundation; listed among Australia's 50 Most Glamorous Exports at a special celebration hosted by the Australian Government and Austrade (2005); and received the Award for Contribution to Cultural Exchange by the Ministry of Culture, the People's Republic of China (2008).

Graeme's directing and choreographic credits include *Metamorphosis*, *Turandot*, *Salome* and *The Trojans* (Opera Australia), *Ainadamar* (The Adelaide Festival of Arts), *Nutcracker* and *Swan Lake* (The Australian Ballet), *Tivoli* (a Sydney Dance Company and The Australian Ballet co-production), VAST (The Australian Bicentennial Authority), *Hua Mulan* (a Sydney Dance Company and Shanghai Song and Dance Ensemble co-production), *The Silver Rose* (Bayerisches Staatsballett in Munich), *Embodied* (Mikhail Baryshnikov) and *The Torvill and Dean World Tour Company*. He also choreographed *Death in Venice* (Canadian Opera Company), *Samson et Dalila* (The Metropolitan Opera, New York), the upcoming movie *Mao's Last Dancer* and directed and choreographed *Aida* (West Australian Opera and Opera Australia).



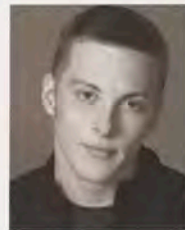
Janet Vernon AM
Creative Associate,
Firebird

Adelaide-born Janet Vernon studied at The Australian Ballet School and has danced with The Australian Ballet, Ballets Félix Blaska (France)

and Sydney Dance Company. In 1976 she was appointed, along with Graeme Murphy, to the artistic helm of Sydney Dance Company, where they remained for 31 years. Graeme created roles for Janet including: *Shéhérazade*, *Daphnis and Chloé*, *Some Rooms (The Bathroom)*, *After Venice*, *Nearly Beloved*, as Queen Roxana in *King Roger*, *Berlin*, *The Protecting Veil*, as Andromaque in *The Trojans* (a collaboration with Opera Australia), and as Herodias in *Salome*.

Creative Associate credits include: *Swan Lake* for The Australian Ballet; *Hua Mulan*, a collaboration between Sydney Dance Company and Shanghai Song and Dance Ensemble; *The Silver Rose*, a full-length commission for The Bayerisches Staatsballett Munich; *Ainadamar* for The Adelaide Festival of Arts; the upcoming movie *Mao's Last Dancer*, and *Aida* (West Australian Opera and Opera Australia).

Awards include: an AM for Services to Dance in 1989; Sydney Opera House Honours in 1993; Dance Australia named her 'One of Australia's Five Best Female Dancers Ever'; Green Room Award for Concept and Realisation (*Swan Lake*) 2003; Centenary Medal for services to society and dance; Lifetime Achievement, Australian Dance Awards 2006; and Green Room Award, Outstanding Contribution to Dance 2006.



Leon Krasenstein
Set and costume design,
Firebird

Leon Krasenstein graduated from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAPPA) in 2003 (Design for Performance).

During his studies, he created several WAAPA productions, including *The Pajama Game* (costume design), *Fiddler on the Roof* (set and costume design) and *Pacific Overtures* (set and costume design).

Leon's first professional commission was set and costume design for Australian Opera Studio's production of *Die Fledermaus* (2003) which was followed by a remount for Opera Queensland in 2005. He also designed set and costumes for Gregory Yurisch's production of *The Marriage of Figaro*. His subsequent commissions for the West Australian Ballet included Chrissie Parrott's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (costume design), and Simon Dow's productions of *Dangerous Liaisons*, *The Red Shoes* and *Alice* (set and costume design). He also designed costumes for Canadian choreographer Matjash Mrozewski's *Ballet at the Quarry*. In 2005 he designed for Opera Australia's new production of *The Barber of Seville* (set and costumes) with director John Milson.

In 2004 Leon completed a secondment under Robert Kemp, working on Queensland Theatre Company's production of *The Cherry Orchard*. He also worked with Tom Gutteridge on *Tears from a Glass Eye* (set and costume design) for Black Swan Youth Theatre Company. He has also worked on numerous corporate projects including Alcoa's 2010 strategic plan, *LIVE@WOODSIDE*, and designing the uniforms for the Channel 7 crew for the 2006 Winter Olympic Games in Torino, Italy.

Leon was nominated for a Helpmann Award in 2006 for his costume designs on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He was a finalist for the 2008 citizen of the year (Youth Arts category) and is a recipient of the 2008 ArtsWa's Young people & the Arts Fellowship.

THE MAKING OF FIREBIRD

Designer Leon Krasenstein consulted a rich array of sources when creating the costumes for Graeme Murphy's new production of *Firebird*, stumbling across some innovative new methods in pursuit of the right effect, writes Kate Scott. Photographs by Jessica Bialek.



Firebird designer Leon Krasenstein is responsible for issuing perhaps one of the strangest mission directives The Australian Ballet's wardrobe department has ever received: throw down your knitting needles and pick up cricket stumps. Leon had already undertaken months of research to conjure *Firebird*'s magical garden, taking in everything, he says, "from Biblical art to fables; pictures of moths and trees, flowers of foliage and lots of decomposed things" to books on basket weaving and Japanese craft techniques. While the effect would be ostensibly naturalistic, Leon wanted to magnify manmade methods of construction, amplifying tiny details to make them clearly visible to the audience. To create one costume, a tunic as soft and variegated as moss, Leon and The Australian Ballet's wardrobe department abandoned increasingly larger sets of knitting needles until arriving, naturally, at cricket stumps.

"Knitting with cricket stumps is hilarious," he says. "They started with these massive knitting needles and I said, 'Is there any way we could go bigger?' The work isn't fine, it's more textural. Texture is everything in this show."

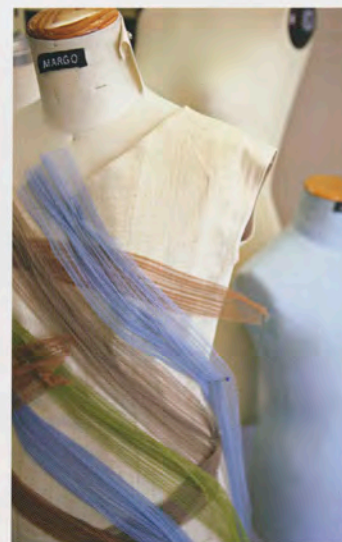
It is just one of many innovative techniques Leon employed. Manmade fabrics were woven, pressure cooked, overlaid, covered in wires and shredded to give them a botanical appearance. Says Leon, "there have been so many methods manipulated into the fabrics; weaving, dyeing. Everything's been sprayed into and worked over. I want to be sitting in the audience and feel like I'm standing right in front of the costumes. It's really important to me that the detail doesn't get lost."

For the titular *Firebird* character (traditionally attired in a tutu), wardrobe created a base tulle skirt encircled by two enormous feathers. The

team then sliced the stiff projecting skirt away until all that remained were two architectural pillars to support the blazing plumes. With this deconstructed tutu, a new *Firebird* – scarlet feathered, swift of flight – was born.

"We wanted to take the story into the key players and really get to the soul of the work," says Leon. "In the original version there are crazy warthogs, a guy with skulls and long fingers, twelve girls throwing golden apples, but for us [Leon, Graeme Murphy, and creative associate Janet Vernon] the important key players are the *Firebird*, the prince and the princess – their love and what happens to them. It's still a visual feast, but for us the design is a key component of the production, interacting with the choreography."

View the full Making of *Firebird* gallery at australianballet.com.au/galleries





DIAGHILEV AND STRAVINSKY

The love-hate relationship between Diaghilev and Stravinsky was the catalyst for some of the masterpieces of 20th century music and dance, writes Dr Mark Carroll.

Impresario Sergei Diaghilev and composer Igor Stravinsky (1882 - 1971) in Seville during their Ballets Russes collaboration. Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images.

"Has anyone ever had so much taste as Diaghilev?" Igor Stravinsky

The relationship between Igor Stravinsky and Sergei Diaghilev may have been an artistic match made in heaven, but their professional interactions and personal rivalries make even the most tumultuous marriage seem idyllic. The question posed by Stravinsky above appears in one of the composer's reminiscences with Robert Craft, Stravinsky's long-term aide and confidant. Turn the page and we find a letter from Big Serge to the diminutive composer which begins: "You awful pig", and concludes with the salutation (if one can call it that) "Write, Dog." Their love-hate relationship was the catalyst for some of the masterpieces of 20th century music and dance. Yet how did it come to this?

Tonight's programme features three ballets that not only trace Stravinsky's meteoric rise to fame in Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, but the burgeoning relationship between the two men. Diaghilev is thought to have first heard Stravinsky's music at a memorial concert for Igor's teacher, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. In what was a rare display of emotion for the generally taciturn composer, he recalled weeping openly at Rimsky-Korsakov's funeral, only to be approached by the old man's widow, who remarked: "Why so unhappy? We still have Glazunov." As Stravinsky recounted to Craft: "It was the cruellest remark I have ever heard and I have never hated again as I did at that moment." His temper cooled when Diaghilev, ignoring Glazunov's dismissal of Stravinsky as a musician of "no talent, only dissonance", asked the fledgling composer to orchestrate Chopin's *Valse Brillante* for the finale of Mikhail Fokine's *Les Sylphides* (1909). In so doing Stravinsky joined Glazunov (perhaps best known to balletomanes as the composer of *Raymonda*) and other lesser-known Russians in creating a score that has since undergone countless revisions, including one by Maurice Ravel.

Les Sylphides was to be the first of many instances when Diaghilev's instincts proved to be correct. According to Stravinsky, the impresario "did not have so much a good musical judgement as an immense flair for recognising the potential of success in a piece of music or work of art in general". It was because of this that Diaghilev felt justified in giving the composer more or less free reign as he set about transforming not just the role of music in ballet, but the syntax of Western art music itself.

Stravinsky followed up his cameo in *Les Sylphides* with the first of his tours de force, *The Firebird* (1910), again choreographed by Fokine. Revelling in the faith placed in him by Diaghilev, the music is nothing short of inspired. Stravinsky depicts the struggle between good and evil, between the natural and supernatural worlds, using melodies that alternate between optimism and fear. The music bristles with a rhythmic vitality that infused his very being. As the great prima ballerina Tamara Karsavina (who danced the title role) recalled of Stravinsky's piano-playing during rehearsals: "His body seemed to vibrate with his own rhythm . . . he made the pattern of his music forcibly clear to me, more so than the counting of bars would have done." The Australian Ballet is presenting Stravinsky's 1945 version which reduces what the composer called

the "wastefully large" orchestral forces of the original while losing none of its expressive power.

The same can be said of the third ballet in tonight's Stravinsky-Fokine trilogy, *Petrouchka*, which was revised by the composer in 1947. The original version dates from 1911, and came hot on the heels of *The Firebird*. Diaghilev visited the composer, expecting to be presented with sketches of *The Rite of Spring*. Much to his amazement he instead heard the first two movements of *Petrouchka*. Quick to realise its potential, Sergei recommended immediately that Stravinsky collaborate with Alexandre Benois to develop further his already advanced ideas for stage action and design. As is the case with *The Firebird*, the music for *Petrouchka* assails the listener with clashing harmonies and menacing rhythms that breathe life into the immortal, unhappy puppet. This is exactly as Stravinsky intended: "In composing the music, I had in my mind a distinct picture of a puppet, suddenly endowed with life, exasperating the patience of the orchestra with diabolical cascades of chords. The orchestra in turn retaliates with menacing trumpet blasts. The outcome is a terrific noise which reaches its climax and ends in the sorrowful and querulous collapse of the poor puppet."

The three works attest not simply to Diaghilev's self-proclaimed talent as a "collector of geniuses", but his ability to extract the best out of those with whom he came into contact. A notable exception to this was his attempt to engage Anna Pavlova to dance the principal role in *The Firebird*. Over "much champagne", as Stravinsky put it, the three, plus Benois and Fokine, met at Pavlova's St Petersburg house to discuss this and other plans. According to Stravinsky, the plan failed because Pavlova found his music "horribly decadent". The composer for his part was able to put aside his intense dislike of Fokine – "easily the most disagreeable man I have ever worked with" – in deference to what Diaghilev was trying to achieve. Actually, Stravinsky qualified this verdict by saying that Glazunov was worse (perhaps not surprisingly in view of the barbs he flung at the younger composer), but the fact that Glazunov was an alcoholic prone to two-week binges on Chateau Yquem (think Grange Hermitage) apparently excused him. Stravinsky was highly critical of Fokine's choreographies for *The Firebird* and *Petrouchka*, which to him undermined the dramatic ideas that were central to the plot of each (although he did concede that his own overly long and "patchy" music for the former may have been partly to blame). What saved *Petrouchka* in Stravinsky's eyes was Nijinsky's interpretation of the clown. "He was," the composer recalled, "the most exciting human being I have ever seen on stage." For Stravinsky, Nijinsky was also "wholly without guile", proof positive of which he offered in an anecdote concerning a London dowager during a party attended by Diaghilev and his inner sanctum:

Lady Ripon proposed a parlour game in which we were all to decide what sort of animal each of us most resembled – a dangerous game. Lady Ripon initiated it herself by saying that "Diaghilev looks like a bulldog and Stravinsky like a fox. Now M. Nijinsky, what do you think I look like?" Nijinsky thought a moment, then spoke the

awful, exact truth: "You, madame – a camel" . . . Lady Ripon did not expect that of course, and in spite of her repeating: "A camel? How amusing! I declare. Really? A camel?", she was flustered all night.

Nijinsky in his diary, which traces his heartbreaking descent into madness (and which should be required reading for all balletomanes), was nevertheless sufficiently perceptive enough as to divine the essence of the relationship between impresario and composer: "Diaghilev wanted to strangle Stravinsky many a time, but Stravinsky is so sly. He cannot exist without Stravinsky and Stravinsky cannot live without Diaghilev. Both understand each other." There are several root causes for their antagonism, not the least being their mutual success. As Stravinsky's stature as a composer grew he came to be not only less deferential to Diaghilev, but increasingly strident in his artistic opinions. As was the case when Nijinsky gradually slipped from the impresario's grasp, Diaghilev was given to malicious outbursts directed at Stravinsky. Unlike the dancer, who was emotionally ill-equipped to deal with the situation, Stravinsky fought fire with fire and the accelerant was, more often than not, money.

As Stravinsky put it:

My monetary discussions with Diaghilev were always the same and always unresolvable. What he called stinginess I called economy. I was never wildly dispensious, to be sure, though neither was my only goal the promise of numismatic bliss, as Diaghilev pretended. (Diaghilev also used to pretend that the 'or' in Igor meant gold).

With the benefit of hindsight it might be fairer to suggest that Diaghilev, the promoter of extravagant, and therefore hugely expensive productions, had to watch his pennies, while Stravinsky as an artist needed to ensure that he was duly recompensed for his efforts. This is something that Nijinsky for his part appeared manifestly unable to address, and his diary is tinged with his bitterness towards Diaghilev for abandoning him financially and emotionally.

Stravinsky spoke admiringly of Diaghilev as "a deeply cultured" yet "pathologically superstitious" and "self-destructively vain" man. It was a source of great regret to the composer that the impresario died without their final falling out (over the rights to *Le Baiser de la fée*) being reconciled. Stravinsky often visited Diaghilev's grave on the island of San Michele, adjacent to Venice. The two were reunited in death when Stravinsky himself was interred just metres from Diaghilev's grave.

A very elderly Stravinsky offered John Drummond what should be the final word on their relationship: "Diaghilev and I were on good terms and bad terms, in good times and bad times, but, after all, he was my brother." It is left to us mere mortals to rejoice in the fruits of their sibling rivalry.

Dr Mark Carroll is an Associate Professor at The Elder School of Music, University of Adelaide

CREATIVES



John Auld
Producer, *Petrouchka*

John Auld was born in Australia and began his ballet career with the Borovansky Ballet, where he graduated to become a principal dancer, performing a wide range of roles.

He remained with the company for ten years and then went to Europe dancing and acting in revues, plays and musicals in Scotland, Bristol (Old Vic), Windsor (Theatre Royal) and London. Returning to ballet, he toured throughout Europe with the Ballet of Two Worlds, an innovative company led by Nora Kaye, followed by four years with the London Festival Ballet as principal dancer – the last two as assistant director when John Gilpin was artistic director. He was then appointed Ballet Master of the Gulbenkian Ballet in Lisbon, where he stayed for six years. During this time he was responsible for the classical training of the company and mounted many works, including his own productions of *Coppélia*, *La Fille mal gardée* and Act II of *Swan Lake*. In 1970, at the invitation of the then joint directors Kenneth MacMillan and Peter Wright, he joined The Royal Ballet with special responsibility for the newly formed Royal Ballet New Group, created to present new choreography and small scale master works. In 1972 he was appointed assistant to the directors of The Royal Ballet and in 1977, when the New Group was expanded to become Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet, he was appointed assistant director. In 1982 he retired from Sadler's Wells, but has returned to appear as a guest artist with both companies and mounted a highly successful production of *Petrouchka* for the company. He produced *Paquita*, *Petrouchka* and *Coppélia* for the National Ballet of Portugal and has appeared with the company as Dr Coppelius, Madge the Witch in *La Sylphide* and the mistress in *Graduation Ball*. He has mounted *Petrouchka* for the Grands Ballets Canadiens and for the National Ballet of Tokyo.



John Berrett
Lighting reproduction,
Les Sylphides. Lighting
design, *Petrouchka*

John Berrett began his theatrical lighting career in 1974 when he became a member of the LX department at the Sydney

Opera House. Highlights of his time at the SOH include tours into the House by Stuttgart Ballet, Opera Australia and The Australian Ballet.

In 1977 John began work with The Australian Ballet on a part-time basis, becoming permanent in 1978. Between 1978 and 1982 John worked on all of The Australian Ballet's repertoire, both national and international tours, with a particular highlight being the first tour by the company to China in 1980 with *The Merry Widow* starring Dame Margot Fonteyn.

In 1982 John travelled to London where he spent three years working in various theatres including the London Palladium, where he worked on *The Two Ronnies* and *Singing in the Rain*, and at the Coliseum with English National Opera. During his time at the Coliseum, Matsuyama Ballet Company with Rudolf Nureyev as guest star, Dance Theatre of Harlem, Nederlands Dans Theater and London Festival Ballet all performed in the venue.

In 1986 John rejoined The Australian Ballet as Head Electrician, becoming Master Electrician in 1996. Highlights over the past 22 years include tours to Russia, China, America, Europe and the United Kingdom. On the company's most recent tour to Paris, London and Manchester in 2008, John was responsible for reproducing the lighting for all the works presented – Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake*, Stephen Page's *Rites*, Krzysztof Pastor's *Symphonie Fantastique*, and *Les Présages*.



Damien Cooper
Lighting design, *Firebird*

Damien has worked with most of Australia's dance companies including *Swan Lake* with The Australian Ballet; *Mathinna* for Bangarra Dance Theatre; *Birdbrain* and *The Age of*

Unbeauty with Australian Dance Theatre; *Mortal Engine* for Chunky Move; *Homelands* with Legs on the Wall; Lucy Guerin Inc's *Heavy*, One Extra Dance Company's *Fugly* and many shows with Sydney Dance Company including *Grand*, *Some Rooms*, *Ellipses*, *Mythologia* and *Air and Other Invisible Forces*. Damien also lit *Tivoli* for the Sydney Dance Company and The Australian Ballet.

Damien regularly works in theatre and opera with companies including Bell Shakespeare, Company B, Sydney Theatre Company and Opera Australia. Recent shows include *The Women of Troy*, *Toy Symphony*, *Keating! The Musical*, *Rifle Mind*, *Exit the King*, *The Lost Echo*, *Ying Tong*, *The Government Inspector* and *Honour Bound*. Damien's lighting for opera includes *Alcina*, *The Magic Flute*, *Death in Venice* and *Aida*.

Damien received the Mike Walsh fellowship in 2003 which allowed him to study with director Robert

Wilson in New York. Damien won the Sydney Theatre Award for Best Lighting Design three years running, in 2005 for *Summer Rain*, in 2006 for *The Lost Echo* and in 2007 for *Toy Symphony*. Damien was nominated for three 2007 Green Room Awards and won the Theatre Green Room for his body of work that year.

Damien's recent projects include *Ainadamar* for the Adelaide Festival of Arts, *Shane Warne The Musical* and *Midsummer Night's Dream* for the Houston Grand Opera.



Paul Kathner
Décor, *Les Sylphides*

Paul was born in Sydney in 1935. He trained under William Constable and Elaine Haxton, assisting their work with the Borovansky Ballet in Sydney. Since his start in the

industry over 50 years ago he has designed and painted sets and backdrops for the most significant ballets, operas and musicals in Australia. This includes designs for the Independent Theatre, The John Alden Company and the Elizabethan Trust Opera & Drama Company in the early years of his career. In 1963 he became resident designer at St Martin's Theatre in Melbourne and he also designed for the Melbourne Theatre Company.

Among Paul's many credits during this period are the design of *The Last Vision* and *Le Carnaval* for The Australian Ballet, *Pirates of Penzance*, *The Gondoliers* and *Trial by Jury* for the Adelaide Festival Trust and *Yeoman of the Guard* for the Australian Opera. For the Melbourne Theatre Company, he designed *Privates on Parade*, *A Man for all Seasons*, *The Suicide* and *A Cuckoo in the Nest*. His design work includes banners for Police Legacy in the Victoria Police Chapel and St Andrews Church, Brighton, an icon screen for St Paul's Cathedral and design and painting *Les Sylphides* for The Australian Ballet. Paul has designed and painted many sets for the Port Fairy Spring Music Festival over the last ten years. He has just been made a life member of the festival for his work.

His exhibitions in Sydney include the Macquarie Gallery, David Jones Gallery, Contemporary Arts Society Gallery, and in Melbourne Roar Gallery, Zab Gallery, and the Westpac Gallery. He continues to paint prolifically.

He formed, with Ross Turner, Scenic Studios in 1976 and the company went on to paint and design for hundreds of ballets, operas and musicals in the thirty years since. Paul retired in 1998 and has been recalled regularly to design and paint for Scenic Studios.



A TASTE FOR THE EXOTIC

Like Madonna a century later, the Ballets Russes' Sergei Diaghilev was always one step ahead of the zeitgeist, writes Valerie Lawson, marketing an imagined idea of Russia for Parisian audiences hungry for the exotic.



"I need a *ballet* and a *Russian* one", wrote Serge Diaghilev. "The first Russian ballet. Since there is no such thing. There is Russian opera, Russian symphony, Russian song, Russian dance, Russian rhythm – but no Russian ballet".

Writing to Anatoly Lyadov, Diaghilev assured the composer that the definitive Russian ballet scenario was ready, having been "dreamed up" by a remarkable assembly of collaborators, including the choreographer Mikhail Fokine.

Their creation – *The Firebird* – was conceived by Diaghilev's circle, men who understood the marketing possibilities of exporting to Paris an exotic work sprinkled with the essence of old Russia. The 'essence', because *The Firebird* represented an illusion of mother Russia, offering a kaleidoscopic landscape of colours, motifs, symbols and myths that looked back with nostalgia to a folkloric past. Over time *The Firebird* – and Diaghilev's other Slavic and oriental ballets, such as *Petroushka* and *Schéhéhazade* – developed a patina of ethnic realism. They seemed to be deeply rooted in mythology and history, yet the ballets were as much an invented concept as the Babushka toy, the Russian doll within a doll, that was created in 1891 and shown at the World Exhibition in Paris in 1900.

The doll, which came to be seen as an ancient Russian artefact, represents more than the sum of its nesting parts. It is a symbol of the kind of craft produced at the Russian artists' colonies Abramtsevo and Talashkino late in the 19th century. The craftsmen who worked there looked back affectionately at medieval Russian art and naïve peasant art, much like the artists who produced beautifully crafted goods during the arts and crafts movement of England in the second half of the 19th century. Diaghilev's *World of Art* magazine was subsidised by Savva Mamantov, the railway magnate who owned Abramtsevo and by Princess Maria Tenisheva, who owned Talashkino. The output of the Russian art colonies influenced Diaghilev in the early years when he was showing art works in Paris and editing *The World of Art* magazine. And that influence continued in the early repertoire of his Ballets Russes.

Léonide Massine was once asked whether Diaghilev followed fashion or created it. He replied that Diaghilev was "extremely flexible, and sensible to any evolution in the art world ... he was always following the ideas of the day as long as they were the valuable ones". Much like Madonna a century later, the impresario could read the zeitgeist. Highly intelligent, he adapted with chameleon-like speed and surrounded

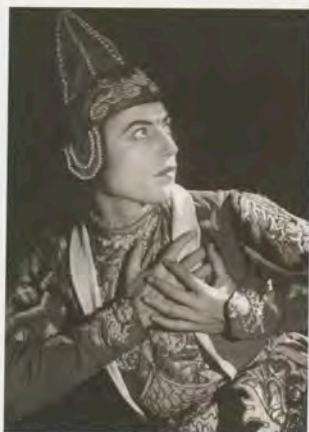
himself with artistic heavyweights. And, in true Madonna-like fashion, he effortlessly appropriated other cultures for his own ends.

To a Western audience of 1909, the ballets he presented represented "exotic otherness", in the words of Orlando Figes, author of *Natasha's Dance*, a cultural history of Russia. At the Ballets Russes' first season in Paris in 1909, audiences lapped up the exoticism of *Cleopatra* and the Polovtsian songs and dances from *Prince Igor*. Diaghilev's collaborator, artist Alexandre Benois, recalled how "the French loved our 'primitive wildness'".

And so more exoticism, more sensuality, was needed to feed the fin de siècle Western appetite. "Diaghilev could see that there was money to be made from the export of more Russian ballets in this vein", wrote Figes. "Always keen to spot a new market opportunity, the impresario was impressed by the growing popularity of the neo-nationalists' folk-like art. And so it was, as he wrote to tell Lyadov, that they cooked up the libretto of *The Firebird*. Benois called the ballet 'a fairy tale for grown-ups'".

Its aim was to create what Benois called a "mysterium of Russia" for "export to the West". "The real export", Figes noted, "was the myth

Highly intelligent, Diaghilev adapted with chameleon-like speed and surrounded himself with artistic heavyweights. And, in true Madonna-like fashion, he effortlessly appropriated other cultures for his own ends.



of peasant innocence and youthful energy. Each ingredient of the ballet was a stylised abstraction of folklore ... The scenario was a patchwork compilation of two entirely separate peasant tales ... the production for the Paris season was a self-conscious package of exotic Russian props – from Golovine's colourful peasant costumes to those weird mythic beasts”.

Binding together this exotic fabric was one extraordinary thread, the music of the man who ultimately composed *The Firebird*, Igor Stravinsky, whose brilliant score made extensive use of Russian folk music, especially peasant wedding songs.

In the recent history of classical music, *The Rest is Noise*, author Alex Ross described *The Firebird* as “a magical concoction: Russian musical sorcery, overlaid with French effects. Lit up by the X-factor of Stravinsky's talent”.

The composer went on to create another huge success with *Petrouchka* in 1911. He used the sounds of Russian life “to overturn the entire musical establishment with its European rules of beauty and technique”, wrote Figs.

“Here was another Russian revolution – a musical uprising by the low life of St Petersburg. Everything about the ballet was conceived in ethnographic terms. Benois' scenario conjured up in detail the vanished fairground world of the Shrovetide carnival of his beloved childhood in St Petersburg. Fokine's mechanistic choreography echoed the jerky ostinato rhythms Stravinsky heard in vendors cries and chants, organ grinder tunes, accordion melodies, factory songs, coarse peasant speech and the syncopated music of village bands”.

In the five years after the first Paris season, the Ballets Russes presented a host of ballets based on Russian or oriental myths and fairytales, including *Schééhérazade* and *Les Orientales* in 1910; *Sadko* in 1911, *Tamar* and *Le Dieu Bleu* in 1912, *Le Sacre du Printemps* in 1913 and *Le Coq d'Or* in 1914. In 1916, Diaghilev was asked where the Ballets Russes had its intellectual origins. “In the Russian peasantry”, he replied. “In objects of utility ... in the paintings on sleighs, in the design and colours of peasant dresses or the carving around a window frame we found our motifs and on this foundation we built”.

Diaghilev's enterprise arrived in Paris during the belle époque, a time when audiences

were yearning for the exotic, the new, the revolutionary. Those Parisian audiences – educated, sophisticated and cultivated – included the diplomatic corps, the aristocracy, rich American expatriates, and even richer Jewish bankers who financially backed the Ballets Russes. For its part, the Ballets Russes enhanced the bohemian mood of Paris, its ripple-like influence reaching out into wider world. The designer Paul Poiret created evening dresses, kimono coats and fans, all inspired by Bakst's designs for *Schééhérazade*, while Cartier designed *Schééhérazade*-like jewellery incorporating emeralds and sapphires, and perfumiers created scents called Nirvana, Kismet, Maharajah and Shalimar. The ballerina Tamara Karsavina recalled how the ladies in the Ballets Russes' audience appeared in turbans and interior decorators recommended what they called “Bakst Blue”.

Long after the death of Diaghilev in 1929, the vogue for ‘Russian ballet’ lingered on, with the words ‘Russia’ and ‘ballet’ intertwined as if one did not exist without the other. Western dancers recruited into the Ballets Russes took Russian names, as did their successors who joined the ballet companies that followed in its wake. When Russian dancers from the Ballets Russes troupe of 1910 were lured to the United States and to England, Diaghilev recruited from the West. By 1918 the Ballets Russes was an international troupe of 39 dancers, with fewer than half born in Russia. Twelve dancers were from Poland while others were Italian, Spanish, English and Belgian. When the English dancer Algernon Harcourt Essex joined Anna Pavlova's touring company, the Russian ballerina insisted he change his name to H Algeranoff.

The name-change tradition continued with the Ballets Russes' offshoot companies established in Monte Carlo in the 1930s. The dancers all took Russian names with Australian dancer Valrene Tweedie, for example, becoming Irina Lavrova and Madeleine Parker transformed into Mira Dimina. In the first three decades of the 20th century, ballet troupes assembled in London and, destined for long Australasian tours, were given the names the Imperial Russian Ballet, the Dandre Levitoff Russian Ballet, the Monte Carlo Russian Ballet, the Covent Garden Russian Ballet and the Original Ballet Russe.

Diaghilev, the man who began the faux Russian ballet craze, never returned to Russia after the success of his company in the early 20th

century. He cut his ties with the Russian Imperial Theatres and his company became a purely commercial enterprise. One of his biographers Arnold Haskell believed that after the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, “to go to Russia would be easy [for Diaghilev], to come back impossible”. Diaghilev feared a loss of creative freedom and “he did not believe he could reconcile his art with both privation and political stress”.

Yet, two years before he died, the impresario yearned for his motherland. He planned to return briefly to Russia in the 1920s, hoping to keep up with Soviet artistic developments. In 1927, from his base in Monte Carlo, he asked Prokofiev for news, after the composer had spent three months in Russia. Choreographer Léonide Massine suggested that Diaghilev “flirted with communist ideas”, resulting in a machine-age Soviet ballet *Le Par d'Acier*, composed by Prokofiev and designed by the Soviet artist Georgi Yakoulov. It is fascinating to speculate whether Diaghilev could have reinvented himself once more, had he lived into the 1930s and beyond.

Instead, the marketing wizard and master of reinvention died in Venice in 1929. He was buried on the funeral island of St Michele, as was Stravinsky. The remains of the Russians lie close together, forever expatriates, yet forever representing the genius of Russian cultural life.

Valerie Lawson is an author and dance historian

Previous page from left:

Costume sketch of Russian theatre performer by Léon Bakst 1911

Dimitri Rostoff as the Shah in *Schééhérazade*. 1938/39 Melbourne · Photography Spencer Shier

Costume sketch for *The Firebird* by Léon Bakst 1910
Lubov Tchernicheva in *Tamar*, Ballets Russes, 1930s
nla.ms-ms9803-1-113

Above from left:

Portrait of Serge Lifar in *The Firebird*, Original Ballet Russe Australian tour · Photography Max Dupain
nla.pic-an12114755-

Madonna poses in a sari backstage at the 1998 VH1 Vogue Fashion Awards in New York City (Photo by Frank Micelotta/Getty Images)

Portrait of Tamara Grigovleva as a princess in *The Firebird*, Ballets Russes, 1930s.nla.ms-ms8495-23-1-s50

THE BALLETS RUSSES CENTENARY PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

2009 is a year to remember in many ways. Not only does it mark the centenary of the first performance in Paris of Sergei Diaghilev's inaugural Ballets Russes, but it is also the 70th anniversary of the final tour to Australia by the ultimate successor to his company, led by the redoubtable Wassily de Basil. How fitting, then, that 2009 also brings the remarkable Ballets Russes project to a close. To celebrate these events, The Australian Ballet's entire 2009 season is dedicated to channeling the creative energy of the Diaghilev and de Basil companies. The season sees the restaging and recreation of Ballets Russes repertoire, and the presentation of new and old works which are in various ways linked to the legacy of the Ballets Russes. The 2009 celebrations are capped off by a series of Ballets Russes exhibitions mounted by some of Australia's major national cultural institutions.

MELBOURNE

The Australian Ballet's education season includes a range of Ballets Russes' related programmes this year.

Informative talks 'Saturdays at five' series:

Clara's Story (*Nutcracker*) and Artistic Directions (*Concord*) hosted by Education Manager Colin Peasley during Melbourne and Sydney seasons. Musical Masterpieces, presented by Music Director Nicolette Fraillon and Principal Pianist Stuart Macklin, will take an in-depth look at Stravinsky's *Firebird* and *Petrouchka*. To be presented in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney.

Introduction to the Ballet

The dancers in practice and performance, hosted by Colin Peasley in Melbourne and Sydney. The event will highlight *Nutcracker* and its Ballets Russes connections.

Q&A sessions given by Artistic Director David McAllister, Music Director Nicolette Fraillon and leading dancers at the conclusion of selected Ballets Russes related performances in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. **Further details & bookings** australianballet.com.au/education 03 9669 2794

Creative Australia & the Ballets Russes Gallery 1, the Arts Centre 6 June to 20 September

This exhibition celebrates the profound cultural effect of the Ballets Russes tours upon modern Australian visual, dance and design arts from the 1930s to the present.

PUBLIC EVENTS*

JUNE

Steps of a Russian dancer

Discover the story behind Graeme Murphy's *Nutcracker* and the exotic origins of Australia's vibrant dance culture as we re-trace Clara's steps from pre-revolutionary Russia to Australia and the Borovansky Ballet in the 1940s.

Graeme Murphy and the Ballets Russes

Follow Graeme Murphy's unique and ongoing response to the Ballets Russes as we re-visit some of his groundbreaking works and examine the creative process behind his most recent commission for The Australian Ballet, *Firebird*.

JULY

Spotlight talk: the Ballets Russes behind the lens

This luncheon lecture presents the work of Australians who captured the spirit and excitement of the Ballets Russes tours through action and studio photography.

Astonish me! Creative Australia responds

Enjoy a tour of the exhibition to survey some of the profound creative influences that the Ballets Russes tours had upon Australian modernist artists and designers.

AUGUST

A cultural revolution

Artistic Director David McAllister and Music Director Nicolette Fraillon discuss the four-year project *Ballets Russes in Australia: Our Cultural Revolution* in relation to the Arts Centre's exhibition.

Inspired by the past and present

Hear from contemporary visual artists who have created new works of art in response to The Australian Ballet's 2009 Ballets Russes programme.

SEPTEMBER

Modernity comes alive in music

Participate in an insightful discussion on the impact of great Ballets Russes scores upon Australian composers in the early 20th century through to composing for ballet with today's technology.

*Event dates unavailable at time of printing.

Further details 03 9281 8000 theartscentre.com.au

CANBERRA

Capturing the Ballets Russes

National Library of Australia

9 April to 26 September

Drawing on the Library's comprehensive Ballets Russes collections, this exhibition reveals the artists who created the Ballets Russes and its experimental productions, the dancers who captivated Australian audiences, and Australian artists they inspired.

Photographs, paintings and drawings describe the dancers' working days and nights. Personal letters and snapshots provide insights to their feelings about dancing in a new country. Rare business cables, souvenir programmes, magazines and books reveal how the print media captured the evanescent art of dance at a time when Australia was ripe and hungry for new experiences.

The exhibition includes a centenary tribute to the Russian impresario Sergei Diaghilev, whose inaugural Ballets Russes (1909-1929) revolutionised ballet. It also celebrates those Ballets Russes artists who settled in Australia and established our earliest professional ballet companies.

Further details 02 6262 1271 nla.gov.au/events

The Ballets Russes 1909-1939

National Gallery of Australia

11 December 2009 to 28 March 2010

This celebratory exhibition will trace the Ballets Russes story through the company's designers, displaying the costumes and some original designs for its major productions. Evoking the exoticism and drama of the Ballets Russes' performances the exhibition will show aspects of their influence on early 20th century design.

The National Gallery of Australia holds one of the world's most extensive collections of costumes from the Ballets Russes companies. The Gallery is undertaking a major conservation project where more than 100 of these costumes are being prepared for the exhibition. Many will be revealed to the public for the first time since they were last worn.

A catalogue and a dedicated website will support the exhibition. The public programme aims to bring the Ballets Russes to life through film, performances and events focusing on dance and design.

Further details 02 6240 6411 nga.gov.au

PRINCIPAL ARTISTS

Principal Artists
generously supported
by Les Etoiles

Mrs Mary Barlow
Bill Bowness
Ms Robin Campbell
Sue Chisholm
Val Harding
Lynette Harvey
Mr Arthur L Norcott
Mrs Roma Norcott
Mrs Kerry Packer AO
Dr Valmai Pidgeon AM
Lady Potter AC
Mr Peter Reilly
Mrs Robert Rose
Mrs Christine Smedley
Ms Nancye Willmott



OLIVIA BELL

“An intoxicating lead”

Sunday Herald Sun



ADAM BULL

“True star quality”

Dance Australia

Newcastle-born Olivia Bell competed in the Prix de Lausanne competition and won a scholarship to the Paris Opéra Ballet School, where she graduated in 1995. Joining The Australian Ballet the same year, Olivia would go on to dance some of The Australian Ballet's most coveted lead roles, hailed variously as “imperious and sinuous”, “truly exquisite”, and for her “cool, sensitive precision”. In 1996 she was awarded a Khitercs Foundation scholarship, enabling her to study abroad. Olivia's acclaimed performances in everything from the most classical of ballets to contemporary pieces have shown her great versatility. A career highlight was her debut in the title role of *Manon* in 2008. Olivia was promoted to Principal Artist in 2007.

Repertoire highlights

- Juno in Matjash Mrozewski's *Semele* 2008
- Afternoon of a Faun* 2008
- Sugar Plum Fairy in Peter Wright's *The Nutcracker* 2007
- Idée Fixe in *Symphonie Fantastique* 2007
- Passion in *Les Présages* 2007
- Christopher Wheeldon's *After the Rain*®, *Continuum*® and *Mercurial Manoeuvres*®
- Street dancer in *Don Quixote* 2007
- Terpsichore in *Apollo* 2007
- Zobeide in *Schéhérazade* 2006
- Jiří Kylián's *Petite Mort* and *Stepping Stones* 2005
- Flavia in *Spartacus* 2003
- Vertiginous Thrill of Exactitude* 2000
- Other Dances* 2000
- William Forsythe's *In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated* 1996

Guest appearances

- Swan Lake* with The Dancers Company 2001

You may not know ...

Olivia took time out to travel and see the world in 1997, rejoining the company in 1999.

Adam Bull was born in 1981 and began training at Dance World 301 with Brian Nolan before joining The Australian Ballet School. In 2000 he represented Australia in the Paris International Ballet Competition, before graduating from The Australian Ballet School with honours in 2001. Adam joined The Australian Ballet in 2002, going on to dance soloist and principal roles in works by George Balanchine, Jiří Kylián, Graeme Murphy, Christopher Wheeldon, Stephen Baynes, Stanton Welch and Adrian Burnett. After just six months as a Senior Artist, Adam was promoted to the highest rank of Principal in June 2008, capping off a string of critically acclaimed lead performances.

Repertoire highlights

- George Balanchine's *Ballet Imperial* 2008
- Afternoon of a Faun* 2008
- Prince Siegfried in Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake* 2008
- Peter Wright's *The Nutcracker* 2007
- Apollo* 2007
- Don Quixote* 2007
- Raymonda* 2006
- Giselle* 2006
- La Sylphide* 2005
- La Fille mal gardée* 2004

Guest appearances

- The Dancers Company tour 2006

Awards

- Telstra Ballet Dancer Award nominee 2006 and 2004
- Green Room nomination for Albrecht in *Giselle* 2006
- The Australian Ballet Society Scholarship in 2001

You may not know ...

“I was encouraged to dance by a grade one primary school teacher. I owe a lot to her – thank you Mrs Kipp from Laverton Primary School!”



ROBERT CURRAN

“The ultimate poetic and sensitive dancer”

Sunday Herald Sun

A graduate of The Australian Ballet School, Robert Curran joined The Australian Ballet in 1996 and was promoted to Principal Artist in 2002. During his time with the company he has performed in numerous classical and contemporary works by choreographers such as Kylián, Forsythe, Welch, Balanchine, Cranko, Baynes, Robbins and MacMillan, carving out a niche with his powerful partnering. Robert particularly enjoys the interaction with other dancers in the technical achievements of pas de deux and the creation of stories and feelings on stage. Robert has toured extensively overseas with The Australian Ballet, and a burgeoning interest in choreography has seen him create two works for the company's *Bodytorque* programme.

Repertoire highlights

- Des Grieux in Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon* 2008
- *Symphonie Fantastique* 2007
- *Don Quixote* 2007
- *Apollo* 2007
- *Giselle* 2006
- *Le Spectre de la rose* 2006
- *Forgotten Land* 2005
- *Petite Mort* 2005
- *Other Dances* 2001
- *At the edge of night* 1997

Guest appearances

- *The Sleeping Beauty* with Houston Ballet
- *The Nutcracker* with The Royal Danish Ballet

Choreographic works

- *amusemeant* for *Bodytorque.To the Pointe.* 2008
- *Promenade* for *Bodytorque.Generations.* 2007

You may not know ...

Robert is undertaking a Bachelor of Business by correspondence, and is studying for the Vocational Graduate Certificate in Elite Ballet Instruction with The Australian Ballet School. He has a miniature border collie called Gilly.



LUCINDA DUNN

“In a word – stunning”

State of the Arts

Lucinda Dunn received her early training in Sydney with Janece Graham and Tanya Pearson before going on to win a Prix de Lausanne scholarship to study at The Royal Ballet School, London. While in London she also performed with Birmingham Royal Ballet. In 1991 Lucinda joined The Australian Ballet and was promoted to Principal Artist in 2002. She has also been awarded several scholarships to study overseas and has been partnered by many international guests of The Australian Ballet. A diverse and musical dancer with a strong technique, Lucinda excels in the pure classical ballets and enjoys portraying characters in story ballets, as well as the physicality of contemporary pieces.

Repertoire highlights

In addition to the ballerina roles in all of the major classical ballets such as *Giselle*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Swan Lake* and *Coppélia*, a particular career highlight for Lucinda was dancing the world premiere of Stanton Welch's *The Sleeping Beauty* in 2005. Other highlights include her performances on The Australian Ballet's tours to London, Tokyo, Italy, Shanghai and New York, as well as dancing lead roles in contemporary works by Wheeldon, Kylián, Robbins, Balanchine, Sharp, Fonte and Baynes.

Guest appearances

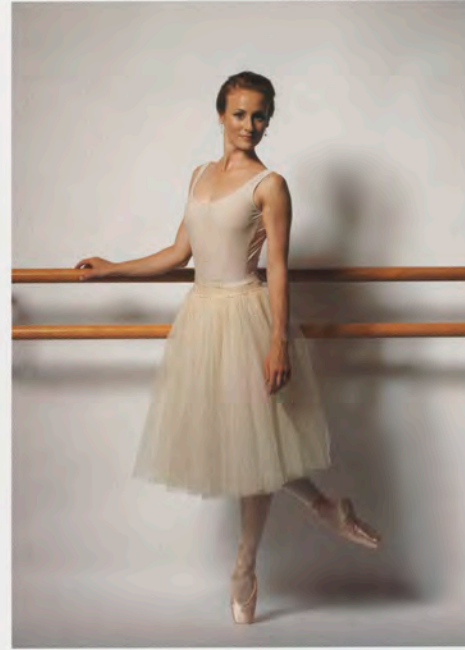
- The Royal Danish Ballet
- Le Jeune Ballet de France
- Birmingham Royal Ballet
- World Ballet Festival, Tokyo

Awards

- Australian Dance Award for Outstanding Performance 2008
- Helpmann Award nomination for Dance Performer of the Year 2007 and 2004
- Mo Award nomination for Dance Performer of the Year 2006, 2005 and 2001
- Green Room Award for Best Female Dancer 2005

You may not know ...

Last year, Lucinda and husband Danilo welcomed their daughter Claudia into their lives.



MADELEINE EASTOE

“Her dancing is fearless and utterly assured”

Herald Sun

A graduate of The Australian Ballet School, Perth-born Madeleine Eastoe joined the company in 1997 and danced many lead roles before being promoted to Principal Artist following her debut as *Giselle* in 2006. Madeleine has particularly enjoyed working one-on-one with choreographer Stephen Baynes to create the lead role in 2007's *Constant Variants*, and dancing with guest artists such as Angel Corella in *La Fille mal gardée* and Cédric Ygnace in *Giselle*. A career highlight was dancing Odette on the opening night of Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake* in London, a role she reprised on the company's 2007 Japan tour and 2008 Paris and Manchester tours. Madeleine has also toured internationally with The Australian Ballet to China, Singapore, New Zealand and the US.

Repertoire highlights

- Peter Wright's *The Nutcracker* 2007
- *Don Quixote* 2007
- *Constant Variants* 2007
- *Giselle* 2006
- *La Sylphide* 2005
- Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake* 2005
- *La Fille mal gardée* 2004
- *Romeo & Juliet* 2003
- Graeme Murphy's *Nutcracker* 2000

Awards

- Telstra People's Choice Award 2006
- Green Room Award 2005
- Helpmann Award nomination 2003

You may not know ...

“My great uncle Herbert Sachse invented the Pavlova dessert. He was a chef at the Esplanade Hotel in 1935 and was asked by the opera singer Dame Nellie Melba for a nice light dessert. Inspired by the dancer Anna Pavlova who was performing in Perth at the time, he named it after her for the light and fluffy qualities it's so famous for.”

PRINCIPAL ARTISTS



KIRSTY MARTIN

“Heartbreakingly lovely ... She seems not so much to cut the air, but carve it”

Herald Sun

Kirsty Martin had twelve years of ballet training before graduating from The Australian Ballet School under the direction of Gailene Stock. She joined The Australian Ballet in 1996 and then Nederlands Dans Theater I in 2000, where she performed a wide range of contemporary ballets and worked with choreographers Jiří Kylián, Johan Inger and Paul Lightfoot. Kirsty returned to The Australian Ballet in 2002 and performed in the world premiere season of Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake*, and was promoted to Principal Artist after the opening night performance of *The Three Musketeers* in 2003. After becoming a mother, Kirsty returned to The Australian Ballet in 2006. Stephen Baynes created the role of Raymonda on her for his glamorous new production of the same name later that year.

Repertoire highlights

- Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon* 2008, 1999
- Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake* 2008, 2007
- *Don Quixote* 2007
- George Balanchine's *Apollo* 2007
- Christopher Wheeldon's *After the Rain* 2007
- *Paquita* 2007
- *Symphonie Fantastique* 2007
- *Les Présages* 2007
- *Raymonda* 2006
- *Giselle* 2006
- *La Bayadère* 1998

Awards

- Gold medallist at the fifth Asian Pacific Ballet Competition 1995
- Silver medallist at the Adeline Genée Awards 1995

You may not know ...

"I enjoy being a mum and having a great family life, as well as a wonderful career. A rewarding challenge!"



YOSVANI RAMOS

“A revelation ... with his smouldering matinee-idol looks, he achieves the extraordinary”

Evening Standard

Yosvani Ramos was born in Camagüey, Cuba and trained at the National Ballet School, going on to dance with Jeune Ballet de France and Ballet de l'Opéra National de Paris after winning the Gold Medal at the Paris International Ballet Competition in 1998. He joined English National Ballet as a Soloist in 1999 and was promoted to Senior Soloist in 2000, then Principal Artist in 2003 after his performance as Franz in *Coppélia*. During his time with English National Ballet he created many pieces in the company's choreographic workshops and was nominated for several years running in the Critics' Circle National Dance Awards. He joined The Australian Ballet as a Principal Artist at the beginning of 2008.

Repertoire highlights

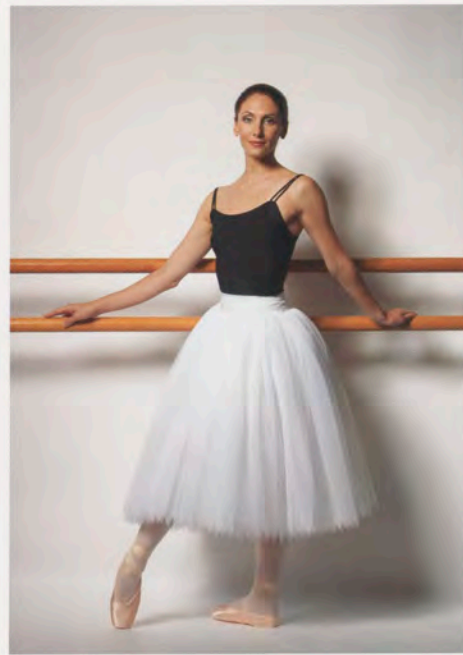
- Des Grieux in Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon* 2008
- Prince Siegfried in Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake* 2008
- Basilio in *Don Quixote* 2006
- Prince Siegfried in *Swan Lake* 2004
- The Prince in *Cinderella* 2003
- Romeo in Rudolf Nureyev's *Romeo & Juliet* 2002
- Albrecht in *Giselle* 2001
- George Balanchine's *Who Cares?* 2000
- Principal Man in *Etudes* 2000
- *Les Sylphides* 2000
- The Prince in *The Nutcracker* 1999
- Franz in *Coppélia* 1999

Awards

- Silver Medal in Nagoya, Japan 1999
- Gold Medal in the International Ballet Competition in Paris 1998
- Silver Medal in Mississippi, USA 1997
- Silver Medal and Best Couple in the Junior division at the International Ballet Competition in Varna, Bulgaria 1996
- Grand Prix and the Best Couple at the first International Ballet Competition in Havana 1995
- Gold Medal at International Ballet Competition in Vignale, Italy 1994

You may not know ...

Yosvani speaks fluent French, Spanish, Portuguese and English and loves cooking Cuban food.



RACHEL RAWLINS

“Every centimetre the classical ballerina”

The Australian

Rachel Rawlins grew up in Canberra where she studied ballet with Del Brady. She completed her dance training in Melbourne, attending the Victorian College of the Arts, the National Theatre Ballet School and The Australian Ballet School. Rachel also studied with the National Ballet School in Canada for six months. She joined The Australian Ballet in 1992 and was promoted to Soloist in 1995. Rachel was invited to become First Soloist with The Royal Ballet in London in 1999, returning to The Australian Ballet in 2002. Her performances with the company have garnered much critical acclaim: her interpretation of Odette in Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake* proclaimed "a mature exploration of all its emotions – love, hurt, anger, despair, madness, hope, serenity"; her balcony scene in *Romeo & Juliet* acclaimed for "fine nuances, caution and curiosity and total fascination with this wonder that has entered her life"; while in *The Sleeping Beauty* she was described as "perfect as Princess Aurora. Her looks and skill are sublime". Rachel was promoted to Principal Artist in 2004.

Repertoire highlights

- *Giselle* 2008, 2006
- Sugar Plum Fairy in Peter Wright's *The Nutcracker* 2007
- Stephen Baynes' *Constant Variants* 2007
- *Promenade in Bodytorque.Generations.* 2007
- Raymonda Grey in *Raymonda* 2006
- Jiří Kylián's *Petite Mort* and *Forgotten Land* 2005

Guest appearances

- Farewell gala for Desmond Kelly, Birmingham Royal Ballet 2008
- Twentieth anniversary gala for Singapore Dance Theatre 2008
- Featured in Michael Carter's experimental film *Principal Role*

Awards

- Khitercs scholarship to travel to New York, Washington, Houston, London and Amsterdam.

You may not know ...

Rachel loves Australia, the beach, the bushland, the animals, the sounds, the skies and the cities. She is grateful to all the people who have supported her and enriched her life.



DANIELLE ROWE

“She shines with the knowledge of a dancer in peak form and energy”

Sunday Herald Sun

Born in Shepparton in 1982, Danielle trained at the Cheryl Bradley Dance Studios in South Australia for eleven years, then with Marie Walton-Mahon in Newcastle before moving to Melbourne to join The Australian Ballet School. During her years as a student Danielle received many scholarships including the Fauldings Bursary, which allowed her to complete her training with the School. Danielle joined The Australian Ballet in 2001. 2005 saw her promoted to Soloist and awarded the Lissa Black Memorial Scholarship, which she used to travel to Europe. After many acclaimed lead performances – critics praising her “seductive assurance” and “transfixing vigour” – Danielle was promoted to Senior Artist in 2007 and Principal Artist in June 2008.

Repertoire highlights

- George Balanchine’s *Ballet Imperial* 2008
- *The Concert* 2008
- Baroness von Rothbart in Graeme Murphy’s *Swan Lake* 2008
- Stanton Welch’s *The Sleeping Beauty* 2007, 2006, 2005
- *Don Quixote* 2007
- Christopher Wheeldon’s *After the Rain*® 2007
- George Balanchine’s *Apollo* 2007
- *Symphonie Fantastique* 2007
- Peter Wright’s *The Nutcracker* 2007
- *Giselle* 2006
- *Raymonda* 2006
- *Stepping Stones* 2005

Awards

- Helpmann Award nomination for best female dancer in *The Sleeping Beauty* 2006
- Telstra People’s Choice Award 2005 and 2003
- Lissa Black Memorial Scholarship 2004

You may not know ...

Danielle enjoys spending time at the beach and would love to learn how to surf one day.



DAMIEN WELCH

“Slick and self-possessed”

Sunday Herald Sun

Damien started training at the Marilyn Jones and Garth Welch School of Ballet at the age of fifteen, and was accepted into The Australian Ballet School at sixteen. In 1992 he joined The Australian Ballet, and was promoted to Soloist in 1996, then to Senior Artist and finally Principal in 1998. Damien has performed works by many famous choreographers, including William Forsythe, Nacho Duato, Stanton Welch, Graeme Murphy, Twyla Tharp, James Kudelka, Gideon Obarzanek and Paul Lightfoot, and has danced in hundreds of ballets. After a stretch with Nederlands Dans Theater I from 2000 to 2002, Damien returned to The Australian Ballet.

Repertoire highlights

- *Symphonie Fantastique* 2007
- Graeme Murphy’s *Swan Lake* 2008, 2007, 2006, 2005, 2004, 2002
- *Les Sylphides* 2006
- *Raymonda* 2006
- Stanton Welch’s *The Sleeping Beauty* 2006, 2005
- *Petite Mort* 2005
- *Bella Figura* 2000
- Kenneth MacMillan’s *Manon* 1999
- *In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated* 1996
- *Madame Butterfly* 1998
- *Cinderella* 1997

Guest appearances

- Houston Ballet 2006 and 2003
- National Ballet of Canada 2000

Awards

- Green Room Award for Best Male Dancer 2002
- Ausdance Award for Best Male Dancer 1998

You may not know ...

When he’s not dancing, Damien spends his time playing guitar, golfing, and being a dad.



LYNETTE WILLS

“Irresistibly glamorous, strong and sexy”

Dance Australia

Adelaide-born Lynette Wills began her ballet training with Betsy Sawers and graduated from The Australian Ballet School in 1990. She joined The Australian Ballet in 1991 after touring with The Dancers Company and was promoted to Senior Artist in 1996. Lynette has toured extensively with the company to Italy, London, Taiwan, China, Japan and the United States, and was promoted to Principal Artist after her fiery and moving portrayal of Baroness von Rothbart in the Sydney premiere of Graeme Murphy’s *Swan Lake* in 2002. In 2005 Lynette visited a Cambodian dance company as The Australian Ballet’s ambassador in a joint initiative between the company and CARE Australia. Lynette became a mother to Sophia Bella Burke in late 2008, a sister to Thomas Burke who was born in 2007.

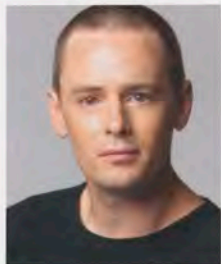
Repertoire highlights

- *Giselle* 2006
- *Raymonda* 2006
- *Stepping Stones* 2005
- *El Tango* 2004
- *The Merry Widow* 2000
- *Don Quixote* 1999
- *Madame Butterfly* 1998
- *In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated* 1996
- *Onegin* 1996
- *Anna Karenina* 1995
- Graeme Murphy’s *Swan Lake* 2008, 2007, 2006, 2005, 2004, 2003
- Stanton Welch’s *The Sleeping Beauty* 2007, 2006

You may not know ...

Lynette rides a motor scooter, walks her labrador Tyler twice a day, and fosters passions for both real estate and photography in her spare time. A collection of Lynette’s photographs of The Australian Ballet’s dancers has just been published.

SENIOR ARTISTS



Marc Cassidy
"Dazzle and strength"
The Age

Marc Cassidy was born in New Zealand and grew up in Central Otago. He joined The Australian Ballet in 1994 and was promoted to Senior Artist in 2000. He admires dancers who are capable of delivering performances with depth, honesty, solid technique and energy – qualities he strives to achieve in his own work. Scholarships have enabled him to travel to Europe and USA for training as well as giving him invaluable insights into international dance. Marc has toured with The Australian Ballet to Japan, USA, New Zealand, China, England and Wales. His most special time onstage has been dancing leading roles opposite his partner Leanne Stojmenov, particularly Basilio to her Kitri in *Don Quixote*.

Repertoire highlights

- *A Suite of Dances* 2008
- *Don Quixote* 2007
- *Le Corsaire* 2007
- *Suite en blanc* 2005
- *La Fille mal gardée* 2004
- *Romeo & Juliet* 2003
- *Mercurial Manoeuvres* 2002
- *Etudes* 2001

You may not know ...

"Since the age of four I have been having a love affair with motorcycles. The smell of the petrol, the sound and feel of them, is as much in my blood as ballet. Ballet and motorcycles aren't really compatible, but as soon as I stop dancing I'm getting one ... again!"



Lana Jones
"Mesmerising in execution"
media-culture.org.au

Lana Jones was born in Coffs Harbour, but moved to Canberra soon after where she commenced her ballet training at the Canberra Youth Ballet School. She moved to Melbourne in 1999 to join The Australian Ballet School, graduating dux to join The Australian Ballet in 2002. In 2005 she was promoted to Coryphée and won the Telstra Ballet Dancer Award, the highest accolade of its kind for Australian Ballet dancers. A rising star within the ranks, Lana's dancing has been critically acclaimed as "joyous and effervescent," with one writer declaring her performance in George Balanchine's *Apollo* as "supernatural". Lana was promoted to Senior Artist in 2009.

Repertoire highlights

- George Balanchine's *Ballet Imperial* 2008
- *Grand pas classique* 2008
- *Semele* 2008
- *La Bayadère* 2008
- Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon* 2008
- *Don Quixote* 2007
- *Diana and Actéon* 2007
- *Apollo* 2007
- *After the Rain* 2007
- Peter Wright's *The Nutcracker* 2007
- *Giselle* 2006
- *Raymonda* 2006
- *Forgotten Land* 2006
- *Petite Mort* 2006

Awards

- Helpmann Award for best female dancer in *Forgotten Land* 2006
- Telstra Ballet Dancer Award 2005

You may not know ...

Lana loves photography, jet skiing and the beach, and has two dogs, Chloe and Rico.



Andrew Killian
"Immaculate and debonair"
Dance Australia

Melbourne-born Andrew Killian, a student of The Australian Ballet School, joined The Australian Ballet in 2000 and was promoted to Senior Artist for the 2009 season. During his time with The Australian Ballet Andrew has thoroughly enjoyed performing leading roles in the company's extensive classical repertoire including, Lescaut in Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon*, Espada in Rudolf Nureyev's *Don Quixote*, the Nutcracker Prince in Peter Wright's *The Nutcracker*, and the Cavalier in George Balanchine's *Ballet Imperial*. Andrew has also been involved in the creation of many new works including Stephen Baynes' *Constant Variants* and Tim Harbour's *Wa*, and has performed in all of The Australian Ballet's *Bodytorque* seasons. In this creative process Andrew enjoys working closely with choreographers and offers a unique versatility that places him in high demand. Andrew has toured with The Australian Ballet to New Zealand, Japan, China, the UK and France.

Repertoire highlights

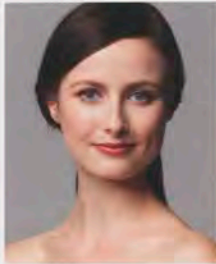
- *Suite of Dances* 2008
- *The Cage* 2008
- *Rites* 2008
- *Spring Waters* 2007
- *After the Rain* 2007
- *Stepping Stones* 2005
- *Forgotten Land* 2005
- *Petite Mort* 2005

Guest Appearances

- *Fool's Paradise* with Morphoses 2009
- *The Nutcracker* with Houston Ballet 2007

You may not know...

Andrew is still struggling to learn how to cook and cried like a baby at his best friend's wedding.



Amber Scott
"A revelation"
The Australian

Amber Scott was born in Brisbane and joined The Australian Ballet School at age eleven. After graduating as dux, Amber joined The Australian Ballet in 2001. In 2003 she spent four months on a dancer exchange at The Royal Danish Ballet, learning the Bournonville technique firsthand. A lyrical and musical dancer, Amber also relishes the virtuoso pieces with exacting technique, as well as contemporary ballets. Amber was promoted to Senior Artist in 2008. Career highlights so far are dancing with Guest Artist Robert Tewsley during the 2008 *Manon* season and dancing *Odette* in Paris and Manchester in 2008.

Repertoire highlights

- Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon* 2008
- *Afternoon of a Faun* 2008
- *The Concert* 2008
- Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake* 2008, 2006, 2005, 2004
- *Le Corsaire* 2007
- *Apollo* 2007
- *Les Sylphides* 2006
- *Le Spectre de la rose* 2006
- *Suite en blanc* 2005
- *Jiří* programme 2005
- *El Tango* 2004

Guest appearances

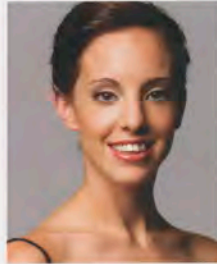
- The Dancers Company tours 2004 and 2003

Awards

- Telstra Ballet Dancer Award and Telstra People's Choice Award 2004
- First place, Junior Asian Pacific Competition, Tokyo 1999
- Adeline Genée Awards, bronze medal 1998

You may not know ...

"I love reading and exploring second-hand bookstores, markets and libraries, and I am a self confessed Francophile."



Leanne Stojmenov
"Flawless"
The Australian

Leanne was born and raised in Perth where she began her initial ballet training with Helen McKay. Her full-time training began at the Graduate College in 1993 under the school's director, Terri Charlesworth, and in 1999 she joined The Australian Ballet. Receiving the New South Wales Friends of The Australian Ballet scholarship in 2004 enabled her to study throughout Europe. Leanne has a high regard for artists who can adapt to all kinds of roles and repertoire. She was promoted to Senior Artist in 2009.

Repertoire highlights

- Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon* 2008
- *Esmeralda* 2008
- *Don Quixote* 2007
- *Apollo* 2007
- Stephen Baynes' *Constant Variants* 2007
- *Le Corsaire* 2007
- *Symphonie Fantastique* 2007
- *Les Présages* 2007
- *Giselle* 2006
- *Stepping Stones* 2005
- Stanton Welch's *The Sleeping Beauty* 2005
- *Grand Tarantella* 2005

Awards

- Telstra Ballet Dancer Award nominee 2007

You may not know ...

"Although for now my passion is in the arts, in the future I would love to open a small business."



Remi Wörtmeyer
"A Prince with personality and promise"
Sydney Morning Herald

Remi began dancing in Adelaide aged three. He trained at Terry Simpson Studios and now holds an Advanced Diploma of Dance (Honours) from The Australian Ballet School. Since graduating as dux in 2001, Remi has danced some of ballet's most recognisable roles, including des Grieux in *Manon*, the poet in *Les Sylphides*, and the princes in *The Nutcracker* and *Aurora's Wedding*. Winning the Diana Ramsay Scholarship in 2003 allowed Remi to tour London's Royal Ballet, Paris Opera Ballet, Italy's Aterballetto, Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo and La Scala Ballet. In 2005 he received a standing ovation after dancing *Grand Tarantella*, a performance that earned him the inaugural Walter Bourke Award and the opportunity to dance with New York's American Ballet Theatre in 2006. Remi returned to New York to learn Jerome Robbins' *A Suite of Dances* with New York City Ballet in 2008.

Repertoire highlights

- *A Suite of Dances* 2008
- Peter Wright's *The Nutcracker* 2007
- *Symphonie Fantastique* 2007
- *La Favorita* 2007
- Stanton Welch's *The Sleeping Beauty* 2007, 2005
- *Romeo & Juliet* 2003

Awards

- Green Room Award
- Helpmann Award nomination
- Asian Pacific International Ballet Competition, silver medal

You may not know ...

Remi will make choreographic debut with a piece for this year's *Bodytorque* season.

SOLOISTS



Gina Brescianini

Born in Sydney, Gina studied at the McDonald College with Josephine Jason and Allan Cross before joining The Australian Ballet School in 1998, and The Australian Ballet in 2001. Gina enjoys performing all genres of ballets, particularly the wide range performed by The Australian Ballet, and finds variety helps get ultimate expression from a dancer's body. Her favourite genre, however, is the story ballet, and the experience of getting lost in a character. Gina was promoted to Coryphée in 2005 and Soloist in 2007.

Repertoire highlights

- George Balanchine's *Ballet Imperial* 2008
- Jerome Robbins' *The Concert* 2008
- Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon* 2008
- Peter Wright's *The Nutcracker* 2007
- Don Quixote 2007
- Apollo 2007
- Giselle 2006
- Rites 2006
- Stepping Stones 2005
- Forgotten Land 2005
- Petite Mort 2005
- Sechs Tänze 2005

Guest appearances

- The Dancers Company tour 2007

Awards

- Telstra Ballet Dancer Award winner 2006

You may not know ...

Gina practices Kundalini yoga and meditation and has completed a course in teaching yoga to children. She has a Pomeranian puppy called Billy.



Juliet Burnett

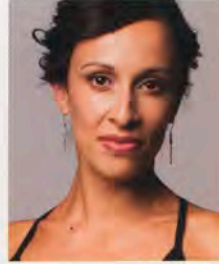
Born in Sydney, Juliet trained in the Cecchetti method with Valerie Jenkins, and later with Christine Keith. She was also fortunate to receive special coaching from the late Valrene Tweedie, a great mentor for Juliet. She was accepted into The Australian Ballet School in 2000 and joined The Australian Ballet in 2003. In 2004 Juliet was a guest artist on The Dancers Company tour, performing as Clara in Leigh Rowles' production of *The Nutcracker*, a role created on her while a graduating-year student at The Australian Ballet School. In 2008, while still a Coryphée, she was chosen by choreographer Matjash Mrozewski to create the title role in his ballet *Semele*, in which her performance was widely praised, one critic describing her as "captivating". Juliet was promoted to Soloist for the 2009 season.

Repertoire highlights

- Matjash Mrozewski's *Semele* 2008
- Paquita 2008, 2007
- George Balanchine's *Apollo* 2007
- Don Quixote 2007
- Les Sylphides 2006
- Stanton Welch's *The Sleeping Beauty* 2005
- Le Conservatoire 2005
- The Four Temperaments 2003

You may not know...

Juliet's mum is Indonesian, coming from a large family of dancers, actors, musicians, poets and playwrights, and her grandmother was the Sultan's principal dancer in his court in Java. Juliet lives with her husband, DJ and music producer Nick Thayer, and their two rabbits Jack and Sadie. She is passionate about animal and environmental welfare and social justice.



Jane Casson

Auckland-born Jane graduated from the New Zealand School of Dance with a scholarship to join Royal New Zealand Ballet in 1998. Three years later, attracted by the diversity of the company's repertoire, she moved across the Tasman to join The Australian Ballet and is now proud to call Australia home.

During her time with the company Jane has enjoyed performing numerous classical and contemporary works by choreographers such as Graeme Murphy, Jiří Kylián, Jerome Robbins, Nicolo Fonte and Stephen Baynes. Jane particularly revels in strong and dramatic characters such as the Baroness von Rothbart in Murphy's *Swan Lake*, her favourite role to date. Jane has toured extensively with the company to China, Japan, London, Wales and Paris. She has a great appreciation of languages is currently studying French. Jane was promoted to Soloist in 2006.

Repertoire highlights

- Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon* 2008
- Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake* 2008
- Jerome Robbins' *The Cage* 2008
- Peter Wright's *The Nutcracker* 2007
- Paquita pas de trois 2008
- Les Présages 2007
- Don Quixote 2007
- Giselle 2006
- Bodytorque 2006
- Grand Tarantella 2005

You may not know.....

Jane is studying business management and dreams of owning her own online business.



Tzu-Chao Chou

Born in Taiwan, Tzu Chao studied at the Lan Yang Dance Centre, joining the centre's dance troupe in 1993. In 2003 he commenced an Advanced Diploma of Dance at The Australian Ballet School, going on to attend classes with the American Ballet Theatre Studio Company and the National Ballet School of Canada as part of a student exchange. Tzu-Chao joined The Australian Ballet in 2005, with his performance in *The Flower Festival in Genzano* prompting a journalist to compare his "buoyancy, power and fluency" to that of a young Baryshnikov. He was promoted to Soloist at the beginning of the 2008 season.

Repertoire highlights

- La Favorita 2007
- Bodytorque 2007
- Le Spectre de la rose 2006
- Bodytorque 2006
- Flower Festival in Genzano 2005

Awards

- Telstra Ballet Dancer Award nominee 2008
- The Australian Ballet Society Scholarship 2004
- Asian Pacific International Ballet Competition, gold medalist 2003
- Kelvin Coe Memorial Scholarship 2003
- Ballet Teachers' Workshop Award 2002

You may not know ...

"My name in Chinese means super child. When I was younger I always dreamed of being a super hero!"



Matthew Donnelly

Born in New South Wales, Matthew trained in Newcastle before joining The Australian Ballet School. After graduating with honours in 1996, he was invited to join The Royal Danish Ballet, where he worked with some of the world's leading choreographers including Maurice Béjart, who recreated a solo for him in *Gaité Parisienne*. A memorable moment was performing *Return to the Strange Land* for Her Majesty Queen Margrethe of Denmark in 1998. Matthew returned to The Australian Ballet in 1999. While enjoying the physical challenges of the contemporary works, classic storytelling is his passion. Matthew was promoted to Soloist in 2005.

Repertoire highlights

- Stephen Baynes' *Night Path* 2008
- Stephen Baynes' *Constant Variants* 2007
- Raymonda 2006
- La Fille mal gardée 2004
- Romeo & Juliet 2003
- The Sentimental Bloke 2002
- In the Upper Room 2002
- Return to the Strange Land 1998
- Fearful Symmetries 1997

Awards

- Adeline Genée Awards, Silver Medal 1995
- Asian Pacific International Ballet Competition, Silver Medal 1995
- Adeline Genée Awards, Bronze Medal 1994

You may not know ...

"Overseas touring gives me a fantastic opportunity to combine my passions for dance and travel. I enjoy wandering the streets of cities and immersing myself in the sights and culture."



Daniel Gaudiello

Brisbane-born Daniel Gaudiello strapped on his first pair of dancing shoes at the age of six at the Johnny Young Talent School then Promenade Dance. Later he completed the Queensland Dance School of Excellence and Queensland Ballet professional year before being accepted into The Australian Ballet School, where he performed as an exchange student with the National Ballet School of Canada and the School of American Ballet. Daniel joined The Australian Ballet in 2004 and in early 2007 participated in classes with some of the world's finest ballet companies in London, Amsterdam, Munich and Paris. Daniel was promoted to Soloist for the 2008 season and made his choreographic debut with a piece called *Notte in Bianco* for *Bodytorque.To the Pointe*.

Repertoire highlights

- Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon* 2008
- Stanton Welch's *The Sleeping Beauty* 2007
- Don Quixote 2007
- Stephen Baynes' *Constant Variants* 2007
- Les Présages 2007
- Giselle 2008, 2006
- Forgotten Land 2005
- Continuum© 2004

Awards

- Telstra Ballet Dancer Award Winner 2007
- Freda Irving Scholarship 2006
- BJ Sutton Scholarship

You may not know ...

"I love to camp on the beach, spending time with my family, and my two dogs Chloe and Rico."

SOLOISTS



Luke Ingham

Luke Ingham was born in Mt Gambier, South Australia. His childhood was spent chasing cows and driving tractors on the family farm. Inspired by Mikhail Baryshnikov, he began dance classes aged five, joining The Australian Ballet School in 2001. After joining The Australian Ballet in 2004, Luke was the recipient of the Young and Emerging Arts Initiative Award from the Australia Council, which enabled him to attend classes with New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Pacific Northwest Ballet, San Francisco Ballet and Toronto Ballet. He was promoted to Soloist at the beginning of 2008.

Repertoire highlights

- *Afternoon of a Faun* 2008
- *Don Quixote* 2007
- *After the Rain* 2007
- *Diana and Actéon* 2007
- *Rites* 2006
- *Giselle* 2006
- *Les Sylphides*, The Dancers Company tour 2006
- *Auroras Wedding*, The Dancers Company tour 2006
- *Suite en blanc* 2005
- *Stepping Stones* 2005
- *Forgotten Land* 2005

Guest appearances

- The Dancers Company tour 2006
- Awards
- Telstra People's Choice Award 2007
- Australian Arts Council Young and Emerging Artist Award 2006

You may not know ...

When he's not dancing, Luke enjoys surfing, golf, swimming and skateboarding.



Kevin Jackson

Born in Perth, Kevin commenced his dance training at the age of seven with the Shirley Farrell Academy of Dance. He studied a variety of dance styles, as well as taking singing lessons, and went on to perform in several stage musicals. In 1999 he undertook a year of classical training in Perth under Adrienne Eastoe before joining The Australian Ballet in 2003. Kevin enjoys the technique and artistry demanded by many different kinds of works but holds the story ballet near to his heart. He was promoted to Soloist at the beginning of 2007.

Repertoire highlights

- Matjash Mrozewski's *Semele* 2008
- *The Concert* 2008
- *A Suite of Dances* 2008
- Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon* 2008
- *Apollo* 2007
- *The Sleeping Beauty*, Japan 2007
- *Symphonie Fantastique* 2007
- *Diana and Actéon* 2007
- *Don Quixote* 2007
- *Les Présages* 2007
- *Rites* 2006
- *Raymonda* 2006
- *Stepping Stones* 2006
- *Forgotten Land* 2006

Awards

- Telstra Ballet Dancer Award nominee 2008
- The Australian Ballet Society Scholarship
- Khitercs Foundation 2007

You may not know ...

Kevin enjoys taking long walks, getting lost and exploring places.



Paul Knobloch

Canberra-born Paul Knobloch trained at The Canberra Dance Development Centre and The Australian Ballet School, graduating with Honours. He joined the West Australian Ballet in 1997, dancing many principal and soloist roles. In 1998 he toured Europe, accepting a position at the English National Ballet and in 2002 he joined The Australian Ballet. He was awarded a scholarship by the company which he used to travel to the United States, working with American Ballet Theatre, New York City Ballet, San Francisco Ballet and Pacific Northwest Ballet. In 2006 Paul made his choreographic debut, creating *FourTune for BodyTorque.Face the Music*. In 2007 he created a new work *Valetta* for the company's *Paquita* season, which was also performed in Brisbane at Telstra Ballet in the Gardens.

Guest Appearances

- The Dancers Company tour 2007

Repertoire highlights

- *The Possibility Space* 2008
- *Le Corsaire* 2007
- *Don Quixote* 2007
- *After the Rain* 2007
- Stanton Welch's *The Sleeping Beauty* 2007
- *Les Sylphides* 2006
- *Stepping Stones* 2006
- *Petite Mort* 2006
- *Forgotten Land* 2006
- *Le Conservatoire* 2005
- *Symphony in C* 2004

Awards

- Lady Mollie Askin Ballet Travelling Scholarship
- Marten Bequest Ballet Scholarship
- ACT Young Australian of the Year 2001

You may not know ...

Paul is a commissioned artist and exhibits in galleries around Melbourne.



Miwako Kubota

Miwako was born in Japan and began her ballet training with Fumika Morishima in Okinawa. Before joining The Australian Ballet School she trained with Kimie Sasamoto and Iwao Nagae in Tokyo. In 1997 Miwako was awarded the Idemitsu Scholarship at the sixth Asia Pacific Competition. After graduating from The Australian Ballet School in 1998 with honours she joined The Australian Ballet, going on to perform many ballets, including principal roles, and tour to Japan, New Zealand, China, London and New York with the company. Miwako was promoted to the rank of Soloist in 2007.

Repertoire highlights

- *Grand pas classique* 2008
- Peter Wright's *The Nutcracker* 2007
- *Apollo* 2007
- *Flower Festival in Genzano* 2005
- *Les Sylphides* 2006
- *Symphony in C* 2004
- *Serenade* 2004
- *In the Night* 2003
- *Bella Figura* 2003
- *Beyond Bach* 2001

Guest appearances

- The Dancers Company tour 2006

You may not know ...

Miwako loves horse racing, knitting, cooking and is a proud Melbourne Storm supporter.



Laura Tong

Laura was born in Whangarei, New Zealand and grew up in Northland, NZ, as well as living in Singapore and London. She started dancing at four when she began going along with her older sister to ballet and piano lessons. Laura studied with Maureen Ax, Phillipa Campbell and Joye Lowe in New Zealand, then at the English National Ballet School from 1998 to 2000. Upon graduation Laura entered the English National Ballet before joining The Australian Ballet in 2004. Key roles she performed with the English National Ballet include *White Ladies in Etudes*, lead Swans in *Swan Lake*, Soloist in *Paquita*, *Raymonda*, *Prayer in Coppélia*, Winter Fairy in *Cinderella*, as well as roles in *Romeo & Juliet*, *Nutcracker*, *Giselle*, *Rite of Spring*, *Les Sylphides*, *Trapeze*, *Square Dance*.

Laura has toured to Japan, Greece, France and the UK.

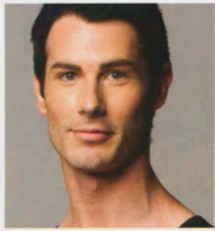
Repertoire highlights

- Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon* 2008
- *The Concert* 2008
- *Don Quixote* 2007
- Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake* 2004
- Stephen Baynes' *Constant Variants* 2007
- *Les Sylphides* 2006
- *Giselle* 2006
- *Rites* 2006

You may not know ...

Laura has three sisters; a scientist, a vet and an economist.

CORYPHEES



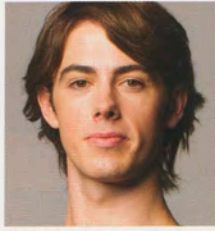
Ben Davis



Jia Yin Du



Amy Harris



Rudy Hawkes



Robyn Hendricks



Natalie Hill



Reiko Hombo



Ty King-Wall



Jacob Sofer



Vivienne Wong



Stephanie Williams



Andrew Wright

CORPS DE BALLET



Dimity Azoury



Kismet Bourne



Annie Carroll



Jacinta Christos



Brett Chynoweth



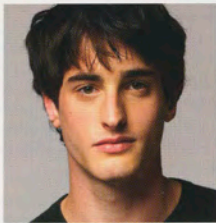
Kristy Corea*



Eloise Fryer



Rohan Furnell



Noah Gumbert



Chengwu Guo



Haiana Hills



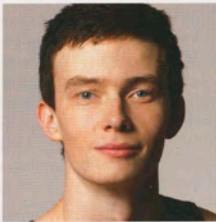
John-Paul Idaszak



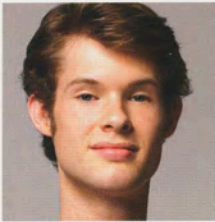
Natasha Kusen



Brooke Lockett



Jarryd Madden



Luke Marchant



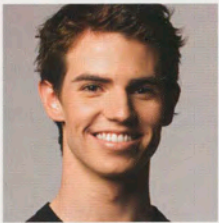
Heidi Martin



Karen Nanasca



Gabriella Raetz



Jared Rainford - Wright



Mitchell Rayner



Sharni Spencer



Dana Stephensen



Garry Stocks



Valerie Tereshchenko



Charles Thompson



Sarah Thompson



Alice Topp

*Corps de ballet position endowed by the Paulette Carson Scholarship

CONDUCTORS



Nicolette Fraillon
Music Director & Chief
Conductor

Nicolette Fraillon began her music studies on violin and piano at an early age. At sixteen she conducted her first concert with the Victorian Junior Symphony Orchestra. She graduated on viola from Melbourne University in 1982, gaining an equal first place in her year in Performance. From 1984 to 1987 she furthered her instrumental studies at the Hochschule für Musik in Vienna and 1987 to 1988 in Hannover. During her time in Germany and Austria, Nicolette toured with many orchestras including the Salzburger Chamber Ensemble and the Chamber Orchestra of Bassano; and was a member of the Haydn Quartet, based at the Esterhazy Palace in Eisenstadt.

In 1990 Nicolette moved to the Netherlands where she became Assistant Musical Director for the 1991-92 season of Les Misérables in Amsterdam and The Hague. In 1992 she was admitted to the Netherlands Broadcasting Association's International Conductors' Masterclass, resulting in a performance with the Dutch Radio Symphony Orchestra in the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. This led to an invitation to conduct for the Nederlands Dans Theater. She was then invited to become Music Director and Chief Conductor of the National Ballet of the Netherlands; working with such renowned choreographers as Hans van Manen, Toer van Schayk, Rudi van Dantzig and Krzysztof Pastor; and conducting numerous world premieres. During the following five years she worked with the North Holland Philharmonic Orchestra, the New Sinfonietta Amsterdam, Noord Nederlands Orchestra, the Gelders Orchestra in Arnhem, the Limburg Symphony Orchestra, the Residentie Orchestra in The Hague, the Kanazawa Chamber Orchestra (Japan) and the Finnish Ballet (Helsinki).

In 1998 she took up the position of Director at the School of Music, Australian National University, and

continued her conducting work with the West Australian Ballet, the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, the Australian Youth Orchestra and the Canberra Symphony Orchestra.

She debuted with The Australian Ballet in 2002, conducting *Spartacus*, and was then invited by David McAllister to become Music Director and Chief Conductor, beginning in January 2003. Since joining the company, Nicolette has conducted all programmes for The Australian Ballet, including three overseas tours, and has been a guest conductor for the San Francisco Ballet. Following The Australian Ballet's 2005 tour to the UK, Nicolette was, in 2006, invited back to conduct *The Sleeping Beauty* with Birmingham Royal Ballet. In 2007 Nicolette guested with the New York City Ballet. In 2008 she returned to the Birmingham Royal Ballet for a *Nutcracker* season, then finished the year with a New Years Gala in Skopje with the Macedonian Philharmonic Orchestra.



Tom Woods
Guest conductor

Conductor Tom Woods is widely considered to be one of the leading talents in Australia's musical life. He has established a reputation conducting symphonic concerts, opera and ballet.

Born in Tanzania to Australian parents, Tom grew up in Perth, Western Australia, studying conducting, cello and piano at the West Australian Conservatorium before undertaking conducting studies in Moscow under Maestro Vladimir Ponkin. He conducted the Garmonia and Kompositor orchestras in Moscow before returning to Australia and joining Opera Australia.

Between 1993 and 1997, Tom was Assistant Conductor for over 60 operas, assisting such maestri as Richard Hickox, Simone Young, Christopher Hogwood, Sir Charles Mackerras, Richard Bonyngé and Carlo Felice Cillario. He became one of the youngest conductors in the company's history with his debut *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at age 23, to critical acclaim. Subsequent operas with Opera Australia received outstanding reviews.

In Australia, Tom has conducted the Sydney Symphony Sinfonia, West Australian Symphony, Queensland Symphony, Queensland Philharmonic, Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra, State Orchestra of Victoria, Sydney Opera House Orchestra and was the Artistic Director of the Sydney Youth Orchestra until 2005. He has conducted in Hong Kong and Russia, and in 2001, conducted the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra and the London Festival Orchestra on tour to Brunei, Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta, as well as touring the Sydney Youth Orchestra to Denmark and Sweden.

In 2002 and 2003 Tom Woods conducted for Opera Australia, Queensland Ballet, and Orchestra Victoria in a series of operatic and chamber concerts, and led the Australian Youth Orchestra and Sydney Philharmonia in two

world premieres. Later in 2003 he made his debut with The Australian Ballet in performances of *The Three Musketeers*.

In 2004 Tom conducted the Queensland Ballet, Orchestra Victoria and Willoughby Symphony Orchestra in Bach's B Minor Mass. He also led Opera Australia's world premiere performances of *Madeline Lee*, conducted *Messiah* with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and continued as Artistic Director of the SYO.

In Opera Australia's 2005 and 2006 seasons, Tom conducted seasons of *La Bohème*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Turandot* and *Carmen*. In 2007, he conducted a new season-highlight production of Andre Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *La Traviata* for Opera Australia and travelled to Adelaide for *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with State Opera of South Australia; Tom also conducted concerts with the Christchurch Symphony and led many performances by the Australian Ballet.

He currently holds the position of Manager, Artistic Planning of The Queensland Orchestra and is Principal Conductor of the Christchurch Symphony, New Zealand. In 2008, he conducted *La bohème* in Sydney, *Madama Butterfly* in Melbourne, *Il Trovatore* in Christchurch and *Rigoletto* in Adelaide. In 2009, he leads performances of *Madama Butterfly* and *Streetcar* for Opera Australia, *The Magic Flute* for Southern Opera, conducts the New Year's Eve Gala at Biwako Hall, Japan and makes many appearances with the Christchurch Symphony.

ARTISTIC STAFF



Danilo Radojevic
Associate Artistic Director

Danilo Radojevic, a dancer with a dynamic style and exceptional technical skill, catapulted to international status at the age of nineteen when he won the Gold Medal at the 1977 International Ballet Competition in Moscow, the only Australian to win this prestigious award throughout the Moscow competition's long history.

Soon after, Danilo left The Australian Ballet to become a Soloist with American Ballet Theatre in New York. He remained with the company for fifteen years, visiting his homeland in 1978 and 1979 with Stars of the World Ballet and in 1991 with Rudolf Nureyev's last tour. Danilo was promoted to Principal Dancer of American Ballet Theatre by Artistic Director Mikhail Baryshnikov in 1981 and performed the leading roles in many of the classics, often alternating with Baryshnikov himself.

After retiring from dancing, Danilo taught at American Ballet Theatre, New York Dance Studios and leading universities in California, gaining a reputation as an outstanding technical coach. He returned to join the ballet staff of The Australian Ballet in 1997 at the invitation of former Artistic Director Ross Stretton.

Danilo was appointed Associate Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet in July 2001.



Mark Kay
Ballet Master & Choreologist

Mark Kay took up the profession of choreologist after studying Benesh Movement Notation at The Australian Ballet School. In 1986 he went to London to complete the course at the Benesh Institute and while there notated and worked with choreographer Gillian Lynne on the musical *The Phantom of the Opera*.

He joined The Royal Ballet as a freelance notator in 1987 and worked on Wayne Eagling's *Beauty and the Beast* and Dowell's *Swan Lake*.

After a twelve-month repose in Australia, Mark returned to London in 1988 to work for English National Ballet. During his five years with the company he performed, notated, and worked with many choreographers and directors, including Peter Schaufuss, Ronald Hynd, Kenneth MacMillan, Nicholas Beriosoff, Ben Stevenson and Ivan Nagy.

As a freelancer, Mark has staged Peter Schaufuss' *Nutcracker* for the Graz Oper Ballett in Austria in 1992, Rudolf Nureyev's *Don Quixote* for the Royal Swedish Ballet in 1994 and for The Royal Ballet in 2001, and taught Christopher Wheeldon's *Continuum*® for Dutch National Ballet (2005) and Zurich Ballet (2006).

In 1993 then Artistic Director Maina Gielgud invited Mark to join The Australian Ballet as the company's choreologist, where he continues to notate and stage ballet, as well as perform character roles such as Sancho Panza in *Don Quixote*. For The Dancers Company, he has been responsible for teaching, staging, and recently performing the role of The Head Mistress in *Graduation Ball*.



Noelle Shader
Ballet Mistress
& Rehabilitation Facilitator

Noelle Shader was born in Caracas, Venezuela and emigrated to the United States, where she studied at the School of American Ballet in New York City. She was one of the last intakes into the school under Balanchine's direction. In 1976 Noelle joined the New York City Ballet and remained with the company until 1981.

Emigrating to Australia, Noelle worked as a classical dance lecturer at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts with Dame Peggy van Praagh, and in 1984 assumed the position of Ballet Mistress with the West Australian Ballet.

In 1989 she joined The Australian Ballet as Ballet Mistress under the direction of Maina Gielgud. After six years she returned to freelance work as a full-time classical dance lecturer at the Victorian College of the Arts; restaging choreographic works and teaching in the larger dance community.

She rejoined The Australian Ballet as Ballet Mistress in 1997 and continues as Ballet Mistress and Dance Rehabilitator for the company under Artistic Director David McAllister.

Over the years, Noelle has been involved in the premieres of many ballets now in the company's repertoire, including *Nutcracker*, *Divergence*, *Rites*, *Bella Figura*, *Requiem* and *Madame Butterfly* and has enjoyed working with great artists, choreographers and directors.

Noelle has been a dance panel member for the Department of the Arts (WA) and the Australia Council, and has choreographed works for West Australian Ballet and for the Festival of Perth.

In 2003 Noelle was awarded a Centenary Medal.



Fiona Tonkin
Principal Coach
& Ballet Mistress

Fiona Tonkin began her career in Wellington where she joined the Royal New Zealand Ballet in 1979. Her association with The Australian Ballet began in 1980 when Marilyn Jones invited her to join the company.

By 1987 she had become a Principal Artist, renowned for her interpretative artistry, classicism and technical versatility. On her retirement in 1993, she had danced almost every major female role in the company's repertoire.

Career highlights with The Australian Ballet include her performances at the Royal Opera House, the Kirov Theatre and the Metropolitan Opera House and opening the company's, 1992 London Coliseum season as Giselle.

She appeared as a Guest Artist with the Kirov Ballet in *Swan Lake*, on Rudolf Nureyev's Farewell Tour, and danced lead roles in the ABC TV broadcasts of *La Fille mal gardée* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Fiona received Green Room Awards in 1988 and 1989.

Fiona returned to New Zealand in 1994 where she completed a Bachelor of Arts at Canterbury University while guest teaching in New Zealand and Australia. In 1999 she completed The Australian Ballet School's Professional Dance Teachers Course and was awarded the Australian Multicultural Foundation Scholarship.

In 2000 Artistic Director Matz Skoog appointed her Rehearsal Director of the Royal New Zealand Ballet. She continued to work with Skoog in London as Assistant Artistic Director of the English National Ballet in 2002. Fiona has worked with many choreographers including Stanton Welch, Mark Morris, Christopher Hampson and Mark Baldwin.

Fiona returned to The Australian Ballet in 2003 at the invitation of David McAllister.



Wendy Walker
Ballet Mistress & Répétiteur

Born in Adelaide, Wendy Walker studied ballet with Joanne Priest before attending The Australian Ballet School before joining the Company in 1969. She was fortunate to work with Ashton, Butler, Tudor, Massine and Nureyev and was promoted to Senior Soloist. In 1975 and 1976 she danced with London Festival Ballet, working with Beryl Grey, Beriosoff, Ronald Hynde, and taking outside classes with John O'Brien. Returning to Australia, Wendy continued dancing with The Australian Ballet and assisted Anne Woolliams and Peggy van Praagh.

In 1978 a Churchill Fellowship enabled her to undertake a Benesh Movement Notation course at The Institute of Choreology in London and she worked with Sir Kenneth MacMillan, Nederlands Dans Theater and Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet. In 1980, Wendy joined American Ballet Theatre as a choreologist, working closely with Tudor, MacMillan, Makarova, Tetley, John Taros, Mark Morris, Twyla Tharp and Artistic Director Mikhail Baryshnikov. Promoted to Ballet Mistress in 1984, Wendy co-staged Balanchine's *Bourrée Fantasque* for American Ballet Theatre, Makarova's *La Bayadère* for Rio de Janeiro, MacMillan's *Romeo and Juliet* in Buenos Aires, and *Manon* in Vienna.

Wendy returned to The Australian Ballet as Ballet Mistress in 1994. She enjoys a close working relationship with choreographer Steven Baynes and has been inspired by working with Nacho Duato, William Forsythe and Graeme Murphy. She takes particular joy in coaching the Corps de Ballet and was involved in the restaging of *Les Siphides* and *Les Présages*. In 2003 Wendy Walker was awarded the Centenary Medal for her services to Dance in Australia.

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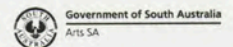
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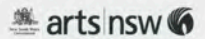
Staging Assistant
Scott Moon

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Italics Principal
+ Principal 1st Violin
* Associate Principal
** Deputy Principal

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