

THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

TALKING POINTE



WINTER 2021



(L-R) Jarryd Madden, Natasha Bowness, Jill Ogai, Kenneth Watkins AM

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.

Welcome from the Philanthropy Director

“We are emerging into an *exciting* new world.”

After surviving a year that no-one wants to speak of again, the company's comeback in February was a very meaningful, truly historic milestone for all of us.

From the moment we took our seats at MCA and saw the dancers warming up on stage, we knew we were in for a treat. Everyone in the auditorium was on the edge of their seat, willing the company to be at their best after such a long time away. And they did not disappoint. Ballet was most definitely back!

Both those on stage dazzling in the performance and the audience members watching the magic unfold felt an energy they hadn't experienced for some time. This landmark signalled a shift from reflecting on what had been to looking optimistically forward.

The performances were truly magnificent, and indicative of the desire and confidence David Hallberg has instilled in the company through his generous leadership. And now, as we move through the 2021 season, we are seeing this new standard continue in each performance.

As someone who has had the pleasure of knowing David for several years now, witnessing his transition from artist extraordinaire into artistic director has been a privilege. In just a few short months he's found his wings and taken flight – focused on realising his vision for the company of fulfilling the true potential of our dancers, expanding our repertoire and touring footprint, and deepening our community engagement.

In just the first months of David's leadership, it's clear to see his aspiration to present the very highest standard of ballet – consistently. Whether we're on stage at MCA, Sydney Opera House or Middleback Theatre in Whyalla, David wants all Australians to expect and receive the best from us.

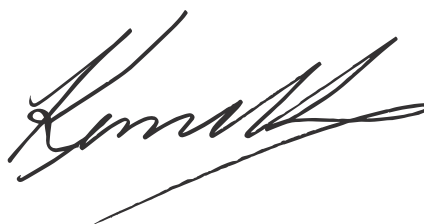
At the heart of this vision sits regional Australia and a personal commitment from David to return the generosity he has experienced as a guest of the country by investing in our farthest-flung communities.

I know many of you – myself included – have a story about growing up in regional Australia and what inspired us to discover our love of the performing arts. This new era of leadership will build on the heritage we're so proud of, while continuing to seek out new ways to improve access to the art form for people in every corner of our beautiful country. All with a view to inspiring, enriching and connecting with the next generation of artists, creative workers and audiences.

Unfortunately, as our recent lockdowns have shown us, we are not out of the woods yet as far as the pandemic is concerned. Thank you to everyone who has stood by us as we navigate more uncertainty and disappointment as our plans to perform for you continue to be impacted once again.

There has never been a more critical time to show your support. Gifts of any amount will help us continue to grow and thrive, which is vital as we have enormously exciting plans for our next act, and it'll take all of us getting behind David to realise them. They're big, ambitious and will propel us towards and beyond our 60th anniversary with meaning and purpose. We can't wait to tell you more about them.

I hope you'll join us on the journey as we head towards our 60th year. Trust me when I say that you won't want to miss out!



Kenneth Watkins AM
Philanthropy Director



The future is bright

David Hallberg reflects on his first 100 days as Artistic Director.

Very few people can say that they have achieved what David Hallberg has in his *extraordinary* dancing career.

From making history as the first American to join the Bolshoi Ballet as principal while also a principal dancer at American Ballet Theatre, to guesting with The Royal Ballet and The Australian Ballet, David has established himself as one of the *finest dancers* of his generation.

Photography Pierre Toussaint



the future is now

David Hallberg's creativity and energy know no bounds. As an artist his performances captivated audiences in every corner of the world and, in his latest role, his unique artistic and global view brings a new and thrilling dimension to his leadership of the company.

The first few months of 2021 have been a whirlwind for the eighth Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet. But, with three stellar seasons under his belt, the rollercoaster has certainly been one worth riding. There's a lot to be proud of, a lot to learn from and a lot to look forward to as he nurtures a company boldly moving into the future.



On the stars aligning

It's been a long build to this point. Throughout my career to date I've had the privilege of dancing in places and meeting people I could only have imagined as a young kid starting out. Every chapter gave me the opportunity to absorb the cultures, choreographers, creators and partners I encountered along the way. It's funny ... I always felt like it was just a matter of time until the stars would align so that I could funnel my experiences, inspiration and energy into one company. As it turns out, that company is The Australian Ballet and the time is now.

On the transition from artist into artistic director

There are two sides to my new role: the leadership and development of the artists – nurturing, coaching, and supporting the dancers to deliver the best possible performance on stage – and the administrative side.

In terms of the company as a whole, I've been on quite a learning curve – understanding how the company ticks, how the organisation works, and overseeing future planning. Thankfully the company's really supported me and I have a great team around me.

I've found that the leadership side has come quite naturally to me. I remember John Meehan (former principal artist of The Australian Ballet) noting my leadership potential when I was only 19 and he was Artistic Director of the American Ballet Theatre Studio Company. I was quite oblivious to what that meant at the time, but the older I got the more it resonated until, finally, I felt ready to lead and guide a group. It's felt great to move into that space.



On authentic leadership

I don't shy away from my experience; it all informs the position I'm in right now. Over time I've learned that I find authoritative power very unsettling and, in contrast, I prefer to take a very nurturing approach.

From day one I've wanted to create a calm and transparent environment, and I've established that by providing honest and clear feedback. You can't make progress if you're not communicating with sincerity and clarity. I've given the dancers my word that I'll be honest with them, and I expect that in return. I think that the overarching sentiment is that the dancers know that I care about them. So, whether I'm reassuring or pushing (and it perhaps feels uncomfortable), they know that it's coming from the right place – it's from care and compassion.

On his first Sydney season

A lot of people have told me that you only feel like a proper member of the company once you've done your first Sydney season and, my, does that resonate! It's relentless and exhilarating – a real ride.

There's a definite challenge in maintaining freshness in the repertoire throughout the entire run. The beauty in that is that the more shows you have, the more risks you can take. Plus, as it's my first time, I have the benefit of approaching it with a fresh perspective. So I've been trying to find ways to guide the dancers into new forms of interpretation and expression by changing up the tempo, approach, sense of risk, and movement to keep it fresh for everyone.

On the dancers

Over my ten-year relationship with the company I have had the chance to get to know the dancers of The Australian Ballet personally. In that time, I've seen how they work; the culture; the rehearsals; the performances; the touring; the repertoire.

I'm so proud of who they have become and what we have produced in such a short space of time. I'm particularly proud of the energy the dancers have brought to the stage and the way they are approaching the repertoire they're dancing. I can see their ambition radiating through the commitment they're showing and what's being presented to the audience on stage. They're pushing boundaries and that's really exciting.

“Australia has graced me with one of the warmest welcomes of any country I've been fortunate to call home.”

David Hallberg,
Artistic Director



On upcoming repertoire

Those who came before me have created an iconic repertoire for The Australian Ballet. I want to continue their work by layering on my experience to add even more texture and richness.

I'm excited for audiences to have their existing perceptions of the repertoire challenged, and to see the dancers' commitment to story and narrative.

Whether they're seeing a fresh approach to something as classic as *Romeo and Juliet* or a new interpretation such as *Anna Karenina*, I want audience members to see that the story isn't simply historical but that it's vibrant, alive and 'now'. With these stories come emotions that can only be delivered through absolute devotion to narrative, role and character.

I will continue to introduce new facets of the art form through repertoire that might be, at first, foreign to our dancers and audiences but which presents a different side of dance, a different side of performance and a different form of expression. It's going to be an interesting, entertaining, challenging, fruitful and fulfilling ride and I invite our supporters to come on it with us.

On touring

The silver lining of the events of the past 18 months is domesticity and the opportunity it presents to refocus on the Regional Tour and make it the very best it can be.

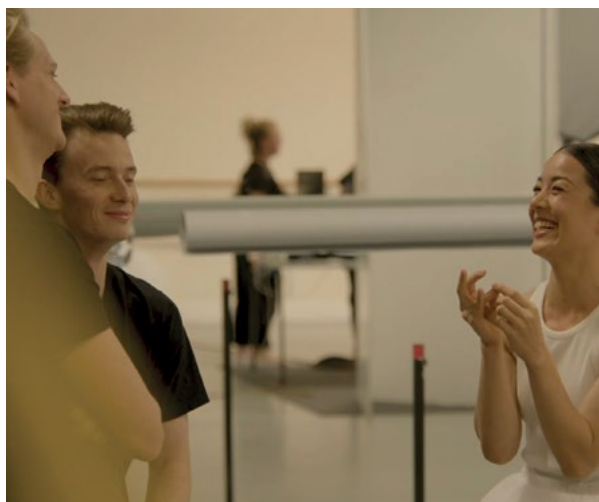
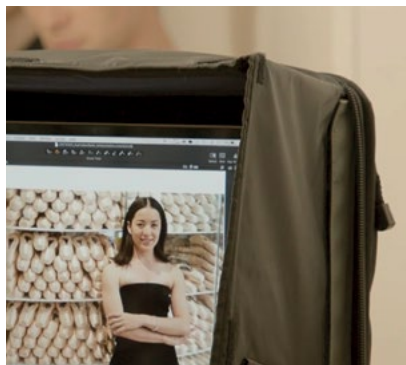
The Regional Tour is an extremely important vehicle for us to engage with an audience that doesn't have ready access to Sydney and Melbourne. It's as important as touring to London or Russia, and audiences can expect to see Australia's national ballet company performing at its best and doing so with its A-Team of dancers, its productions and the quality of its engagement beyond the stage.

On Australia

There's amazing support for and devotion to the company from the audience. Australian audiences seem to connect on a more human level with the company. People don't go to the ballet to just tick the box; there's warmth and active participation, which I love. It is unique to the company and I have every intention of respecting that and leaning into it.

BEHIND THE SCENES

With our new Philanthropy Ambassadors



David Hallberg wasn't the only person to step into new shoes in 2021. This year has also brought new opportunities for Senior Artist Jarryd Madden and Soloist Jill Ogai, our newly appointed Philanthropy Ambassadors.

David personally selected Jill and Jarryd as Philanthropy Ambassadors for the next two years, noting their vibrancy and talent as artists as well as their authenticity and warmth as individuals.

Jill and Jarryd take the reins from Principal Artist Adam Bull and newly promoted Soloist Isobelle Dashwood as the link between our company of elite dancers and artists and you, our generous community of supporters.

We are pleased to share a glimpse behind the scenes of our recent Philanthropy Ambassador shoot with photographer Pierre Toussaint.

“David Hallberg has such a broad understanding of the whole world of dance and ballet, and he has such an open mind. The whole company is going to grow so much with his leadership.”

Jill Ogai, Soloist



GET TO KNOW

Jarryd Madden

Place of birth: Wauchope, New South Wales
Joined The Australian Ballet: 2008
Position: Senior Artist



What has been your career highlight to date?

Spartacus. Hands down. This character and production were the reasons why I wanted to pursue a ballet career in the first place. I grew up in a small country town and wasn't exposed to ballet a lot. But when I was 14, my ballet teacher gave me tickets to go see this production at the Sydney Opera House. I was second row from the front and was completely blown away with what ballet could be. Until that point, I thought ballet was simply ladies in tutus and men in tights, but *Spartacus* was so emotionally driven. The power it had to tell a story so full of emotion took me on a journey that sealed my fate in this art form. Years later I was lucky enough to play Spartacus on opening night on the Sydney Opera House stage. A full circle moment.

What are you most looking forward to performing in this year?

I love a rich story ballet, so I'm looking forward to performing the story-led repertoire in the second half of this year. What's incredible with our art form is that we can tell a deep narrative without talking. Communication is over 70% non-verbal and ballet really demonstrates this fact.

Is there a role or repertoire you've not yet performed but would still like to?

I'd love to play Siegfried from *Swan Lake*. Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake* is a staple of The Australian Ballet. Some of our greatest male leads have performed this role and I would love the opportunity to have a go at it too.

What aspects of the role of Philanthropy Ambassador are you particularly looking forward to?

It's such a privilege to be taking on this role and I can't wait to meet all the incredible people who support our company and enable us to do what we love.

What might our patrons be surprised to learn about you?

I grew up in a family-owned video shop and, because of this, I love movies and TV shows. I would love to be in a movie one day, playing the villain. A great villain makes a great movie!

“This new era with David Hallberg is a *really exciting* time for all of us.”

GET TO KNOW

Jill Ogai

Place of birth: Bondi Beach,
Sydney, New South Wales
Joined The Australian Ballet: 2012
Position: Soloist



What has been your career highlight to date?

Dancing the *Unspoken Dialogues* pas de deux with Kevin Jackson during our 2019 tour to New York was very special. The pas de deux itself demanded so much maturity and artistry, I could barely believe I was cast in the role. This, combined with performing it in New York and with the incomparable Kevin Jackson, makes it a career highlight that was beyond my wildest dreams.

What are you most looking forward to performing in this year?

I love how a full-length ballet brings the whole company together through storytelling and dancing, so the story ballets are up there for me. Every detail is so important when bringing a story to life, and that attention to detail creates an amazing collaborative energy that brings us all together through the power of performance.

Is there a role or repertoire you've not yet performed but would still like to?

I have always loved the role of Kitri in *Don Quixote*. She's vivacious, has character, and dances with such joy and dynamism.

What aspects of the role of Philanthropy Ambassador are you particularly looking forward to?

I'm really looking forward to spending time with the people who support us so generously, and to share with them first-hand insights into what happens behind the scenes of the ballet.

What might our patrons be surprised to learn about you?

I'm a real foodie, and always scope out where to dine out when we're on tour.

“I love the creativity of ballet. It's such a full art form; it's physical, it's mental and it's collaborative.”



Flying High

Nathan Brook on breaking free and being the difference.



Tuesday 6 April was always going to be a significant date for Soloist Nathan Brook – one that marked The Australian Ballet’s much-anticipated return to his home city’s most celebrated stage after more than a year.

But no sooner had the company taken their curtain call following the opening night of *New York Dialects* at the Sydney Opera House than it became apparent that this was going to be a night that would go down in Nathan’s history books for another reason. Looking back at the applauding audience and around at his delighted peers and fellow nominees, Nathan found himself speechless as he was crowned the winner of both the Telstra Rising Star Award and Telstra People’s Choice Award by Telstra Chief Executive Officer Andrew Penn.

This recognition of his exceptional ballet talent and contribution to the art form was made even more special for Nathan because he was following in the footsteps of his childhood hero, Principal Artist Amber Scott, also a Telstra Ballet Dancer Award double winner.

Reflecting on the win, Nathan recalled how surreal the experience felt. “In that moment, the world went into slow motion; my knees went weak and I felt like I was dreaming. The nomination itself was a huge achievement – especially to be so alongside such amazingly talented artists and friends. To receive the accolade as well was an incredibly surreal culmination of an already momentous evening. Telstra’s support for this award has been wonderful for not only me but for all the company.”

Artistic Director David Hallberg, another childhood hero of Nathan’s who formed part of this year’s judging panel, says, “I have watched Nathan grow as an artist in recent years and his commitment, drive, dedication and ambition make him a great advocate for this award. The future is very bright for Nathan in the world of dance.”

The youngest of three boys, Nathan Brook was born and raised in Avalon Beach, Sydney. He started dance classes at the age of seven after his parents recognised that, no matter what the music, Nathan was always dancing.

He trained at Lamont Dance School in Avalon Beach with Aryana Lamont until the age of 14, when he moved to Melbourne to attend The Australian Ballet School. After graduating he joined Queensland Ballet’s Young Artist Program, where he had the opportunity to perform in George Balanchine’s *Serenade* and Kenneth MacMillan’s *Romeo and Juliet*.



Nathan joined Queensland Ballet proper in 2015, touring with the company to Lausanne, London and Shanghai, before joining the corps de ballet of The Australian Ballet in 2016. He was promoted to coryphée in 2018 and soloist in 2019.

As he tells us in the Telstra Ballet Dancer Award campaign, Nathan has always been deeply moved by soul: “If someone is fearless enough to bare their artistry and soul on stage and give themselves completely to the audience, then I find that incredibly moving. The combination of vulnerability and honesty in that moment really enhances the experience and elevates the performance to a whole new level. You can’t beat it.”

Fittingly, Nathan has found ballet to be a way for him to break free of stereotypes and to dance to the beat of his own drum. As a result, he’s fiercely passionate about encouraging young boys and men to fulfill their dream and to feel supported to be themselves. When asked if he has any words of encouragement for young people considering a similar path, he keeps it simple but crystal clear: “There’s nothing wrong with being different. Own it.”

“Your *difference* is what makes you *special*.”

Nathan’s soloist position is generously supported by the Stephanie Fairfax & Hayley Baillie Fund. Speaking of what pulled them towards Nathan, Stephanie and Hayley say that they saw his potential from day one. “Nathan has a compelling stage presence that draws your eyes to him. This is something that can’t really be taught but is in you as a person, and I think that is one of the reasons why we were drawn to him as a dancer to watch.

“As well as enjoying his wonderful performances on stage, we have had the privilege to get to know Nathan personally off the stage. He is a shining, beautiful person, warm and so humble. He’s a true rising star.”

And the feeling is mutual. During the past year, Nathan has had plenty of opportunities to reflect on his relationship with Stephanie and Hayley, adding, “I’m so appreciative of their support, friendship and mentorship. Knowing that they’re there for me is such a confidence boost and has kept me going through the best and more challenging of times. I’m so grateful they saw something in me all those years ago.”

Did you know?

The partnership between Telstra and The Australian Ballet has helped celebrate the company’s emerging ballet talent for nearly two decades. Now in its 19th year, the Telstra Ballet Dancer Award is one of the longest-running arts awards in the country and widely acknowledged as the most prestigious prize in Australian ballet today.

(L-R) Stephanie Fairfax, Nathan Brook, Calum Bolton, Hayley Baillie

An *Enduring* Love



Natasha Bowness. Photography Pierre Toussaint

As a new day dawns with David Hallberg at our artistic helm, we caught up with Natasha Bowness – a lifelong supporter of The Australian Ballet and President of Annual Giving – to learn about her love for the art form, the company and its supporters, and to hear about her aspirations for the company’s future.

Natasha, you have a longstanding relationship with The Australian Ballet and a love for the art form that runs deep. How did your connection with the company come to be?

My introduction to The Australian Ballet came through my parents, who were invited to attend the ballet and enjoyed it so much they decided we would become subscribers. Thirty-five years later and the ballet is still a hugely important part of my life. I can’t pretend to be a ballet lover whose passion began in class. That said, I absolutely love to dance and, to this day, if there’s a party you’ll find me on the dance floor!

What does ballet mean to you?

Joy and the opportunity to share an incredible cultural experience with those closest to me and our Ballet family. I love the emotion and feeling that seeing ballet stirs in me and the audience. I remember sitting next to a couple at a performance of *The Merry Widow* and, at one stage, the gentleman’s leg just started tapping in time with the music ... then he started swaying. It was so special to see someone so moved by the talent and creativity on stage.

A performance brings together people of all ages and diverse backgrounds to share a wonderful experience together. Each performance is unique, and the various

elements come together in ways that impact each of us differently. Ballet is a celebration of extraordinary talent, artistry and commitment – I’m reminded of this each time I see a performance.

You have a long association with philanthropy, particularly supporting the areas of arts and culture. Why is this sector of such importance to you?

I believe strongly in the value of the arts. Philanthropy gives people and organisations the support and opportunity to fulfil their potential. A thriving and vibrant cultural sector supporting a range of flourishing and diverse cultural institutions significantly enhances the social and emotional wellbeing of our communities.

It sounds like creativity is a real passion of yours ...

Absolutely. I’m a very visual person, so the colours, costumes, sets, movement and artistry completely captivate me. Over the course of my relationship with the company I’ve had the privilege to meet some of the dancers and artisans who collaborate to create the magic we see on stage. They’re the reason I’m transported to another world in every performance, and why I connect with each occasion so deeply.

How do you feel when you reflect on the challenges of the global pandemic?

Profound gratitude for the unconditional and heartfelt support the company received from our wonderful Ballet community. Our supporters and patrons were generous from the moment the decision was made to cancel *Vol/t*. They showed care and compassion for the dancers, for the company, and for the future of both. They demonstrated a deep understanding for the issues we were facing as individuals and as a company, and through their actions promised their support to keep us going.

The response from donors also had a deep impact on the dancers who knew that they were surrounded by a community who cared for them and valued what they were doing in such a time of need. That knowledge gave the dancers an enormous lift and will never be forgotten.

Looking ahead to 2021 and a new era for The Australian Ballet ... You've had the pleasure of spending time with David Hallberg over the years. What influence do you think he'll have on the company?

David is incredibly creative and has an inspiring vision which will provide the company, the dancers and the audience with the opportunity to learn from new experiences and influences.

He is a global ballet superstar and the company and dancers will benefit from his wealth of experience as a principal artist at many of the major international ballet companies, and his connection to a global network of creative talent.

The qualities which have enabled him to achieve success are his ambition, drive, dedication and artistry. These qualities will be shared with the dancers and our company. He believes wholeheartedly in the dancers and is already instilling immense confidence in them and pushing them to perform beyond where they think they can go.

It's incredibly exciting and I can't wait to see how David's vision and ambition brings out the best in our dancers and the company.

What are you most looking forward to in the 2021 season?

All of it! The diversity and variety of the repertoire is so exciting. The offering's amazing and so carefully curated to showcase the range of skills and breadth of talent in the company.

I'm both inspired and motivated by the creation of new repertoire. Which is why I would have to call out *Anna Karenina* as a personal highlight in the 2021 season. I believe it's important we keep building the sector, challenging the artists, and providing opportunities for the audience to experience new work. So I'm really excited to see how the dancers' flourish as a result of the company's collaboration with Chicago's Joffrey Ballet.

Finally, as President of Annual Giving, what would you like to say to our supporters at this time?

Thank you for all that you do. You're a special part of our family and integral to the success of our company. We value your support, encouragement and passion, and I look forward to joining with you as we embark on this exciting new stage of the journey together.



Jarryd Madden, Jill Ogai, David Hallberg. Photography Pierre Toussaint

The Bowness Family Foundation Fund for Artist Development

The Bowness Family has made a considerable leadership gift by establishing The Bowness Family Foundation Fund for Artist Development to empower David Hallberg during this new era. The leadership gift will enhance The Australian Ballet by enabling the dancers to reach beyond their current potential and delve into a broader artistic realm. It will enable the Artistic Director to curate a program of inspirational and instructive classes and rehearsals delivered by engaging world-class coaches and teachers, both international and homegrown, allowing the dancers to achieve even greater technical and artistic heights.

Fresh Faces

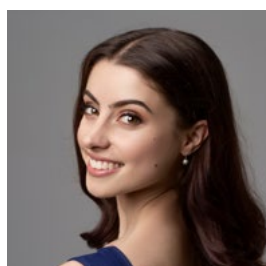
Meet the newest dancers in the corps de ballet.

While the curtains were down for us in 2020, the Artistic team was still identifying and nurturing the future stars of the company.

In January 2021, after completing most of their graduating year at The Australian Ballet School virtually, Annabelle Watt and Lilla Harvey were welcomed into the corps de ballet.

Annabelle and Lilla were chosen by David Hallberg for their instinctive approach to classical technique as well as the way they demonstrated their individuality through artistic expression, which he has identified as a defining trait for the company.

We spent some time with Annabelle and Lilla as they prepared for their first Sydney season and got to know them a little better.



Lilla Harvey

AGE: 20
PLACE OF BIRTH: SUBIACO, PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

How and why did you get into dance?

I started jazz when I was four. I had always loved watching music videos and dancing along to The Wiggles so my parents put me into dance. It became a great way to spend time with my friends and release my energy to music; I instantly loved it.

Who are your role models and why?

I look up to people who are unapologetic, authentic and graceful in life. I'm surrounded by so many role models in the company - my many teachers also, and I look up to almost everybody I know for unique reasons. My biggest role model, however, is my sister Annie.

Where do you take inspiration from?

I take inspiration from absolutely everything around me and the way it makes me feel, such as music, literature, nature and the different ways other dancers interpret their work. It's also inspiring for me to envisage who I want to become as a person and dancer and start making those steps.

What has been the highlight of your first months since joining the company?

I would have to say the chance to perform both *Serenade* and *The Four Temperaments* on the Sydney Opera House stage, and really just the whole Sydney experience.

What are your must-pack items when on tour?

Definitely a couple of books, multiple pairs of tracksuits and my massaging equipment. Anything to help me wind down and recharge.

What are you most looking forward to in the 2021 season?

It's a tie between William Forsythe's *Artifact Suite* and John Cranko's *Romeo and Juliet*; Prokofiev's music is unparalleled.

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

Nikiya from *La Bayadère* in a classical sense. I had a taste of this role doing a demi-character version when I was 13 and have aspired to dance it again in the future with a new maturity and depth. Otherwise I dream of performing contemporary works that have not yet been created.

What does your perfect day look like?

For me a perfect day is one spent having adventures or just chatting with the people I love.

What might we be surprised to learn about you?

If I wasn't doing ballet, I would want to be studying obstetrics, an interest likely sparked by my love of the TV series *Offspring*.



Annabelle Watt

AGE: 20

PLACE OF BIRTH: COORPAROO, BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND

How and why did you get into dance?

My mum put me into classes when I was three because it was a super-hot summer day in Brisbane and the studios had air conditioning, so she could sit and watch in the cool foyer for an hour. After that, I kept dancing because I loved the adrenaline rush I got from being on stage, dressing up in beautiful costumes and putting my inherited flexibility to use.

Who are your role models and why?

My dance role models are Hannah O'Neill, Sylvie Guillem and Daniil Simkin (to name just a few). They each have such security in their technique that they not only dance but become their character, which in turn creates an incredible atmosphere that you get sucked into as an audience member.

Outside of dance, my parents, Oprah Winfrey, Audrey Hepburn, Michael Jordan and Julie Bishop are a real inspiration to me. They're all very different individuals, but have such a strong sense of compassion, an unwavering work ethic and an ability to keep a sense of humour while working in such high-pressure industries.

Where do you take inspiration from?

Being in the arts, I like to draw inspiration from the people and things around me. This helps me ensure I don't become stagnant (as a dancer and person) and that I constantly evolve. My beautiful family, hardworking colleagues, and friends in all other fields of study and work are also constant sources of inspiration.

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

Being a part of The Australian Ballet's return to stage after a year's hiatus was a once-in-a-lifetime experience (I hope so, at least!). But the cherry on top of that was performing the *Kingdom of the Shades* from

La Bayadère with the company alongside dancers I have looked up to for years. What a 'pinch me' moment that was!

What are your must-pack items when on tour?

Since this is my first tour, I have a constantly growing list of things to pack for next time. What I did pack though was the thing I spent my first paycheck on, my memory-foam pillow, which is serving me very well so far. Not forgetting a nice mug and lots of printed photos of family and friends.

What are you most looking forward to in the 2021 season?

I am most looking forward to *Romeo and Juliet* this year. It's a timeless classic and one of my favourite ballets, and the John Cranko version is a dream to watch so I can only imagine how special it will be to be a part of.

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

This is a hard one, so I'll try to narrow it down ... For very different reasons my dream roles would have to be Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* and Alice in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*®. I have watched, listened to, and practised parts of *Romeo and Juliet* (alone in a studio for fun) many times, so to become Juliet onstage would be fulfilling my lifelong ballet dream.

I would also love to dance Alice because of the outrageous energy, fun and depth this character has.

In terms of repertoire, I would love to perform in Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake* as it is such a special ballet to this company.

What does your perfect day look like?

A perfect weekday would be breakfast at one of Melbourne's great cafés, then ballet class and rehearsals at The Australian Ballet (it's technically work but it's also what I love to do). I would then probably go out to dinner with a group of friends before getting my nine hours of sleep!

A perfect weekend would be spent at Noosa beach in Queensland with friends and family.

What might we be surprised to learn about you?

I'm really interested in the stock market and I love playing touch footy.

Preserving our past building our future

This year is the second of a historic three-year relationship with CHANEL. As our Living Heritage Partner, CHANEL is supporting us with the creation of an internal digital asset management (DAM) system to preserve The Australian Ballet's rich cultural and historical significance.

Thanks to our pas de deux with CHANEL, the DAM system will allow us to explore and cherish our history, housing our precious assets for future generations. These include images and footage of performances, dancers, costumes, sets, props, lighting design, behind-the-scenes moments and souvenir programs.

A notable recent find includes 200 slides featuring prima ballerina Margot Fonteyn from her 1957 appearance as a guest artist with Borovansky Ballet in Sydney. Peter Fischer, who generously donated the slides to The Australian Ballet, shared his story with us:

"Back in 1957 I was not able to afford tickets to Borovansky Ballet performances at the Theatre Royal in Sydney, so I got a job as a dresser ... Of course, I met with Margot, and she agreed to my taking photos of her

on stage so long as she saw them first and could veto any she did not like. I took a series of colour slides, and she approved the lot."

Delving deeply into our archives has been a particularly timely exercise as we approach our 60th birthday in 2022. It's also been a company-wide effort. While we were unable to perform during lockdown last year, a number of dancers (past and present) and members of company management generously devoted their time to progress the project.

We look forward to sharing further discoveries and treasures of historical significance as we continue to explore our archives.

Should you have any historical imagery or film you wish to donate, please contact us at 1300 369 741.

Did you know?

CHANEL has a longstanding history with dance, which begins with its founder, Gabrielle Chanel, who took lessons from Isadora Duncan and was fascinated by the comfort and freedom of her movement. She designed for and supported Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes throughout her lifetime. Continuing the patronage of its founder, Karl Lagerfeld collaborated with numerous choreographers during his tenure as Creative Director for the Fashion House and created costumes for the English National Ballet. Virginie Viard, current Artistic Director of Fashion Collections, most recently reimagined costumes for the Paris Opéra Ballet.

MARGOT FONTEYN
BALLET
Ansochrome
JUNE 1957



Margot Fonteyn and the Borovansky Ballet 1956. Photo Peter Fischer

A ballerina is captured in a graceful, dynamic pose against a plain, light-colored background. She is wearing a black, form-fitting, sleeveless bodice with vertical white stripes and a voluminous, white, multi-layered tutu. Her hair is pulled back, and she is looking upwards with an expression of focus and beauty. Her right arm is raised, with her hand near her head, while her left arm is extended downwards. She is wearing light-colored ballet slippers and is balancing on her right leg, with her left leg lifted and pointed.

Letters from the heart

Planned Giving: a lasting and loving legacy.

Our experience of the last 18 months, living through the global pandemic, has highlighted how the generosity and foresight of our bequestors is vital to the future of the company.

Where we have come from and the journey ahead is only possible because of the solid foundation laid by ballet lovers who want to *pave the way for future generations*.

Leaving a gift in your will, no matter how big or small, is the ultimate celebration of life. It's a very personal expression of joy – one that's fuelled by the heart and driven by foresight and devotion.

We had the pleasure of speaking with some of our community to discover what motivated them to express their love for The Australian Ballet through planned giving.

Ako Kondo. Photography Pierre Toussaint



**Ross Fairhurst – artist,
New South Wales**

“When I wrote my will, I wanted to acknowledge those who have made a difference in my life. I wanted to say thank you, and I wanted there to always be an Australian Ballet so that future generations can have some of the experiences that I have had, and more.

“Since confirming my bequest, I have experienced an even stronger connection to The Australian Ballet – one that took me quite by surprise. The inclusion I’ve felt as part of the Bequestor and broader Ballet families has been remarkable. I’ve made many new friendships that have enabled me to explore my love of ballet and dance and increased my connections to the company. The respect and admiration that I feel for the dancers, too, has increased as I learn about life behind the scenes, and the many layers that go into bringing a production to stage.

“To be part of The Australian Ballet’s future is one of the most rewarding contributions I have made. I feel proud knowing that I am part of this remarkable family and to be among others who share the same commitment.”



**Christine Wigg, daughter of
Fred and Jean Upton – lifelong
supporters of The Australian Ballet**

“Fred and Jean Upton grew up in households that cherished and valued the classical arts, particularly music and opera. Jean’s love of ballet started with her first lesson at three years old, while Fred’s induction occurred when he married Jean in 1947. My parents treasured all facets of a ballet performance, be it the union of dance, costumes and sets upon the stage, or the accomplished orchestra below.

“Fred and Jean’s support for The Australian Ballet was continuous since attending their first season in mid-1970 at the Palais in St Kilda.

“Holidays were planned around each year’s season and every program kept since their first encounter. Attending The Australian Ballet’s performances was a comfort for Jean following the passing of Fred several years ago, and it was important to Jean that she bequeathed a gift to The Australian Ballet in her will, through the Planned Giving program.

“In doing so, Jean wished to express her gratitude to The Australian Ballet for the delight that she and Fred experienced over the decades and would be comforted that her bequest was received when times were particularly difficult for the company. I am a season ticket holder myself, and The Australian Ballet continues to play a significant role within our family.”



**Alan Smith – President of
Friends of The Australian Ballet,
South Australia**

“I first started attending performances of The Australian Ballet when I moved to go to university in Melbourne in 1974. I quickly became entranced and have remained so ever since. My husband, Daryl Anderson, and I still go to every performance at every opportunity.

“After thoroughly enjoying the glorious 50th Anniversary Gala, we decided to bequeath fifty percent of our estate to the Ballet. We are great believers that if there is something that gives you joy you support it so that it can continue to give joy in the future.

“Other than our admiration for the exquisite skill and artistry of the company, our prime reason for giving is that we have enormous respect for the many ways in which the dancers are cared for and nurtured. Their health, welfare and post-dance careers are considered along with their technique and prowess. The Ballet cares for its dancers, and so we wish to care for the Ballet.”

We invite you to have a confidential conversation about how you can be a part of the future of the company and share your love of The Australian Ballet with generations to come.

Reimagining *Romeo and Juliet*

Inspiring the next generation with
a fresh look at a timeless classic.



As Australia's national ballet company, we are always looking for ways to improve access to the arts for all Australians in every corner of the country. Our Education and Outreach team leads the way by curating a curriculum featuring truly inclusive opportunities for every age, ability and experience level.

One such initiative is a 30-minute modern retelling of *Romeo and Juliet*, choreographed by Ballet Master Paul Knobloch.

Inspired by 1980s pop art, this production of *Romeo and Juliet* began its journey in lockdown last year with everyone rehearsing online from their homes. In contrast, in 2021 it will go on to reach a community

of 40,000 children in 110 primary, high school and community groups across a broad selection of the most remote Australian communities.

There's no denying that taking a production on a tour of this scale presents some unique challenges (think reducing a three-act ballet into a 30-minute performance and sending it on the road with four dancers and a handful of suitcases travelling in one car!) but the team behind the scenes has relished the opportunity to come up with the best possible solutions.

Set designer Kat Chan took Paul's source of inspiration - the love-heart motif in a Keith Haring painting - and ran with it. She devised a larger-than-life inflatable



heart that could serve as a backdrop as well as providing a 'backstage' location where the dancers could store props and change their costumes. It also packs down to a suitcase for travel.

Meanwhile, costume designer Christie Milton created a capsule set of simple but distinctive costume pieces that were interchangeable, easy to change into without a mirror or assistance, and were washing-machine friendly for life on the road.

Exploring themes such as fate, choice, love, prejudice, conflict resolution and family, Shakespeare's play is as relevant now as it ever has been and continues to feature on the national curriculum.



From fusing traditional Shakespearean movements with pop-culture dance to create an engaging neo-classical style, to complementing classical ballet mime gestures with relatable motifs to assist with storytelling, great efforts have been made to ensure the touring production is tailor-made for this younger audience.

Reflecting on his aspirations for the production, Paul Knobloch hopes the children and young people watching his reimagining of *Romeo and Juliet* "will be inspired to be the storytellers of dance, of art, and of theatre in the future."

Ballet Family Events

David McAllister AC Farewell Dinners

Stage of the Joan Sutherland Theatre,
Sydney Opera House. Tuesday 15
and Wednesday 16 December 2020.

Despite COVID-19 cancelling our scheduled galas
we closed out 2020 on a high with a fitting farewell
for David McAllister, generously supported by
Van Cleef & Arpels.

Photography Guy Davies



(L-R) Ian Hicks AO, Susie Grant, David McAllister AC, Lady Potter AC CMRI



(L-R) Ron and Suellen Enestrom*, David McAllister AC



(L-R) Robert Albert AO RFD RD and Libby Albert, David McAllister AC



Libby Christie AM and guests

Talking Pointe



(L-R) Wesley Enoch AM , David McAllister AC

Introduction to David Hallberg

Ciao Papi, Howard Smith Wharves, Brisbane. Friday 19 March 2021.

His Hon Judge Greg Egan and members of The Foundation Board hosted a special evening for Brisbane supporters to meet new Artistic Director David Hallberg and hear about a new era for The Australian Ballet.

Photography Marlene Suter



(L-R) Jane Freudenstein* and His Hon Judge Greg Egan*



(L-R) Julie-Anne Standfield and Rhonda Sheehy



(L-R) Anne Symons, Alan Symons, Natasha Bowness*, Barbara Bedwell, Barbara Duhig



(L-R) Diana McLaurin, Joan Lyons, David Hallberg

Les Etoiles Dinner

Sofi's Lounge at Sofitel Melbourne on Collins.
Thursday 25 March 2021.

Our annual dinner for our Les Etoiles patrons,
hosted by the principal artists of The Australian Ballet.

Photography Casey Horsfield

*The Australian Ballet Foundation Board



(L-R) Brett Chynoweth and Jodie Maunder*



(L-R) Brett Chynoweth, Robyn Hendricks, John Barlow, Amy Harris, Jarryd Madden



(L-R) Adam Bull, Natasha Bowness*, Rosie Lew AM, Allan Fels AO, Sharyn Gilham



(L-R) Graeme Uthmeyer, Lisa Bolte, Amber Scott, Ty King-Wall



(L-R) Bob Valentine, Robin Campbell* and Bill Bowness AO*



(L-R) Angie Carter and Mary Barlow*

*The Australian Ballet Foundation Board

Introduction to David Hallberg

Sanctuary Adelaide Zoo. Friday 26 March 2021.

Our South Australian patrons were treated to an intimate evening with new Artistic Director David Hallberg.

Photography Frankie the Creative



(L-R) David Hallberg, Annette Gillen OAM, Beverley Perrett OAM, Natalya Sard



(L-R) The Hon Steven Marshall MP, Natasha Stott Despoja AO, David Hallberg



(L-R) Werner Neuman, Areti Boyaci, Jacqui Stratton-Smith, Edward Stratton-Smith



(L-R) Kaye Feetham, Trish Byrne, Jarmila Flaherty

Lady Potter's 90th Birthday Celebrations

Saturday 24 April 2021.

Our beloved Lady Potter celebrated a significant birthday at an afternoon at Thé Dansant with friends.

Photography Casey Horsfield



(L-R) Lady Potter AC CMRI, Kenneth Watkins AM



(L-R) David Hallberg, Lady Potter AC CMRI

Awards and Accolades

It has been a period of well-deserved recognition for and celebration of some important members of our philanthropic community. Congratulations to all on their wonderful achievements.



(L-R) David McAllister AC, Lady Potter AC CMRI, The Hon Paul Fletcher MP, Federal Minister for the Arts. Photography Rob Blackburn

Lady Primrose Potter AC CMRI President Emeritus – Annual Giving

Lady Potter was honoured with the Arts Visionary Award in the 2020 Creative Partnerships Awards for her transformational impact on philanthropy across the arts sector.

The Creative Partnerships Awards celebrate luminary individuals from Australia's philanthropy, business and arts sectors who show leadership in private giving and business partnerships in the arts.



(L-R) Kenneth Watkins AM, Rita Anesbury. Photography Nico Photography

Kenneth Watkins AM Philanthropy Director

Kenneth Watkins was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 2021 Australia Day Honours List for significant service to the performing arts, particularly to ballet.

The Australian Honours and Awards recognise the outstanding service and contributions of Australians whose efforts make our communities and our nation a better place.



(L-R) Elizabeth Toohey, David McAllister AC, David Hallberg. Photography Chris Pavlich

David McAllister AC Artistic Director 2001 – 2020 and Planned Giving Ambassador

As part of the Queen's Birthday Honours, David McAllister was appointed a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC). The award — the highest of all Australian honours — was made for eminent service to the performing arts, particularly to ballet both nationally and internationally, to artistic directorship and dance education, and as a mentor.

Earlier in the year David was awarded the Royal Academy of Dance's internationally coveted Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Award at a Friends of the Australian Ballet gala lunch celebrating his tenure as Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet. Recognised as one of the most sought-after awards in the dance world and the highest honour from the Royal Academy of Dance, the award was presented in recognition of his outstanding service to the art of dance.

In addition, David received the JC Williamson Award for industry lifetime achievement at the Helpmann Awards, which recognises achievement and excellence within the performing arts, music and comedy. This award is described as the most prestigious award in Australian live entertainment, and past recipients include Graeme Murphy and Dame Joan Sutherland.

THE PHILANTHROPY TEAM

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.

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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
philanthropyevents@australianballet.com.au

Front cover
Artists of The Australian Ballet
with David Hallberg

Inside back cover
Chengwu Guo

Back cover
Jill Ogai

Photography Pierre Toussaint

Talking Pointe is made from 30% recycled materials from sustainably managed sources.

Principal
Partner

 THE
AUSTRALIAN
BALLET





THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

PHILANTHROPY