

THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

TALKING POINTE



SUMMER 2021

The Australian Ballet acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.



Principal Artist Benedicte Bemet. Photo Kate Longley

Welcome from the Philanthropy Director.



Philanthropy Director Kenneth Watkins AM
with Soloist and Philanthropy Ambassador Jill Ogai.
Photo Pierre Toussaint

“Without the *power of you*,
we would not look as we do today.”

What a time we're in. As I stop to reflect on the second half of this year, I experience a real sensation of déjà vu. Yes, a weariness from the rollercoaster ride of the past months, but predominantly a palpable feeling of optimism for what's to come, fuelled by a wholehearted appreciation for everyone who worked together to lead us to this milestone.

Last year was hard, but this year has been harder still and - while we are fortunate and incredibly grateful to be performing again - we are not out of the woods yet. We depend on ticket sales for over 60% of our annual income, so the intermittent absence of live performance during 2021 has been a very real threat to The Australian Ballet as we know and love it.

Fortunately, because of the prudent leadership shown by our board and management over many years, we have been able to dip into our available reserves. We have also been buoyed by the support of our philanthropic community, sponsors and governments, enabling us to protect our financial resources and support our people so that we can return to the stage in the best possible shape now vaccination rates are high and COVID restrictions have eased.

I would like to acknowledge the dedication and influence of Natasha Bowness, President of Annual Giving, and Jane Freudenstein, Chair of The Australian Ballet Foundation Board, as well as our Foundation Board members. The generosity they have inspired has continued to expand and enrich the support network around the Ballet.

Now in its eleventh year, The Australian Ballet Foundation Board exists to attract, encourage and honour acts of generosity, and its members have been instrumental in cultivating the necessary support to help the company weather this storm.

As ever, through the highs and the lows, you - our evergreen community of ballet lovers and supporters - have continued to show up for us and have proved yourselves to be the backbone of The Australian Ballet. Every generous gift, bequest and ticket donation has played a crucial part in helping our national ballet company withstand the challenges we face. Collectively you have helped to keep our lights on, our artists dancing, and our art form thriving. Quite simply, without the 'power of you', we would not look as we do today.

So, as we reach the culmination of 2021 and look forward to the untapped potential of a new year and David Hallberg's visionary second season, I want to thank you for your unwavering belief in us. We exist to perform, but we can't do that without you. You are part of the fabric of our great company and your generosity will keep us dancing for years to come.

Kenneth Watkins AM
Philanthropy Director

Thank you from the
President of Annual Giving.

A message of appreciation

As we emerge from another period of great highs and lows – one that sadly featured the postponement of many performances we so desperately wanted to experience – I have so much gratitude and admiration for everything we have overcome together.

While at times this has been undeniably disheartening, the company found itself in a once-in-a-lifetime situation: a moment of stillness and an opportunity to reflect, recharge and refocus until it was time for 'Curtain Up' again.

Like swans gliding gracefully on a lake while their legs work beneath, there's been a wealth of activity happening behind the scenes at The Australian Ballet. During this period, I've observed the company's leadership and commitment to its people and audiences manifested in a host of innovative and meaningful ways, propelling the company onwards so that we were ready to perform as soon as possible and without anything holding us back.

One of the reasons the company is still here today – resilient, energised and dancing strongly towards a brighter future – is you: our devoted supporters, patrons, bequestors and ticket donors. Our giving community comprises people from every corner of Australia who want to see The Australian Ballet flourish into the future and who have rallied around to preserve and protect what they love. And, in a time when we have all struggled, I have been so inspired by the acts of generosity from this collective and honoured to welcome many new patrons to the Annual Giving program and our Ballet family.



President, Annual Giving Natasha Bowness. Photo Pierre Toussaint

To everyone who has been there for us – those who have given more, those who have given again, and those who have felt compelled to give for the first time – thank you. The power of your philanthropy and the impact of generational giving has helped sustain the company and will continue to play a vital role in its future success.

I'm sure you will have missed seeing our company on stage just as much as I have this year and I know we will all be looking forward to supporting the dancers and marvelling in David's new vision for The Australian Ballet when the curtain goes up on the spectacular 2022 season.

Until then, I hope you'll take great joy from reading about some of the gifted and talented members of the company, whose resilience and ingenuity has ensured we have continued to thrive in the face of adversity.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which reads "Natasha Bowness". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'N' and 'B'.

Natasha Bowness
President, Annual Giving



Coryphée Coco Mathieson and Soloist Imogen Chapman. Photo Kate Longley



Soloist Rina Nemoto. Photo Kate Longley



Artistic Director David Hallberg with Artists of The Australian Ballet. Photo Pierre Toussaint



The world at our feet

How David Hallberg is taking us on a *global voyage* of artistic exploration and expansion.

When David Hallberg took hold of the reins at The Australian Ballet, he shared his aspiration to take the company further afield - to show everyone in Australia and the rest of the world what we're doing and how current and vital it is.

And, while one thing or another (COVID, we're looking at you!) may have curtailed some of his immediate plans, it has not stood in the way of David's commitment to bring the best of today's creatives and works to our audiences and dancers. Meaning that, when it's time for the curtain to rise on Season 2022, David and the dancers will be ready and raring to show you - our devoted community - what we have all been missing: the unique and unifying experience of dance.

So, in a time when we still can't travel as freely as we would like, we hear how David Hallberg is bringing the world to us, and which creators he is collaborating with to elevate and enhance The Australian Ballet in new and exciting ways.

Harlequinade

In 2022, we can look forward to being delighted by Alexei Ratmansky's meticulously reconstructed and lively revival of Marius Petipa's *Harlequinade*. Originally commissioned by David McAllister to bring his final season with The Australian Ballet to a crescendo, the ballet will now be presented under the directorship of David Hallberg, who serendipitously danced the role of Pierrot in American Ballet Theatre's 2018 premiere season of the revival.

"I've had the pleasure of knowing Alexei for 10 years at American Ballet Theatre and now he's bringing *Harlequinade* to Australia, which is really special. To see someone I've known from my dancing career come and coach these dancers in a work that had its birth with us in New York has been really exciting.

"With commedia dell'arte, everything is very gestural and expressive. The dancers are embracing it all and they're willing to take the plunge. Ballet sometimes teaches you to do what you're told but *Harlequinade* demands that the artists use their imagination and, as I've seen in rehearsals, this is where it's coming alive. It's amazing to watch!"





Senior Artist Callum Linnane. Photo Kate Longley

Kunstkamer

Kunstkamer marks a new horizon for The Australian Ballet. Never before have we presented contemporary dance of this scale and ambition. Commissioned for the 60th anniversary of Nederlands Dans Theater, the world's most celebrated contemporary company, *Kunstkamer* brings together the elements of movement, song, film and spoken word into one stimulating experience. As audiences, we will be enveloped into an immersive world we haven't seen in dance before, as the dancers absorb movement they haven't yet expressed as artists.

"*Kunstkamer* is a colossal work, created in the most modern way by some of the great choreographers of our time. It shows the immersive power of art by bringing the audience into a world that isn't immediately obvious but is clearly intriguing.

"This is a style of work that has never been experienced at The Australian Ballet, which is one of the reasons I wanted to bring it to our shores. Its four creators are the most sought-after choreographers working today and *Kunstkamer* is undeniably a feast for the modern eye - one that will show Australian audiences what else is possible in dance."

Instruments of Dance

Justin Peck's *Everywhere We Go* - a nine-movement, 42-minute work that was a huge success when it premiered at New York City Ballet - is one of the highlights in a triple bill of contemporary works profiling choreographers from three of the world's top companies. Also featuring The Royal Ballet's Wayne McGregor and The Australian Ballet's Resident Choreographer Alice Topp, *Instruments of Dance* will bring together fascinating works from three corners of the globe to chart the evolving shape of dance and music in the 21st century.

"Justin and I have known each other for a number of years and I'm really excited to be bringing him to Australia in 2022.

"*Everywhere We Go* is completely original in every way. It's a dance with an abundance of humanity and I have a great feeling about how our open and eager artists will absorb the physicality in his work.

"Musically, *Everywhere We Go* is one of a kind. The music has never been recorded, but it's become a crowd favourite in New York. People crave it and I know that its energy and optimism will really resonate with Australian audiences too. I'm so excited for the dancers and audiences to experience Justin's originality and uniqueness of movement and creation."



Artists Of The Royal Ballet. Photography By Tristram Kenton ©2018 Roh

Rising through the ranks

Reward and recognition for seven *hard-working* dancers.

Following a successful and emotional Sydney season earlier this year, a raft of well-deserved promotions were made throughout the ranks of the company. In an all-company meeting Artistic Director David Hallberg personally highlighted the growth and commitment of these chosen artists and their strength of character both on and off the stage.

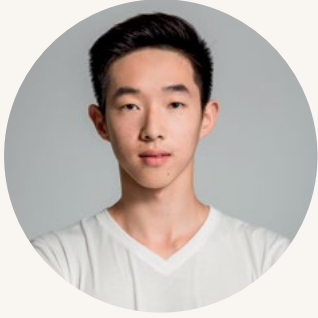
Here, we invite you behind the curtain to delight in some of David's commentary from that moment. We hope you'll join us in rapturous applause when the time comes for us to see these talented artists shine on stage once again.



**Callum
Linnane**

From Soloist to Senior Artist

"In the last year Callum has shown a dedicated focus, reaping the benefits of successful performances on stage. He has danced works that are challenging for anyone, but always retained a humanness and an ease about his performance."



Lucien Xu

From Corps de Ballet to Coryphée

“Lucien has grown in the years he’s been in this company, rising to every opportunity. With an unmissable sharp attack, he has become a constantly curious artist.”



Isobelle Dashwood

From Corps de Ballet to Soloist

“Isobelle’s progression from corps de ballet to soloist is an unprecedented jump and a result of her perseverance and the exceptional development of her talent.”



Lisa Craig

From Corps de Ballet to Coryphée

“Lisa has a beautiful quality to her as a dancer. She’s grown this season and tackled difficulties with focused perseverance. Our culture at The Australian Ballet recognises and rewards her hard work and talent.”



Yuumi Yamada

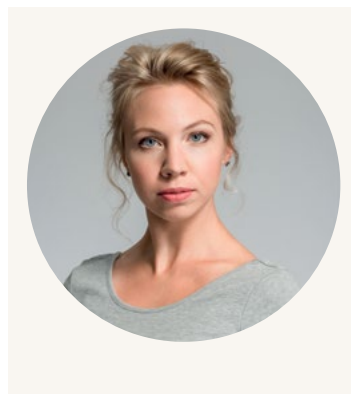
From Coryphée to Soloist

“Yuumi showed a willingness to grow and trust in those guiding her during the Sydney seasons. I’ve enjoyed seeing Yuumi become who she chooses to be on stage and to have fun tapping into her own individual artistry.”

Jacqueline Clark

From Coryphée to Soloist

“There are those dancers that have the ability to approach anything they do with dedication and commitment. Jacqueline commits herself completely to any role she is given, big or small, and she has devoted herself wholeheartedly to this art form.”



Riley Lapham

From Corps de Ballet to Coryphée

“Riley blossomed over the Sydney season, showing great responsibility and work ethic. Every performance of The Four Temperaments, I watched downstage left in anticipation for her eye-catching entrance.”



Executive Director Libby Christie on leading The Australian Ballet through its time of need.

When duty calls



Libby Christie AM and David Hallberg. Photo Simon Eeles

Libby Christie has been at the helm of Australia's national ballet company since 2013. Entrusted with arguably one of the most complex and demanding jobs in the arts industry, Libby has extensive expertise and her reputation is exemplary. She is undeniably at the top of her game.

That said, the past couple of years have been like no other. Indeed, on the day of this interview, Libby had just been on the phone to government stakeholders about border restrictions between Victoria and New South Wales to get a better sense of how freely the company would be able to travel towards the end of the year. "I need to understand that if we go to Sydney, we can also get back home to Melbourne." There is never a dull day when you're leading a company through uncertainty of global pandemic proportions.

Leading a cultural icon

"It's a big job, but it's a fabulous job. Especially when you can see the end result onstage. It's thrilling to be in the audience and see people laughing, cheering, crying, standing on their feet and applauding at the end of the show. I can't tell you how personally rewarding I find that.

"I have a huge ongoing commitment and a sense of satisfaction from caring for this really amazing treasure of a company. I feel a great sense of responsibility, not just to all our people but also to all Australians, because I really believe that The Australian Ballet is one of our country's most valuable cultural assets.

"As everybody who supports us knows, we've been in existence for almost 60 years now. And in that time, we have brought great pleasure and joy to so many Australians. The sense of pride that Australians have in their national ballet company – not to mention the careers that we've created through the years for dancers, those who work in artistic operations, and others throughout the whole company – is just quite extraordinary."

The two Davids

"One of the features that attracted me to The Australian Ballet was the opportunity to work with such a capable and respected Artistic Director as David McAllister. As the Executive Director and Artistic Director are joint leaders of the company, reporting to the board, it's very important that the relationship is collaborative and productive. Both of us want to be successful in our different fields of responsibility and David and I had a great working relationship.

"It was a real pleasure to work with David for all that time, and just so disappointing not to be able to farewell him in the way we had hoped in 2020. It wasn't the year of celebratory farewells that we had anticipated, but David took it with such good humour and continued to do everything he could to protect the company until the very end of his tenure.

“And this year, one of the real highlights of this very unusual period has been the huge privilege of working with David Hallberg – somebody whom I’ve admired so much as a dancer – as he has taken on the role of Artistic Director. It has been a very special experience to work alongside him as he reveals his plans and rolls out an ambitious future for the company. This has been a year of so many challenges for David and our dancers and I have been so impressed that he has refused to be daunted by any of them. He is so resilient, highly intelligent, a super-fast learner and eager to make his mark. David’s interest in learning about every single part of the organisation – from finance and wardrobe to marketing – has been fascinating to witness too. He’s got right into the details of everything we do to learn and understand how all parts of The Australian Ballet can work together to support his vision for a new era.”

Navigating the year that rocked us

“I can’t deny that it’s been very difficult since March 2020 [when theatres first shut down due to the pandemic] but this company works as a team and we’re all doing whatever it takes to get through this. When we talk about how we protect the company and our people, people tend to think that my mind automatically goes to the financial situation. Of course, this is a huge priority for me given we employ 285 people and have a company to protect. But I’m equally focused on protecting our future and staying strong and healthy in every respect.

“Keeping our culture and the morale of the company positive through these difficult times is a real priority for me. We have such a strong culture and a tradition of caring for each other and being ambitious about what we want to do and bring to the stage. This is a tremendously valuable asset, I don’t want that to be damaged and so we’re working very hard to keep the company positive and together and to plan for what we’re calling ‘Curtain Up’, the time when we’re able to be back on stage again.”

The support of many

“As soon as our shows stopped and theatres closed, 60% of the company’s income dried up. We are so very grateful to our many patrons, ticketholders, supporters and sponsors, and to our governments, for maintaining their support of us during 2020 and now throughout 2021.

“Whether it’s been by donating the value of tickets that people have bought for shows that haven’t proceeded, keeping tickets until we get back onstage, donating generously, or continuing support through sponsorships and government funding, we have been humbled and are hugely grateful. This support has been invaluable and has kept us going.

“Fortunately, the company has been very well managed and well supported for many years, and so we have had financial reserves put aside for a rainy day. We just didn’t anticipate the rainy day was going to go on for so long. As we approach the end of 2021 and a second year with very little box-office income, the financial situation is increasingly challenging. However, thanks

to careful management, brilliant support and our ‘can do’ attitude, I have no doubt that the company will remain in great shape.”

Getting ready for ‘Curtain Up’

“For some months it was impossible for us to perform due to the lockdowns in Melbourne and Sydney, but you’ll be pleased to hear that we kept very busy. Our dancers have been fortunate to be able to continue working hard in our studios and the whole company has come together to work on a number of projects to keep us connected with our supporters and to ensure we’re ‘performance-ready’ for 2022 and beyond.

“Our core purpose is to perform, so we’ve desperately missed our audiences and been dreaming of looking out into the theatre to see you all there once more. The hope that we could perform for you was instrumental in driving us forward, and we have been doing our utmost to get back onstage as soon as possible.”

A new era

“I can only tell you that I am as excited about the future of the company as I ever have been, thanks to David’s plans. He’s so ambitious for our dancers and company, and his vision for the future is thrilling. Some of the projects David has planned will require a lot of time and thought to bring together, to rehearse and to create, so it’s been very interesting working across the company to work out how we can make it happen. We’re a great team and fantastic at innovating and taking on a challenge!

“As for our dancers, well ... David is a born leader, and he has embraced his responsibility for leading our dancers and Artistic team very naturally. To see him in our studios coaching the dancers and working on rehearsals has been remarkable. He’s a very clear communicator and has a great knack for energising the dancers about his standards and vision – always empowering and trusting the dancers to do more. And my, are they rising to that prospect in a very positive and enthusiastic way! I can’t wait for you all to see them dancing again.”

In case you missed it

“Nothing gives you a better sense of how important The Australian Ballet has been to the development of the Australian cultural life than the amazing three-part ABC series *And We Danced*. I hope everyone has had a chance to catch that; if you haven’t, do watch it on ABC iView.”

Insights from the
'body of the ballet.'



Soloist Jacqueline Clark. Photo Lynette Wills

Life in the corps de ballet

The corps de ballet is literally and figuratively the body of the ballet. It's the strength of the company, the breeding ground for emerging talent, and the integral foundation for each performance.

Think of the swans on the shimmering disc in Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake*, the mesmerising Kingdom of the Shades scene from *La Bayadère* and the full glory of Serge Lifar's *Suite en blanc*. These dancers are some of the most continuously hard-working on the stage, and they perform some of the most important and demanding ensemble parts in ballet.

Whether they're moving en masse or being featured individually, these dancers bring breathtaking moments to the stage and unite the company.

Virtually every dancer in the company started out as a member of the corps de ballet, honing their craft in the studio and on stage, learning from previous generations of principal artists. And, as the current corps de ballet dancers move through the ranks, so too will they pass on their experience and expertise to dancers just starting out in ballet schools across the country today.

Serena Graham, Montana Rubin and George-Murray Nightingale – three members of The Australian Ballet's dazzling and devoted corps – tell us about their ensemble experiences and how it feels to feel the power of many.

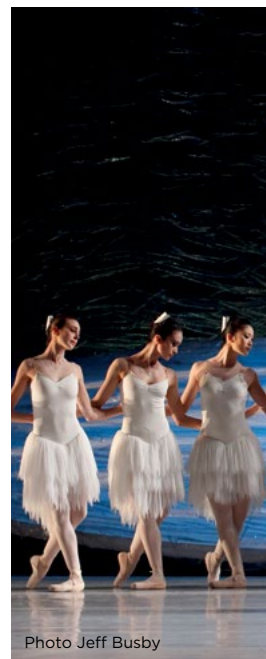


Photo Jeff Busby

Serena Graham

“The corps de ballet is the heart and soul of a company. We breathe together, sweat together, boost and support each other when exhausted on stage, and ground each other when nervous.

“An expression of the corps’ strong connection was seen during *Summertime at the Ballet*, where we performed *The Kingdom of the Shades* from *La Bayadère*. The piece requires us to move as one in a series of slow arabesques, balancing continually on one leg. This can get wobbly when your nerves get the better of you. Backstage before each show, the corps would join hands in a circle, stand on one leg and close our eyes to find our balance and prepare as a group. This was our pre-show ritual and cemented our solidarity.

“It is such an honour and incredibly special to do what I love as a career and dance alongside a group of talented, hard-working and amazing artists every day.”



Montana Rubin

“To me, the corps de ballet is analogous with being the backbone of the company; the flurry of snowflakes, the flock of swans, the ghostly Wilis. It’s what you see on stage but, at the same time, also so much of what you don’t see.

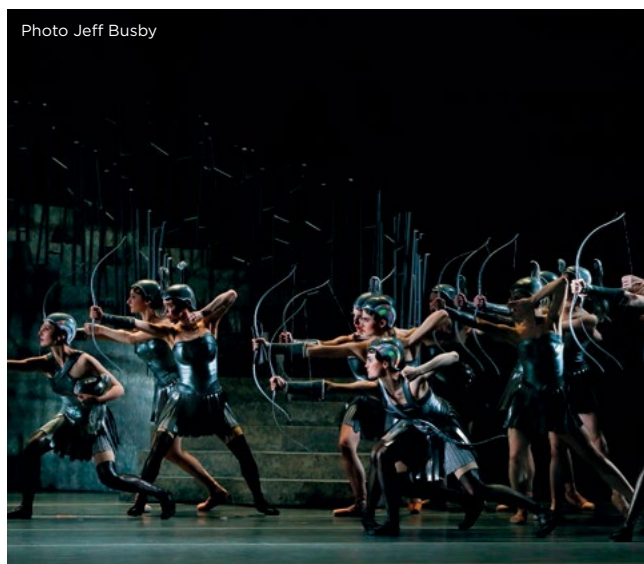
“The corps is the backstage banter, the pre-show huddles, the night-after-night collective grind, the looks of assurance from across the stage. It is finding yourself among a group of dancers all striving for the same head alignment and the same counts.

“It is challenging, motivating, at times frustrating, but always incredibly rewarding. Because, ultimately, it is about being a family from different and unique backgrounds, uniting to contribute to a bigger picture where we stage the arena, create the backdrop, and shine the spotlight for us all to express individually and as a whole.”

George-Murray Nightingale

“Being a member of The Australian Ballet is a huge honour, especially dancing as part of the corps de ballet. The corps acts as the spinal cord of every production – supporting and assisting the principals as they tell a story to the audience. Without the corps it would be like seeing The Australian Ballet tapestry without colour. Each of us adds a little light and shade to what ultimately becomes a final masterpiece of art.

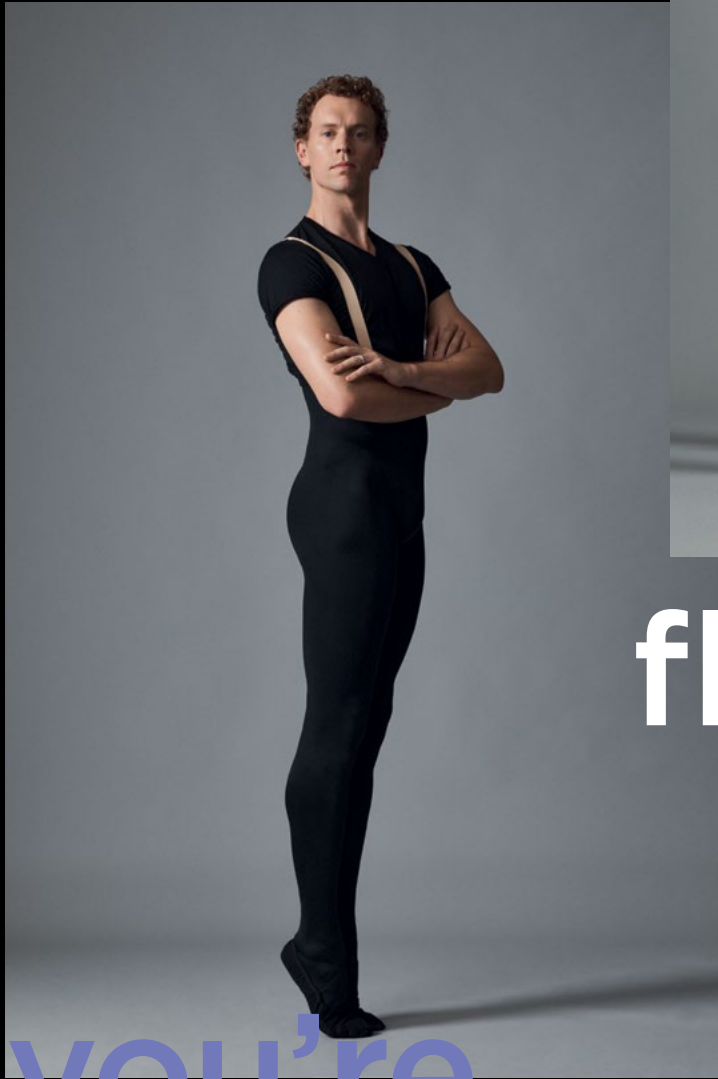
“My favourite thing about being a member of the corps de ballet is the family spirit among us. Sharing this connection and the art form with people you admire makes you excited to step on stage every night. I feel like the luckiest dancer in the world to be a part of this magic we create here at The Australian Ballet.”



Time



flies when



you're

having fun

Principal Artists Amy Harris and Adam Bull. Photos Pierre Toussaint

Amy Harris and Adam Bull on 20 years of dancing and friendship at The Australian Ballet.



Photo Jeff Busby

Principal Artists Adam Bull and Amy Harris go way back. They first crossed paths as young up-and-comers on the competition scene and soon found themselves on the same track to professional greatness.

From dancing alongside each other in the first year of The Australian Ballet School's Associate Program under Gailene Stock, to being in Marilyn Rowe's first intake at The Australian Ballet School, to joining The Australian Ballet as David McAllister hung up his tights and stepped into the role of Artistic Director, Amy and Adam have danced under the leadership of some of the most well-known names in ballet. In turn, they too have become synonymous with our company as enduring and much-loved artists. Now principal artists in David Hallberg's first year as Artistic Director, Amy and Adam's duet of double decades continues and their ambition certainly shows no sign of slowing down.

Andrew Wright, who danced with Amy and Adam for 15 years and is now Philanthropy Manager at the company, enjoyed a catch up with the pair to reflect on and celebrate their 20-year careers.

You've been members of The Australian Ballet now for 20 years – what a huge achievement! How does reaching such a significant milestone feel?

Adam

Wow ... well, the years really have just flown by. It doesn't seem like 20 years ago that I joined the company. [Ballet Master] Steven Heathcote was still dancing, and David McAllister had just retired. In some ways I can't quite believe that I'm still going! Not many dancers get to this milestone, so it's something I'm really proud of.

Amy

I agree! I've had to really stop and allow myself to acknowledge that reaching this milestone is actually a big deal. Not many people get the privilege to stay so long and to become a principal artist of The Australian Ballet, so I'm truly honoured. I love being here. It's such a family-oriented place and it's impressive to be a member of this incredible company, so it's quite humbling to realise that you've left your little stamp on it.

Going back to where it all began ... how did your ballet story start?

Amy

I started dance classes at the Rosengreen School of Dance in my hometown of Ararat when I was about three-and-a-half years old. I did tap (which I was terrible at!), as well as ballet and jazz (which I loved). It's funny, I don't know when the switch came that made me decide ballet was for me - it just kind of happened - but thankfully it did.

I was a competition (comp) kid, which I loved and that's where I met my ballet teacher, Miss Carole Oliver, who had a beautiful school in Ballarat, and I started taking classes there. At first it was once a week but it quickly became four classes a week by the time I was about ten or eleven years old. Miss Carole introduced me to The Australian Ballet School Associate Program and that's where I met Adam, and many of the people that we're still in touch with today. I did the Associate Program every Saturday morning, carpooling with the other 'Carole girls', and then it became a Wednesday night too.

Eventually Miss Carole suggested that it would be a good thing for me to experience The Australian Ballet School audition. At 15 I was a year younger than they wanted me to be, but she encouraged me to go and just soak it all up. Anyway, I got in and Adam and I both joined in 1999. We did our three years and ended up stepping straight into the ballet company, which was incredible, and we haven't moved since!

Adam

I was a western suburbs kid from Melbourne and my parents knew nothing about ballet. Dance wasn't even on the radar in our family, but I had a schoolteacher in grade one - Janine Kip - who encouraged my parents to take me to dance classes. They found a little local suburban ballet school in Werribee, the Brian Nolan Academy of Dance, that was in a funny little industrial area and run by an ex-member of The Australian Ballet. I started with jazz and then the next year I started ballet. As soon as I started ballet I was like, "Wow, I'm really into this!" My teacher was very strict, but I really liked that discipline and the structure of ballet and took to it like a duck to water.

Like Amy, I did all the comps and I loved being on stage. I was quite a shy kid but once I got on stage I transformed and found this confidence that I didn't know I had. You know, as a gay kid, ballet was a safety net where I could be me. Dance became my voice in a way.



Photo Kate Longley



Photo Lynette Wills

And what were your first impressions of each other?

Amy

Adam and I met through the comps. We were the little tackers all around Ballarat and Melbourne and he was so bloody good! He was beyond ... he was a rising star. But we gelled - you know how you just kind of know 'your people'? - and we had the best time socialising at the competitions.

Adam

Yes! You were 'Amy Harris from the comps' ... they were good times. You were a couple of years younger, so we were never in the same age groups, but you were always one of the top girls. And because you were one of the 'Carole girls' you were always immaculate - your hair, your make-up: everything was so polished and refined. We knew you meant business!



Photo: Kate Longley

You've been colleagues and friends for so long, but have you had many opportunities to dance together?

Amy

Yes, we have done a few times. I think the first time was the Black Swan Pas de deux, which we did for our graduating end-of-year performances, and since then we've partnered a few times in the company. We did the last pas de deux in Wayne McGregor's *Infra*, which was lovely, and we did *Ballet Imperial* with Lana Jones, which was pretty cool and really memorable for me as that's when I was pregnant with Willow.

Adam

I've been fortunate to dance with some incredible ballerinas over my time. I've been really spoiled, and I think what I'll take with me is sharing all these incredible moments with people on stage and creating something so special together. It's an amazing thing to reflect on and it makes me kind of emotional to think of the moments that you've shared with people. It means a lot to me.

The past 18 months or so have been tough on the company. How are you feeling about what's to come?

Adam

It has, and we're just so grateful for the support of our audiences and patrons. They're as much a part of this company as we are and we're still standing here today because of the incredible support that they've shown us throughout this period. We've had our back against the wall, but we can only move forward from this even stronger and with a drive and hunger like never before. As dancers, we're so hungry to get back on stage and are primed to do incredible things when that time comes, everyone wants it SO much.

Amy

Absolutely. We're so thankful for our supporters and we've missed them so much. Over 20 years you do start to build relationships with the community - they've followed your career since the beginning - so I want to be able to see them. After all, that's why we do what we do!

That takes me back to *Summertime at the Ballet*, in February this year. I can't tell you how much I loved that experience and performing at MCA. To go out on stage beforehand and feel the energy of the audience was magical.

Adam

Oh yes, *Summertime at the Ballet* was incredible. I found it quite emotional. I caught a moment between a mother and daughter when we were warming up for one performance. I followed them with my eyes and saw them look at each other. They were almost in tears. You could see how much it meant to them to be back at the ballet and to be sharing the moment together. It was a perfect reminder of why we do what we do.

I also think *Kunstkamer's* going to be one to watch. Having that ballet involving four of the best contemporary choreographers in the world is going to be an enormous undertaking for the whole company, but an incredible experience. This one ballet will take our company to another level - it's going to be the perfect vehicle for all of us to get our teeth into!

Photo Jeff Busby

As you look back on your tenure with the company, which highlights stand out to you?

Amy

I've had the most [highlights] during the nearly seven years since coming back from having Willow. I always felt like I was pretty grounded and good with my time, but once I had a child, you know, it really put things into perspective for me. A huge highlight was taking on the role of Romola in John Neumeier's *Nijinsky*. I didn't think it was going to be that kind of ballet for me. It didn't start as well as it could have but, in that respect, it made the fire inside kind of burn and it ended up being incredible - I hold it really close.

I also really loved my two shows of David McAllister's *The Sleeping Beauty* and making my debut as Aurora. That was magical, and to do it on the State Theatre stage where I had graduated 16 years prior was so special. Especially with my family and friends in the audience rooting for me.

Adam

I was promoted to principal at quite a young age so I've been very fortunate to tick off my bucket list. It makes it really hard to pinpoint just the one highlight ... I'm so grateful that I've been so fulfilled to this point. Every role from here is one to be savoured.

Amy, you mentioned parenthood [Amy and Senior Artist Jarryd Madden are parents to Willow, seven, and Phoenix, two] ... how has that experience been for you as a professional dancer?

Amy

I mean, it brings its challenges absolutely, but I'm so thankful that I've been supported in this role too. David McAllister was really the driving force, by saying to the dancers that you could most definitely go and have a family and still have a career. To hear that was amazing.

To be honest, I think this is probably my proudest time. I don't know how but motherhood has changed me as a dancer ... I think it's enriched my dancing and until it's not doable or until my kids turn around to me and say "no more" I'll feel okay about not hanging up my shoes. I definitely want Phoenix to see me dance, and to finish this wild ride on a real high.

Adam

The way Amy and the other mothers juggle this career with having kids is unbelievable. Everyone just has the utmost respect for how they do it. Dance is a very self-centred profession, so it really puts things into perspective when you see these parents juggle this career and bring up incredibly beautiful kids. And, to echo Amy's point, from my experience they are better dancers - perhaps in part because of the change, but I also think it's because it's not about them anymore; they're dancing for their family.



Telstra
Emerging
Choreographer

Creating the future of dance together.



Principal Artist Chengwu Guo. Photo Pierre Toussaint



At 37 years and counting, our pas de deux with Telstra is one of the most enduring arts partnerships in the country, beautifully in sync and anchored in a shared passion for supporting creators of the future and innovation.

As with many a successful, long-lasting relationship, the secret to not growing apart is to grow together. Which is why, this year – to coincide with a new era of The Australian Ballet under the artistic directorship of David Hallberg – we have proudly launched Telstra Emerging Choreographer, a fresh pathway for emerging Australian choreographers to develop their skills and foster their talent.

Telstra Emerging Choreographer is the brainchild of David himself, who has personally championed choreographic creativity throughout his career.

“Working with Telstra to create a platform that encourages Australian choreographic creativity is incredibly important. It will mean that we’re creating more accessibility for all dance creators and helping to make a career in choreography more of a reality for the young Australian creators of today.”

David Hallberg, along with fellow judges Damian Smith and Lucy Guerin, selected four finalists after viewing a total of 60 applicants. The finalists have each been provided with a budget of up to \$2,500 to create and film their final work inspired by the inaugural theme, ‘joy of dance’.

The winner, to be announced in December 2021, will receive a cash prize of \$10,000. They will also receive the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to continue their development by working with The Australian Ballet’s Artistic team and dancers to create a new work as part of the 2022 *Bodytorque* program, which has been a breeding ground for some of the country’s brightest choreographic talents, including dance legend Graeme Murphy and Resident Choreographer Alice Topp.

Meet the Finalists

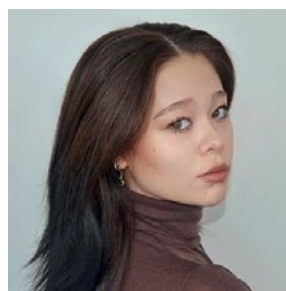


**Aimee
Schollum**

Aimee is a New Zealand-born, Melbourne-based dancer, choreographer and graphic designer. From a very young age, Aimee has loved moving with others. Whether it was making up

choreography with friends, being part of a crew in her teens or performing at events, the joy has always come from collaborating and the moment when all the elements come together.

“I make works with highly physical movement and aim to immerse audiences in the world I’ve designed. Sound plays a big part in my process. I create a lot of choreography with evolving repetitive loops, coded rhythms and patterns, often linked to sound design or percussion. I work in a really collaborative way to build choreographic rules and textures for the dancers to work within.”



**Mathilda
Ballantyne**

Mathilda is Melbourne-based and began her training at the Melbourne School of Classical Dance before being accepted into The Australian Ballet School. Mathilda credits the choreographic

opportunities she had while studying at The Australian Ballet School with enlightening her and giving her the freedom and sense of voice that drew her in to explore and pursue her interest in choreography.

“I love exploring the idea of breaking the fourth wall as I think the joy and beauty of dance come from a conversation between the choreographer, dancer and the audience. I like to focus on really small, beautiful and detailed movements such as waving to the audience or having intense eye contact. The way we interpret this art form is incredibly individual and leans into being playful, pedestrian and personal.”



Soloist Imogen Chapman
and Senior Artist Calumn Linanne
with David Hallberg. Photo Nicole Cleary



Geoffrey Watson

Geoffrey is a Melbourne-based artist whose work is rooted in choreography but has branches in wearable design, text, lighting, sculpture and photography.

As a contemporary

choreographer who was trained at The Australian Ballet School, Geoffrey is interested in tracing back the history of ballet to its pagan origins – a fascination he attributes to his upbringing in a family of folk musicians who instilled a sense of connection to history and a familiarity with the language of conversing with history.

“I am interested in dance as a life-affirming act, in which both performer and audience experience a revitalising sense of physicality through the visceral efforts of the dancer.”



Feras Shaheen

Feras is based in Punchbowl, Sydney. His art practice spans performance, semiotics, street dance, readymade art and digital media. Feras was born in Dubai to Palestinian parents and moved to Sydney at the age of eleven. Drawing from his street dance background as well as Palestinian cultural dance traditions, Feras creates compositions that traverse a range of different roles within the arts.

“There’s contemporary dance and contemporary practice. For the Telstra Emerging Choreographer work, I’m working within contemporary practice, using street dance as the tool and as my starting point.”

Meet the newest company member of The Australian Ballet.

Introducing Grace Carroll



As the dancers busy themselves in the studio – training and rehearsing to keep the company’s energy and artistry alive as we work toward our return to the Australian stage – they have also welcomed a new member of the corps de ballet into their ranks.

Grace Carroll, a recent graduate of The Royal Ballet School, grew up in Sydney’s northern beaches and began her ballet training at the Tanya Pearson Academy in Sydney with a former Principal Artist of The Australian Ballet, Lucinda Dunn. Grace then travelled to Paris to take up a place at the Paris Opera Ballet School and later to London where she joined The Royal Ballet School.

We sat down with Grace to get to know her a little better as she finds her feet at The Australian Ballet and embarks on her first full-time professional role.

How and why did you get into dance?

I started dance classes when I was four years old and wanted to follow in the footsteps of my older sister, who was a ballerina.

Who are your role models and why?

There are many people I look up to, in and outside the dance community. However, I think my greatest inspirations are my parents and older sisters. To have grown up surrounded by people who so passionately pursue their individual craft has really paved the way for me to have trust in my inner artist. I learn so much from each of them in different ways and I truly believe that they have helped to shape me into who I am today.

Where do you take inspiration from?

I take inspiration from a variety of sources. In terms of people, I look to artists who execute with absolute authenticity and I love to read their memoirs or biographies of their lives, which often have a great impact on me. I also take great inspiration from dancers, usually in our morning class but otherwise watching many videos of new and old performances. I also find great influence in music. I adore classical music and I find ballet to be the perfect vessel to emulate it. For me, music is the main thing I can attribute my continual artistic growth to.

What has been the highlight of your first months in the company?

Sadly we haven’t been able to perform much yet due to the lockdowns. However, we are still rehearsing for upcoming productions of John Cranko’s *Romeo and Juliet* and Alexei Ratmansky’s *Harlequinade*. Just being able to rehearse and observe during this time has been so rewarding and definitely the highlight.

What are you most looking forward to in the 2022 season?

Simply to perform! I miss the stage so much and am really looking forward to getting back on stage, and as a professional for the first time.

What is your dream role or repertoire to perform, and why?

I aspire to dance more of the dramatic, narrative ballets and roles with depth of character that I can dive into. Seeing Marianela Núñez perform the title role in Kenneth MacMillan’s *Manon* at the Royal Opera House really sparked this desire in me. There was something about the great union of story, choreography and music that moved me so deeply! I hope one day to add my own essence to that role.

If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be?

I would travel throughout Northern Europe and experience the great seasonal shifts as well as viewing the Northern Lights.

What do you want to be doing in ten years’ time?

I hope to be performing and fulfilling my dream roles as well as travelling overseas to add to my experience and knowledge as a dancer and a person.

What might we be surprised to learn about you?

My dad is a two times world champion surfer!

“I am pleased to welcome Grace back home to Australia. She is showing her ability to reach beyond the training she acquired during her time at some of the world’s most prestigious dance schools, and I look forward to supporting the development of her artistry.”

David Hallberg, Artistic Director



Photography by ASH

Celebrating Joyce Clothier OAM



**A lifetime of love
for the ballet**



Joyce Clothier was an *impassioned lifetime supporter* of The Australian Ballet. As the ultimate celebration of her life and art, she also chose to include the company in her will and share her love of ballet with future generations.



The Australian Ballet wouldn't be where it is today without the vision and generosity of people like Joyce. All gifts received through our Planned Giving program – no matter how big or small – are invested in endowment funds that, in turn, create perpetual income that continues to build and maintain a solid foundation for the company.

In honour of their mother who passed away in May this year, Joyce's sons Gary, Grant and Derek share their memories of her, the joy that ballet brought to her over the years and how it remains an important part of their family's story.

Mum had two families – her biological and her ballet – and she was very proud of both.

Mum was born in Perth in 1929, and music and dance always played an important part in her life. She danced from a young age and, after leaving school, worked as a dance teacher where she taught many different styles of dancing, including ballet, tap, ballroom and Scottish Highland.

Mum was a city girl who loved dance, music and theatre. She also loved attending Saturday night dances where, in time, she met our dad Ken Clothier, who became her husband and partner for the next 50 years. In 1970, Dad saw an advert in the Whyalla local paper offering casual work for dance teachers. Mum was very hesitant, but Dad encouraged her to give it a go – not knowing the tsunami he was about to let loose on Whyalla ...

In 1971, Mum began after-school classes, teaching dance in a small classroom at Whyalla's Memorial Avenue Primary School. From the very beginning her students knew they were in the presence of a great teacher and 'Ballet Mum' who was serious and knowledgeable about both the art and her students.

Mum always wanted to extend her knowledge and keep up to date with the latest teaching methods. This commitment to the craft culminated in four of her talented students – Janine Bradshaw, Karen Fabbeni, Angela Deegan and Craig Lord – being accepted into The Australian Ballet School. Despite this success and her dedication to teaching, she was exceedingly humble and shy and almost turned down her Order of Australia Medal in the 1986 Queen's Birthday Honours for her service to ballet because she believed there were others more worthy.

Mum rather beautifully described ballet as 'poetry in motion'. She was a life member of the Royal Academy of Dance, a longstanding devotee of The Australian Ballet and a member of Friends of The Australian Ballet South Australia. In 2006, her Christmas present to our families was tickets to The Australian Ballet's production at the Sydney Opera House. It was such a thoughtful gift that, in time, became a wonderful Christmas family tradition. Unfortunately, it came to an end when Mum no longer felt well enough to continue the flights to Sydney. But her devotion to the company never ended and it was her wish to leave a gift to The Australian Ballet in her will to help give young children from regional areas access to the wonder of ballet.



Mum was a very modest person and, although she would never say it herself, she really transformed people's lives through ballet. Her legacy now lives on through our family and The Australian Ballet family, as well as her many students, in whom she fostered a life-long appreciation of dance, performance and classical music that they will continue to share with others in the future.

We would love to hear from you about what ballet means to you and, if you have included The Australian Ballet in your will, what inspired you to do so.

We invite you to contact us on 1300 752 900 to start a conversation about how you can pass on your love of ballet to future generations by including The Australian Ballet in your will.



Soloist Rina Nemoto.
Photo Kate Longley



Senior Artist Callum Linnan and Principal Artist Benedicte Bemet.
Photo Kate Longley

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If you have any questions about how your generosity is supporting the company or would like to discuss other ways you can sustain the future of The Australian Ballet, please get in touch with our dedicated Philanthropy Team.

PHILANTHROPY EVENTS

Supporters and patrons are invited to attend pre-performance dinners and other exclusive events held throughout each season. If you would like to find out more about our calendar of events and how you can be involved, please contact us.

Event Enquiries

1300 752 900
philanthrophevents@australianballet.com.au

Right Philanthropy Ambassadors Soloist
Jill Ogai and Senior Artist Jarryd Madden.
Photo Pierre Toussaint

Front and back cover
Artists of The Australian Ballet
Photo Kate Longley

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