

THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

TALKING POINTE



WINTER 2022

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.



Front and back cover
Artists of The Australian Ballet
in Anne Woolliams' *Swan Lake*
Photo Branco Gaica 1983

Philanthropy Director
Kenneth Watkins AM
Photo Pierre Toussaint

“The ultimate pas de deux”

As we dust ourselves off after a couple of very challenging years where every member of The Australian Ballet has been touched by our community's boundless support, it's time to take our first step in a thrilling new journey together.

In 2023, The Australian Ballet will proudly present a dynamic new version of *Swan Lake* as the centrepiece of our 60th anniversary celebrations. A reimagining of one of the greatest works of all time, Anne Woolliams' iconic classical production, Directed and Realised by David Hallberg, signals a bold new era for the company.

This extraordinary creative undertaking is David's brainchild and has been his north star since the Artistic Directorship was just a twinkle in his eye. As he so eloquently expresses, “Every company needs a signature, classical production of *Swan Lake* within its repertoire; one that every dancer wants to be a part of, and every ballet fan is eager to see. We have many a wonderful iteration of *Swan Lake* in our canon, but I see an opportunity for a reenergised classical version of the work in our repertoire ... One that will stand proud as a choreographically modern representation of The Australian Ballet.”

David's realisation will embody the beauty and power of the art form while honouring the rich history and legacy of The Australian Ballet to create a *Swan Lake* that feels as current as the day it was created. One that will be a jewel in our crown for decades to come.

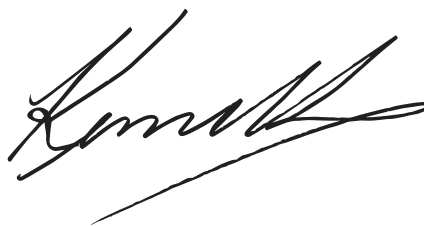
Annual Giving remains one of the most important ways you can support the future of The Australian Ballet. That being said, if you have been on this path with us for some time, you will know that a new production of this magnitude can only come to life with the support of many and the generosity of our incredible philanthropic community.

This is why we're inviting our nearest and dearest to be a part of this momentous journey with us.

We are deeply honoured that the James & Diana Ramsay Foundation and the Lachlan and Sarah Murdoch Foundation have joined forces to anchor the production with two leadership gifts. The generosity of these foundational commitments has enabled a gift-matching campaign and helped to galvanise our wider community by maximising the impact of every donation made in support of this landmark work.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate everyone who has since joined the exciting creative journey so far by making a gift to help this epic production take flight. I have had the privilege of being a member of this company for 28 years now. Every day I find motivation in our artists and art form, and I'm constantly moved by the outpouring of generosity we experience when our supporters link arms to create an artistic legacy for future generations.

This is the ultimate pas de deux. We are creating magic together.



Kenneth Watkins AM
Philanthropy Director

A new creative journey is just beginning

There is still time if you would like to make a gift to help us write a new chapter in our history. Your generosity will enable David's vision and support our artists, creatives and company at every step of the way as we realise this world-first reimagining of *Swan Lake*.

Join the journey: australianballet.com.au/swanlake2023

Company news

The Australian Ballet has kicked off 2022 with an exciting celebration as our first new principal artist was promoted since 2019, a host of new dancers joined the company, alumni returned as new Artistic staff, and we said a number of bittersweet farewells.



Principal Artist
Callum Linnane
Photo Lucas Dawson

Principal promotion

During the curtain call of *Anna Karenina's* opening night in Melbourne, Artistic Director David Hallberg announced the promotion of Callum Linnane to principal artist of The Australian Ballet.

The promotion came seven years since Callum joined the company as a graduate of The Australian Ballet School and less than a year after he was appointed to senior artist.

Commenting on the recognition, David Hallberg says, "When hard work, focus and passion come together, it can be an undeniable combination. This is what Callum embodies as a dancer and I am thrilled that he has been named principal artist of The Australian Ballet. I cannot wait for audiences to see Callum soar to new heights as he embarks on the ascent of a true artist."

New dancers

One of England's leading dancers, Joseph Caley, will be joining the company as a principal artist in August. Joseph trained at the Royal Ballet School before joining Birmingham Royal Ballet in 2005 where he was promoted to principal in 2011. In 2017 he joined the English National Ballet and was promoted to lead principal a few months later.

Maxim Zenin joins The Australian Ballet from Mariinsky Theatre. A graduate of the Vaganova Ballet Academy, Maxim has an extensive classical and contemporary repertoire and has toured with Mariinsky Theatre through Europe and Asia. Maxim joined the corps de ballet in May.

Henry Berlin, a native New Yorker, will join The Australian Ballet's corps de ballet on 1 August. Henry has performed for the New York City Ballet in many productions during his 12 years at the School of American Ballet and has recently guest starred with Maria Kowroski and the New Jersey Ballet.

Kirsty Martin in
The Merry Widow
Photo Jeff Busby



Principal Artist Ty King-Wall
Photo Christopher Rodgers-Wilson

Alumni

In 2022, at the invitation of David Hallberg, Kirsty Martin has returned to The Australian Ballet as a full-time member of the Artistic Team.

Kirsty is an icon of The Australian Ballet. She was accepted into The Australian Ballet School under the direction of Gailene Stock and graduated in 1995 with a Diploma of Dance. Joining the company in 1995, she rose to the rank of principal artist in 2003 and, in 2009, Kirsty was the first Australian to win the Prix Benois de la Danse in Moscow. In 2011 Kirsty partnered with David Hallberg in his first guesting appearance with The Australian Ballet in Sir Peter Wright's *The Nutcracker*.

Kirsty has remained close to the company since her retirement in 2011, returning frequently as a guest teacher and coach, and her connection will now continue in the new role of Ballet Mistress & Repertoire Coach.

Farewells

Sadly, we also bid farewell to four stand-out dancers in the first half of 2022 but wish them the very best for the next exciting chapters in their careers.

Principal Artist Ty King-Wall took his final bow with the company dancing the role of Alexei Vronsky in the Sydney season of *Anna Karenina*. Ty started dancing at the age of seven, graduated dux from The Australian Ballet School before joining The Australian Ballet in 2006. During his time with the company, Ty has danced numerous principal roles, and performed in Paris, London, New York, and Tokyo. He had the roles of Ceyx in Tim Harbour's *Halcyon* and Crassus in Lucas Jervies' *Spartacus*, created on him and was promoted to soloist in 2010, to senior artist in 2011, and to principal artist in 2013.

Senior Artist Cristiano Martino also said farewell to the company after the Melbourne and Sydney seasons of *Anna Karenina*, where he performed the role of Alexei Karenin. Cristiano joined The Australian Ballet in 2013, having graduated dux from The Australian Ballet School; he was promoted to coryphée in 2015, to soloist in 2017 and to senior artist in 2018.

Another dancer to say their goodbyes at the conclusion of the *Anna Karenina* season was soloist Nicola Curry. Nicola had been with the company for six years having spent the first decade of her career as a member of the American Ballet Theatre, where she toured extensively around the world. Nicola joined The Australian Ballet in 2015 and was promoted to soloist in 2017.

A member of the Corps de Ballet since 2009, Jessica Wood, a graduate of The Royal Ballet School, hung up her pointe shoes at the end of 2021. Fortunately for us, Jessica will continue her career with The Australian Ballet, albeit in a slightly different role as she moves into the company's Publicity department.

The *power* of love

How the impact of philanthropy is powering
The Australian Ballet of *today and tomorrow*.

After the challenges of 2020, we had such high hopes for 2021. Crossing the threshold between years felt symbolic – the bridge between what had been and what was now possible.

Unfortunately, 2021 proved to be another difficult period. It was certainly not the year we were hoping for. In many ways the challenges were greater, and the almost total absence of live performance throughout the year was a very real threat to The Australian Ballet as we know and love it.

Thankfully, because of the leadership shown by our board and management over many years, we have been able to access our available reserves during this uncertain time.

We have also been buoyed by the generosity of our enduring community of ballet lovers and devoted supporters, patrons, bequestors and ticket donors, who have never failed to show up for us.

Approximately 34% of revenue received by the company in 2020 and 2021 was donated by our generous patrons. Of this, half was immediately available to facilitate operations. The remaining half represented donations that were capital protected and/or only available for specified purposes. Your generosity continues to be our salvation.

Read on to learn how every member of our giving community has played a crucial part in helping Australia's national ballet company withstand the challenges it faced and will go on to play a vital role in our future success.

“With around 60% of our revenue normally generated by box-office income, and so many mainstage seasons cancelled or postponed at short notice, we have had to exercise great ingenuity and once more rely on reserves and the support of friends and partners to keep the company together and thriving ... Thanks to this *heart-warming support* we have been able to keep the company together and in good shape.”

Libby Christie AM, Executive Director



Annual Giving

The Australian Ballet's Annual Giving program is the lifeblood of the company and, arguably, the most successful program of its kind in Australia's performing arts landscape.

Throughout its 33-year history, Annual Giving has underpinned the company's everyday activities and remains one of the most significant ways our community can bolster the strength of the company today. Every gift – no matter its size – ensures we can continue to create the magic you witness on stage, by supporting our incredible company of artists, artisans and the endless work that happens behind the scenes to keep our dancers in top shape.

The impact of Annual Giving has never been so vital as it was during 2020 and 2021, when over 6,000 patrons made gifts to the program – including valuable donations to our Annual Giving Catalogues – totalling \$9.2 million.

During this time, Annual Giving contributions played a critical role by keeping over 230 dancers, ballet teachers, artisan costume makers, theatre technicians and administration staff employed in their chosen fields. Without the ability to retain these people, immeasurable talent, artistry, knowledge and experience would have been lost by the company, compromising the standard of ballet The Australian Ballet is renowned for.

“The Australian Ballet is proud to be a company that creates gold standard art, but it can only be this way with your support. I am *profoundly grateful* for the heartfelt generosity and encouragement that we receive from our community that, in turn, allows others to continue to discover this beautiful art form and experience great joy because of it.”

Natasha Bowness, President of Annual Giving

Ticket donations

In addition to the generous support of our Annual Giving program, 5,000 of our devoted audience members generously donated the value of their tickets to our cancelled performances in 2020 and 2021, totalling \$4 million. The tangible impact of these gifts helped the company endure some of the most difficult years in our history.



Planned Giving

The quiet achiever of philanthropy, The Australian Ballet's Planned Giving program has been creating a powerful groundswell of its own for over 30 years.

Since 1990, hundreds of generous lovers of ballet have made provisions for the company with a gift in their will and, subsequently, laid a solid foundation for the company to survive and thrive.

Our experience of living through the pandemic has reinforced how transformational the generosity of our bequestors is to the future of the company and the art form. Every gift we receive from a bequestor's estate is capital protected and invested in a long-term fund to create perpetual income that becomes an integral part of the company's resources and underpins our financial strength.

In the ultimate expression of passion for the art form, the heartfelt decisions of our donors who leave us a gift in their will are paving the way and futureproofing The Australian Ballet, ensuring we can continue to uplift and delight audiences for future generations.

In fact, during 2020 and 2021, over \$1 million of income earned on bequests received over the lifetime of the program was allocated to support general operations and company priorities – shaping and sustaining us during the most challenging time in our history.

“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 ... that has enabled me to explore my love of ballet and dance and increased my connection to the company.”

Ross Fairhurst, Bequestor

Endowment funds and specific purpose major gifts

The Australian Ballet currently has 45 capital protected endowment funds that have been created by visionary philanthropists to guarantee the long-term sustainability of the company and to maintain our reputation as a gold standard, internationally recognised ballet company.

Along with bequests, these funds are overseen and governed by The Australian Ballet's Investment Committee. Each year, the capital growth from the funds is directed to support designated priority areas of the company's activity, including:

- Expanding our touring footprint into Regional Australia.
- Positioning the company on the world stage by making it possible for us to tour to key international cities.
- Creating new ballet productions, and preserving and restoring our heritage ballets.
- Providing opportunities for our artists to develop and thrive through scholarships and specialist training.
- Underwriting the salaries of four principal artist positions, one soloist position and one corps de ballet dancer position.
- Fostering the development of choreographers within The Australian Ballet.
- Supporting general operations to help bridge our annual performance gap deficit. In a typical year, box-office income only covers just over 60% of the artistic and other costs of operations.

As well as endowment funds, many members of our Ballet family choose to make annual, specific purpose major gifts. In 2020, the generosity of this group created the Financial Relief Fund – a COVID-19 Relief Fund established with philanthropic support to assist members of The Australian Ballet experiencing financial difficulty during this period.

Another beneficiary of specific purpose major gifts is our Education & Outreach Program: a wide-reaching body of work encapsulating accessible workshops for preschool, primary and secondary students, as well as creative and community residencies, including performances designed for young audiences.

The magnanimous support from our treasured donors, sponsors and community partners allows this program to be delivered at no cost to more than 30,000 students and teachers every year. In symbiosis, truly inclusive opportunities are being created to inspire and connect with the next generation of artists, creative workers, and audiences across all corners of Australia in metropolitan, regional and remote communities.

“The workshops were a *huge success and highly engaging*. A wonderful example is of a Year Four student who did not come to school last year when the workshops were on because he “didn’t like ballet and he wasn’t going to do dancing.” I spoke to him about the upcoming workshops and this year he was front and centre, so enthusiastic and engaged.”

Primary Teacher, Northern Territory

In 2020 and 2021, over \$6 million of philanthropic distributions were made from the company's endowed and specific purpose funds that invaluablely underpinned our key activities, strategic priorities and enabled the delivery of core programs.

The Australian Ballet exists to inspire, delight and challenge audiences through the power of performance, but this wouldn't be possible without the tangible commitment of our nearest and dearest. Resilient, energised and grateful, we are still here today and we are eternally thankful to those of you who have come together to keep us dancing through the rain.



Standing on the shoulders *of giants*

Lady Potter AC CMRI and Natasha Bowness
in conversation with Kenneth Watkins AM.

Lady Primrose Potter and Natasha Bowness are a powerful pair and – as President Emeritus and the current President of Annual Giving, respectively – they personify the past, present and future of philanthropy at The Australian Ballet.

Between them, they have amassed 125 years of ballet attendance and decades of generous support for projects enabling artistic development, innovation and support for game-changing infrastructure. A rich, shared experience across lifetimes has driven an enduring passion for the art form and an intergenerational ambition to ensure The Australian Ballet continues to flourish.

With the company's 60th anniversary just months away, Philanthropy Director Kenneth Watkins shared a pot of tea with Natasha and Lady Potter and joyful tales of their deep affection and commitment to ballet, the company, their fellow supporters, and their great anticipation of what's still to come.

I'd like to start by asking you how your story with ballet began?

Lady Potter

Well, I've been going to the ballet now for about 85 years. I think it was my fifth or sixth birthday when my mother took me to a matinee performance of the Ballets Russes performing Aurora's Wedding from *The Sleeping Beauty* when they toured to Australia in 1936. I can still remember the dancers quite clearly – what they danced and what they wore – and I was quite beside myself with it. To such an extent that, at the end of it, I wouldn't get out of the chair and made a frightful scene. She said, "Well, if you'll come home now, I'll bring you back to each season". Thankfully she did.

Natasha

What a lovely memory. My connection with The Australian Ballet began nearly 40 years ago when I started attending the ballet with my parents. We used to go on Monday night and then went out for dinner at Walter's [Wine Bar] afterwards where we'd talk about what we'd seen. It was a really lovely family thing to do. I can still remember a moment when Lisa Bolte sat on a table near us at Walter's, after seeing her perform in the show – my sister and I were so excited!

I've continued attending every season since then. I'm still going to the ballet with mum and a group of women, who I've grown up with since I was six. And, as a family we all still go – together when we can, and apart. The commitment has continued. That's the beauty of The Australian Ballet being a national company: we can still be connected and share in the beauty of ballet when we're in different states.

It's the shared experience of ballet that really stands out to me. Whether it's between the audience who collectively gasp when the curtains go up, or the conversations between loved ones after the show, there's this great affection and warmth for the ballet that is so powerful.

Lady Potter, you cemented your relationship with The Australian Ballet in 1989 when you came to lead The Australian Ballet Club [now our Annual Giving program]...

Lady Potter

That's right, I had a chance encounter with Noel Pelly [former Administrator of The Australian Ballet] sitting on a flight returning from Sydney. I'd been working with another arts organisation and that association had just come to an end. When I mentioned this to Noel, he immediately invited me to support The Ballet. And so I did, and I have been involved with the company ever since.

You were President of Annual Giving for about 28 years before asking Natasha to take over five years ago...

Lady Potter

Yes, well I feel very strongly that you must have succession – it's the future of an organisation. But it's all very well to say that you want a successor; you have to find the right person to do it. Someone who is equally as committed to the scope of the role. I was delighted when Natasha said she would do it.

Natasha, how did you feel to be taking the reins from Lady Potter?

Natasha

It was a great honour to be invited to take on the role by someone as inspiring, remarkable and committed as Lady Potter. She's a visionary philanthropist and it's an enormous privilege and great responsibility to follow in her footsteps as President of Annual Giving, and as an ambassador for the company.

I feel incredibly honoured when I think about the trust Lady Potter has put in me by asking me to take over from her, and I take the role very seriously. I love meeting people and hearing their stories. And I love the fact that we're all together – standing on the shoulders of those who came before us – helping to propel the organisation forward.



David Hallberg & Lady Potter AC CMRI
Photo Casey Horsfield



Andrew Fairley AM, Natasha Bowness
& Christopher Rodgers-Wilson
Photo Casey Horsfield

It's been a challenging couple of years for the arts. We've been very fortunate to have come through this time relatively unscathed – largely because of the strength of our Annual Giving program and increase we've seen in new patrons. Why do you think people have chosen to keep supporting and joining the community?

Natasha

I think it's because we all care so deeply about the art form and about the company and want to see it continue to thrive. Since becoming President of Annual Giving, I've had the opportunity to travel around the country attending performances, meeting fellow patrons and sharing stories. I've met with so many people who have been coming to the ballet for decades. It's an important part of our lives. "It's what we do, and we love it," they tell me regularly. The enduring commitment and deep affection for the company is extraordinary.

We are all part of this very special family. And, as you know, when you are family you support what you love unconditionally – in good times and bad. Our community value this company so greatly. They want to support us, they want us to continue to flourish, and they want to support David and his vision.

Lady Potter

Indeed. Things have been tough, but we have David Hallberg and that is the greatest excitement for everyone. Someone of his authority and international representation is presenting a whole new vision of Australian ballet both here and overseas.

Australians are very generous, they really are. But they expect to see whatever they're supporting prosper. There's no doubt that, under David's artistic directorship, The Australian Ballet will continue to thrive in spite of the challenges we have faced.

Natasha

I realise I am just one person of thousands who are part of this long lineage of philanthropy, but I would really like to acknowledge, celebrate, and thank everyone who has made a contribution to the company so far.

You both have a long-standing connection to David and great admiration for the work he has done, both as an artist and now as Artistic Director. Knowing him as you do, what particularly excites you about the future of the company with his leadership?

Lady Potter

I think it's endless the things that could happen with David, and that's why I was so pleased when he was announced as David McAllister's successor. It's also one of the reasons I wanted to set up the David Hallberg Fund. I believe that the Artistic Director should have some independence to do things immediately without the action going cold. That's why I gave a donation and invited friends to match it, and they did! Together we created this Fund for David to dip into as he pleases.

It's very hard to say precisely with the current affairs as they are in Europe, but the ballet world will always respect David Hallberg and want to know – and be a part of – what he's doing.

Natasha

Exactly. David's access to an extensive global network of creatives is second-to-none, and already we're seeing how his connections are challenging, inspiring and encouraging the dancers. Pushing them beyond where they think they can go and helping to build their confidence.

David hasn't got to where he has through just having talent. His grit, commitment, drive and attention to detail are all attributes you want a great leader to have and he's bringing that generously. And not just to the company leadership but in the studio too, where his authentic energy and generosity of spirit is evident and really making a difference.

And so here we are... soon to be celebrating the company's 60th anniversary. What hopes and aspirations do you have for the next era of The Australian Ballet?

Lady Potter

Excitement. And with David Hallberg at the helm exciting is what it will be. He's got 'it'!

Natasha

Already, we can see David taking us a step further and lifting the bar even higher, which will further build our reputation on both the home and international stage. I want to see the company continue to flourish and grow, develop its artistic excellence and be recognised as one of Australia's preeminent cultural institutions and a gold-standard dance company.

I'm also really interested in new repertoire and the artistic vibrancy of the company. We need to keep seeing new work because, to continue to shine, you need to keep inspiring and challenging the dancers, the creatives, and audiences.

And not forgetting dancer development. Artistic development is really important to me. It was one of the key motivators behind my family creating and endowing the Bowness Family Foundation Fund for Artistic Development. We wanted to ensure David has the support to enable the wonderfully talented company of dancers to achieve their full artistic potential via access to the world's best coaches and learning opportunities.

Lady Potter

I'll also be waiting with bated breath to see the new *Swan Lake*. Anne Woolliams [choreographer and former Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet] was brilliant. One of the important things about ballet is the beauty of it, and Anne's *Swan Lake* was truly beautiful and the costumes were exquisite. What a great international coup it is for us to have David as our new Artistic Director. I look forward to seeing what he brings to this version very much.



Step changes

How The Australian Ballet supports its dancers to prepare for life beyond the stage.

The Australian Ballet is world-renowned for the striking aesthetic, extraordinary technique and dynamic athleticism presented on stage.

What audiences may be less aware of however, is the company's global reputation for its commitment to its dancers beyond the stage. A deep-rooted commitment anchored in a trailblazing approach to dancer health and wellbeing, professional development, and training support in anticipation of life after dance. A commitment possible – in part – because of the generosity of our philanthropic community's contribution to The Dancers' Transition Fund.

As Philanthropy Director, Kenneth Watkins explains, "The Australian Ballet employs the very best dancers in Australia and attracts international artists of distinction. Often intense and rewarding, a professional ballet dancer's career has a shorter lifespan than other vocations. Which is why we established The Dancers' Transition Fund in 2010 to support our wonderful artists as their career aspirations evolve."

Testament to The Australian Ballet's dedication to supporting its artists throughout their entire career, Sam Wright was appointed to The Artistic Health Team as Welfare & Development Coordinator in 2019 – a role that facilitates dancer career, wellbeing and personal growth. An ex-North Melbourne football player of 11 years, Sam brought a wealth of valuable lived experience and insight to this role – the first of its kind in ballet globally.

Initially introduced as a pilot program with 15 dancers, Sam has been responsible for implementing individualised best-practice support programs in the areas of career, education and professional development to enhance the performance and wellbeing of the company's incredibly talented dancers. Today, every dancer has a bespoke career plan that is developed in partnership with them from the first day they walk in.

Speaking of the growth of the program, Sam says, "Before the pandemic, I would have told you that many dancers

only started to consider their next career when they reached their early 30's. Since COVID however, and the impact it's had on our ability to perform, we've seen a huge increase in the number of dancers who want to study, who want to have a career plan, and need financial support to explore those options. We now have more than 50 members of our company who are studying and participating in courses to extend their career trajectory which is fantastic.

"From my perspective, the silver lining of the pandemic has been the mindset shift it has brought about in the dancers. From career development being considered a sensitive topic for many, they've been forced to consider, 'what if...?' And where, previously, career progression may have been perceived as being a distraction from the dancers' key focus, we've noticed that this more holistic view has improved performance and engagement. Simply having a meaningful conversation about the future seems to have alleviated some of the stress associated with planning and that has allowed the dancers to focus with even greater clarity on the here and now."

Unexpectedly, the increased interest in career planning has presented opportunities to explore new and reinforced existing partnerships and pathways with tertiary education providers – including The Australian Ballet's Learning Partner, La Trobe University. As a result, the company has achieved 'elite athlete' recognition for our artists which has improved access to a wider range of courses and afforded them full flexibility with their chosen course, fully enabled by the Fund.

Now, 12 years after its inception, more than 30 retired, principal and senior artists, soloists and coryphées have received grants from The Dancers' Transition Fund to set up new career pathways. From undertaking further study and establishing entrepreneurial start-ups to purchasing specialist equipment to fuel their creative pursuits, the power of philanthropy has provided responsible and caring support to enable our great artists' future endeavours.

You can read about some of the artists who have accessed the Dancers' Transition Fund to extend their career trajectory below.

Christopher Rodgers-Wilson, Senior Artist

“A few years ago, while rehabbing from an injury I picked up a camera and, with the guidance from some close friends in the field, started photographing my fellow dancers. The Australian Ballet really encouraged my new pursuit and began to use my imagery online, which motivated me to think about how I could grow this new skill into something more significant.

“With the support of Sam [Wright], I wrote an application for The Dancers' Transition Fund to purchase professional photography gear that would facilitate the highest possible quality of work. My proposal was accepted and now my photography work is being used frequently by the company in programs, online and in promotional material.

“I am incredibly grateful to have been able to access the Fund in this way. It has enabled the development of a passion that I can pursue alongside my dancing, while also building my confidence as I face a future career transition away from the stage.”

Ingrid Gow, Soloist

“The thoughts of a career transition haven't always been high on my list of priorities. Perhaps due to youth and naivety, I imagined myself dancing with no end in sight. But, as my age has caught up with me and personal and professional responsibilities have increased, thoughts of how I will continue to sustain a passionate and fulfilling career post-dance began to trouble me. The 'ballet world' can be an insular and all-consuming environment, full of rewarding experiences and high expectations. What could I possibly know of or contribute to the real world?

“Enter stage left, Sam [Wright] who, in tandem with The Australian Ballet, organised career development and career transition workshops to help us identify our many transferable skills and the opportunities that were waiting for us if we only had a plan in place. My plan was to obtain a degree and, when ready, enter the workforce somewhat more prepared than I was.

“The Dancer Transition Fund has eased the financial pressures and opened up opportunities that I wouldn't have considered otherwise. The pandemic has since supercharged my learning, allowing me to obtain my Advanced Diploma in Leadership and Management and enter the final year of a degree in Applied Management.

“I haven't yet finished my journey in dance or my exploration into education. I hope that one day they are interdependent, walking hand-in-hand, continuing to incite passion. All I know right now is that I wouldn't be realising any path without the support of Sam, the company and The Dancer Transition Fund.”

Jacqueline Clark, Soloist

“As a senior dancer in any company it can be daunting and scary to think of retiring from the art form that we have dedicated our lives to. Ballet for me was my first love, my passion, my everything for many years, and I've been so fortunate to have the career I have had. However, over the last few years – especially during COVID – I've really started to think about what's next, and what my future looks like.

“We are so incredibly fortunate at The Australian Ballet that we have the support to talk through these sometimes confronting thoughts and decisions. I have many ideas of what my future may look like but to be able to discuss and make decisions with the guidance of Sam [Wright] has allowed me to put a plan in place.

“During COVID I started studying to become a Pilates and barre instructor through online study. I hope to continue my studies; working on areas that can assist me managing people and setting me up for any opportunities that may come my way within and beyond the dance world.

“We really are so lucky to be dancing our hearts out and be getting the support we need for when that is no longer possible. To know that I have received financial support through the retraining fund to help set up my future post-ballet is a something I am so incredibly grateful for.”



Artists of The Australian Ballet
Photo Kate Longley



Sam Wright
Photo Paul Kennedy from ABC



If you would like to contribute to The Dancers' Transition Fund, we invite you to contact the Philanthropy Team on 1300 752 900 or by emailing philanthropyservices@australianballet.com.au



Swan Lake through the years

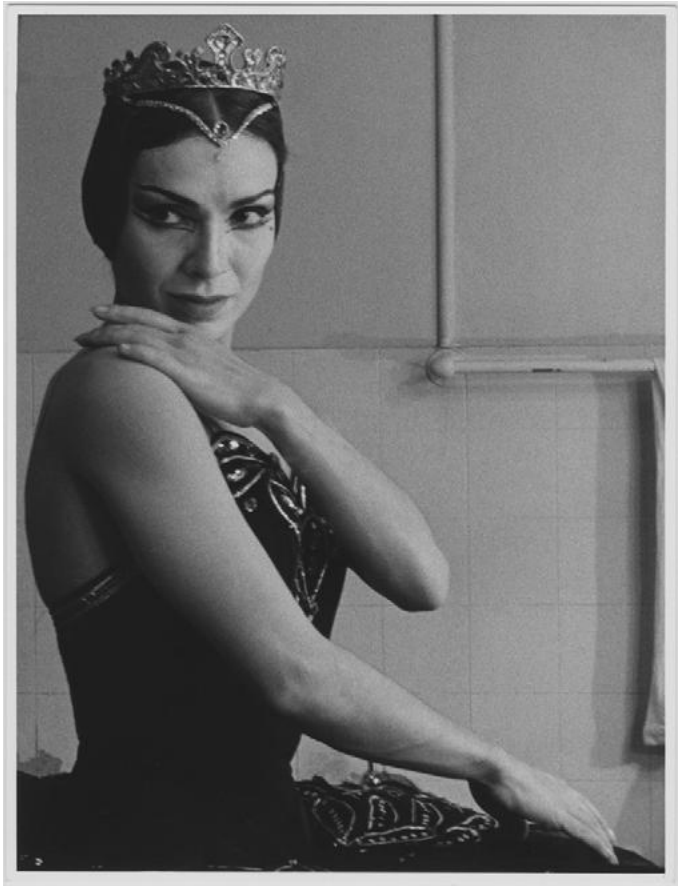
The ethereal beauty of *Swan Lake* has captivated audiences for over a century. Its powerful themes of yearning, idealism, betrayal and ultimately forgiveness enthrall ballet lovers from their earliest years and continue to resonate throughout their lifetimes.



Artists of The Australian Ballet as Swans
in Peggy Van Praagh's *Swan Lake*, 1962
Photo David Mist

An artistic spectacle that is essential to the history and evolution of the art form, *Swan Lake* has played a recurring leading role in the life of The Australian Ballet: four productions and 659 performances of the work have punctuated our 60-year history, starting with our very first performance in 1962.

And so, as we prepare to celebrate our landmark 60th year by staging a reimagining of Anne Woolliams' iconic production – Directed and Realised by Artistic Director David Hallberg – let's delve into the company's archives to discover some of the gems that have marked previous milestones in our rich history.



1960s

“*Swan Lake* comes with a history and a legacy. There’s a real sense of passing the baton with the work, with one generation of dancers handing it over to the next. It’s a rite of passage and that’s the beauty of ballets like *Swan Lake*. People come back year on year to see the work, with the knowledge that it will be unique to that moment.”

Adam Bull, Principal Artist

Guest Artist Sonia Arova backstage, in Odile costume, for the premiere season of Peggy Van Praagh’s *Swan Lake*, 1962
Photo Darryl Smythe



Guest Artist Sonia Arova as Odette in Peggy Van Praagh’s *Swan Lake*, 1962
Photo David Mist



Guest Artist Eric Bruhn as Prince Siegfried in Peggy Van Praagh’s *Swan Lake*, 1962
Photo David Mist



Marilyn Jones with Anne Woolliams in rehearsals for *Swan Lake*, 1977
Photo Michael Cook



Joanne Michel as Odette in Anne Woolliams' *Swan Lake*, 1980
Photo Jeff Busby

Terese Power as Odile and Paul Hamilton as Rothbart in Anne Woolliams' *Swan Lake*, 1983
Photographer unknown

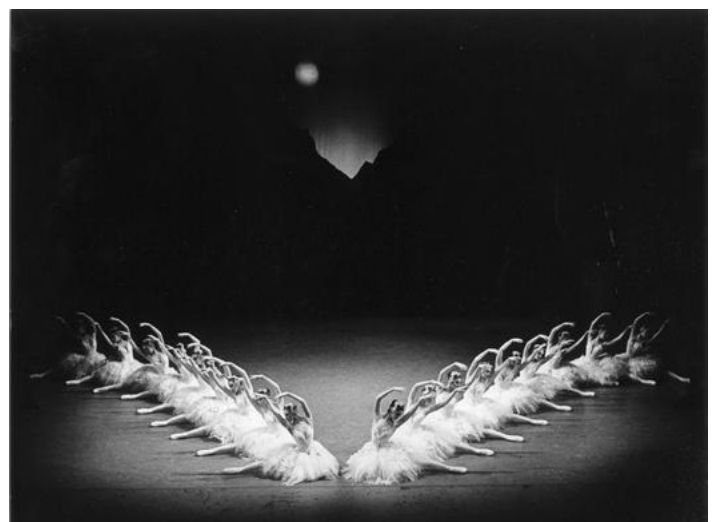


1970s & 1980s

“*Swan Lake* is a benchmark ballet for the women – the corps de ballet in particular. And I can say from my own experience that it’s one piece that really marks the corps as being good as they have to be so in sync with one another. I loved my time being in the corps de ballet in Anne Woolliams’ production, mainly because of how Anne allowed us to dance and to have feelings. I loved those moments.”

Fiona Tonkin OAM, Principal Coach and former Principal Artist with The Australian Ballet

Artists of The Australian Ballet in Anne Woolliams' *Swan Lake*, 1987
Photo Loreli Simmonds



Artists of The Australian Ballet in Anne Woolliams' *Swan Lake*, 1983
Photo Branco Gaica

1990s

“There’s a reason why *Swan Lake* is revered as a quintessential classic. There are so many moments within the ballet that people marvel at, and that takes the viewer away to somewhere completely different and to another time. There’s nothing more exciting than watching incredible dancers performing incredible choreography to incredible music.”

Steven Heathcote AM,
Ballet Master and former Principal Artist with The Australian Ballet



Lisa Bolte as Odette and Steven Heathcote as Prince Siegfried in Anne Woolliams' *Swan Lake*, 1998
Photo Jim McFarlane



Lisa Bolte as Odette in Anne Woolliams' *Swan Lake*, 1994
Photo Branco Gaica



Miranda Coney as Odile and David McAllister as Prince Siegfried in Anne Woolliams' *Swan Lake*, 1998
Photo Jeff Busby



Madeleine Eastoe as Odette and Robert Curran as Prince Siegfried in Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake*, 2008
Photo Jim McFarlane



Amber Scott as Odette and Adam Bull as Prince Siegfried in Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake*, 2008
Photo Jim McFarlane

2000s

"I've conducted more *Swan Lake* performances in my career than any other work, but I never get tired of it ... The score has rawness and passion and contains some of the best music that Tchaikovsky ever composed. The beauty and power of the score takes us on a deep emotional journey and helps us interpret the story we see unfolding on stage."

Nicolette Fraillon AM,
Chief Conductor and Music Director



Olivia Bell as Odile in Anne Wooliams' *Swan Lake*, 2001
Photo Jim McFarlane

2010s

“Every aspect of the dancing in *Swan Lake* is an opportunity for dancers to shine in the most famous ballet of the classical repertoire and to know that they’re part of the history of classical ballet.”

David Hallberg, Artistic Director



Amber Scott as Odile and Adam Bull as Prince Siegfried in Stephen Baynes' *Swan Lake*, 2016
Photo Dan Boud



Amy Harris as The Baroness in Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake*, 2013
Photo Lynette Wills



Adam Bull as Prince Siegfried in Stephen Baynes' *Swan Lake*, 2016
Photo Dan Boud



Amber Scott as Odette and Artists of The Australian Ballet in Stephen Baynes' *Swan Lake*, 2016
Photo Dan Boud

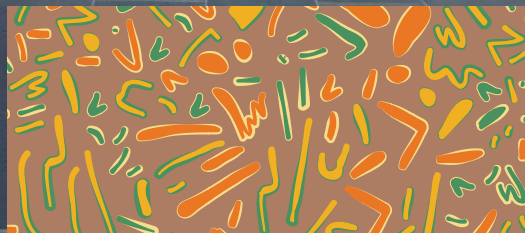


Valerie Tereshchenko as Russian Princess and Artists of The Australian Ballet in Stephen Baynes' *Swan Lake*, 2016
Photo Dan Boud

Did you know?

Our Living Heritage Partner, CHANEL has supported us with the creation of an internal Digital Asset Management system to preserve The Australian Ballet's rich cultural and historical significance – allowing us to explore and cherish our history and house our precious assets for future generations.

Deepening our connection
to communities and culture



Telling the story of Pomi and Gobba

As Australia's national ballet company, we are proudly purposeful in our efforts to reflect the rich diversity of the country and celebrate the privilege we have of living and working on land that belongs to the oldest living culture on earth.

Part of that commitment is embodied through The Australian Ballet's Education and Outreach programs that are brought to schools and communities with the generous support of our philanthropic community and corporate partners.

Our Education and Outreach team strives to curate a curriculum that inspires and connects with the next generation of artists, creative workers and audiences. Developed in consultation with the communities we work with, our programs are truly accessible to all, relevant, and culturally inclusive.

One of the highlights of our 2022 Education and Outreach program is *The Story of Pomi and Gobba* – a new contemporary ballet work realised by choreographer and

former dancer with The Australian Ballet and Bangarra Dance Theatre, Ella Havelka.

A proud Wiradjuri woman, Ella became the first First Nations woman to join The Australian Ballet and, although she no longer dances as a member of the company, Ella continues to collaborate with us – sharing her passion for creating new pathways for First Nations storytelling through dance.

Ella has choreographed two works for The Australian Ballet Education and Outreach Team, *Wilaygu Ngayinybula // Possums Two Minds* (2019) and now, *The Story of Pomi and Gobba* in partnership with fellow First Nations creatives, composer Tristan Field and designer Lillian Hull.

Pomi and Gobba designer Lillian has beautifully represented the Murrumbidgee River with a single piece of fabric abstractly printed using inspiration taken from frogs and fossils Ella discovered when she was on Country by the Murrumbidgee River.

Chantelle van der Hoek and Dann Wilkinson
Elena Salerno and Alexander Mitchell
Photos Edita Knowler

Reimagining the story

Based on the original Wiradjuri Dreamtime story, *Pomingalarna and Gobbagumbalun, The Story of Pomi and Gobba* is a modern adaptation about two non-binary frogs who live on opposite sides of the Murrumbidgee River, in Wiradjuri Country that spans a large area of what many know as Central New South Wales.

One day, Pomi and Gobba meet and strike up a friendship and discover that they have something in common: they feel like they don't fit the mould that's been prescribed by their families. While Pomi and Gobba find a beautiful friendship and the support to be their authentic selves, the Elders on both sides of river tell the frogs that a storm is coming. Of course, the two frogs don't listen because they're too busy enjoying being in each other's company and they get washed away by the storm, down the river, far away from their homes...

Recounting the origin of the work, Ella says, "When I first learned of this story, I remember thinking how closely it correlated with the *Romeo and Juliet* typical love story and that one day I wanted to make a ballet out of it." As Ella spoke with Wiradjuri Elders and community, she discovered that there were many more layers to the story than first thought. "As well as the strong theme of love, it's a story of identity, resilience and friendship, which makes the piece even more relevant to today's generation."

Cultural connections

Throughout the creative process, Ella has consulted closely with Wiradjuri Elders. Uncle Lloyd Dolan and Aunty Lorraine Tye have helped to shape this new contemporary adaptation through their unique interpretations of the story.

Speaking of his involvement, Uncle Lloyd Dolan explains: "It's always interesting to see how stories get interpreted over time and over experiences ... Often they can be seen as children's stories but, as you grow and your experiences of the world grow too, the meanings and what you get out of the story grow with you."

The creative journey

As Ella set about choreographing the work, she began by exploring the connection between spirituality, sharing knowledge and movement. "We started with a series of exercises that looked closely into the philosophy of Yindyamarra – a Wiradjuri way of being, of knowing, of doing – and unpicking what Yindyamarra means to all of us dancers individually. From there, we developed some movement motifs that eventually embedded themselves into the work."

Building on a spontaneous meeting of creative minds under the sails of the Sydney Opera House, Ella and composer Tristan took a unique approach to sound-scaping *The Story of Pomi and Gobba*. Dynamically switching between guitar (Pomi) and piano (Gobba), mixed with authentic sounds recorded on Wiradjuri country, and overlaid with Tristan's voiceover – a nod to the First Nations generational tradition of storytelling – the composition has been carefully curated to illuminate different aspects of the narrative.

This innovative technique has a significant part to play in establishing connections with audiences, as Education and Outreach Coordinator Yvette Sauvage explains. "Having Tristan's voice throughout the piece is not only exciting for the dancers to explore how the words look and how his intonations look, but it's going to be powerful when we take it to schools too. We often go to places that have never seen ballet before, so by having this voiceover, it gives the students another entry point into the story."

A lasting impact

Reflecting on the impact she hopes *The Story of Pomi and Gobba* will have on the 30,000 Australians who will have the chance to see it in 2022, Ella says, "I really hope that when they see the show, they'll put themselves into the story – as Pomi, as Gobba, as the river even – and perceive it in a way that really means something to them."

Tristian echoes, "I want people to go away feeling a little more creative, a bit more engaged and to feel like they've watched something that came from culture. They don't have to be First Nations, culture can still be a part of them in whatever capacity they choose."

Bringing the creation full-circle, Ella plans to develop a second adaptation of the story – reimagined in partnership with the Wiradjuri community and Elders – that will be returned to Country as a further celebration of the cultural origin of this work, and a lasting legacy for future generations.

Government
Partner

Trust and
Foundation Partners

Supporter

Principal
Partner



Van Cleef & Arpels



Behind the curtain with our Philanthropy Ambassadors



The Australian Ballet may be on stage now in full flight, but getting to this point was quite the adventure. Indeed, Melbourne and Sydney were still locked down until October last year. But as Philanthropy Ambassadors, Senior Artists Jarryd Madden and Jill Ogai, reflect in conversation with Philanthropy Manager Andrew Wright, in hindsight this was a period of holistic growth for them and the wider company. The challenges of the past few years have brought their own silver linings and a whole lot of love from our community.

The end of 2021 was quite a ride! We had lockdowns, cancelled seasons and, in a joyful turn of events, a surprise season of Celebration Galas. How did you find that time?

Jill

I feel blessed to have been so busy at a time when many weren't. Garry Stewart, [then Artistic Director of Australian Dance Theatre (ADT)] approached me to perform in one of his most celebrated works, *G*, having remembered me from when he created *Monument* on The Australian Ballet when I was in my second year with the company. Because we weren't performing at that time, I immediately said yes. It was a really special time artistically but also because I got to spend two months with my dad and reconnecting with friends and family in Adelaide.

After ADT, when I was back in Melbourne working with The Australian Ballet again, I had the opportunity to guest with Project Animo and work with Alice Topp [The Australian Ballet's Resident Choreographer] on her new venture too. It was a lot of fun!

I've always been really interested in learning new techniques and styles and working with different dancers. Dancing with a different group of people and being exposed to many different ways you can do things, gifted me with a unique experience and opportunity to hone different techniques and push myself in new ways. I feel like I've evolved and learned a lot more about myself as an artist as a result of these experiences.

Jarryd

Amy [Harris, Principal Artist and Jarryd's wife] and I tried to make the most of the downtime that was forced upon us towards the end of last year, by cherishing the extra time it gave us with our little possums [Jarryd and Amy are parents to Willow, seven, and Phoenix, two]. We don't get to tuck them into bed normally – we are usually starting a performance at their bedtime – so we really soaked up every night we could do that.

Outside of family life, I took the opportunity to upskill in other areas. I studied real estate and successfully completed the Agents Representative course and got stuck into a lot of home reno work. I'm quite proud to say that I built an inbuilt floating bookshelf from scratch (and that it hasn't fallen apart yet). My next job is to build an outdoor deck for our alfresco area. Wish me luck!

And then came *Celebration Gala* which was a wonderful surprise. I must admit, it was weird to be back on stage after so long being dad at home, but to be part of the live magic on stage again, accompanied by dramatic music and ambience and some of the loudest applause we've ever had was incredible.

Jill

It was such a great way to end the year and set us up for the year ahead. Opening night was particularly emotional. I love the State Theatre stage. It's such a spiritual place for me, so I took the time to be on stage before the show without my costume and connect to my sacred space before the performance. When the curtain went up, the audience was buzzing – you could feel how happy everyone was to be back in the theatre.

We were fortunate to be granted an exemption to continue working in the studios when we were locked down late last year. During this time, David Hallberg invited the dancers to submit their 'wish list' of repertoire to be coached on by fellow dancers, many of which were presented in Celebration Gala at the end of the year. Can you tell us a little more about this experience?

Jarryd

This was such a fun experience! With no performances, some of the senior, more experienced dancers got the chance to coach younger members of the company on a grand pas de deux of their choosing. Valerie Tereshchenko and I coached a handful of couples on the Black Swan pas de deux.

When I can, I like to teach ballet students at local ballet schools, so I'm familiar with coaching. But this was coaching professional ballet dancers, who already have vast knowledge of ballet technique and a sound understanding of their body as a tool, on the finer points of artistry and execution of steps to deliver the best performance possible. It was a bizarre experience to begin with, but there was such a sense of satisfaction in the end when we saw the five, unique performances realised.

Jill

Yes, it was amazing – such a fantastic time. I worked on the *Don Quixote* pas de deux with Ako Kondo and Chengwu Guo [Principal Artists] in the two weeks before I headed off to ADT. David Hallberg oversaw the process with a unique lens. His experience allows him to bring both a dancer's eye and a director's eye to the studio, which translates into such great advice.

At one stage David observed that I was looking up a lot in a 'Clara-esque' way [referencing Clara in *The Nutcracker*], whereas Kitri is about the straight-on eyeline. Instantly I became more aware of the power of my eyeline, and that was a gem that will continue to play a huge part in my performance.



You've now had a year working with David as Artistic Director. How are you seeing that experience shape you as an artist, as well as the company more broadly?

Jill

David is such a prolific name in the dance community – both in ballet and in contemporary dance – so the perspective and the knowledge he brings to our company as someone who has experienced so much is invaluable. His wealth of knowledge has opened our minds up exponentially.

He's also very tuned in to the personalisation of dance. Personally, he's encouraged me to figure out my way and present it to him. That's pushed me to discover what I like and the artist I want to be, which has been quite confronting at times but also liberating. It's made me more confident as a result. I think this approach has made the company more confident, because that's the standard David has empowered us to achieve.

Jarryd

I agree, and I've found that too. David naturally encourages individuality in us as dancers. I've found that he encourages me to explore new avenues in the choreography and has created a safe environment where it's okay to make mistakes and learn what works and doesn't work, which is really exciting as an artist.

Our giving community have been front and centre again, supporting us through another year...

Jill

Absolutely. We're all so grateful for the support we've had from the community over the past two years.

Jarryd

Yes, the broader arts community really suffered during the past couple of years and many performers had to find alternative employment, but because of the generosity of our donors we felt safe and secure.

Jill

To have had the support and ability to keep working when many of our peers couldn't, was even more precious with the knowledge that we had an audience waiting patiently for our return.

What's great is that the fruits of their generosity will be seen this year, and the next and thereon... Because, during that time, we had the invaluable opportunity to get to know each other even better, establish our partnerships with David, work our technique and push ourselves in new directions so we could come back stronger than ever!

Speaking of which, 2022 is the season we have all been waiting for. What are you most looking forward to performing in this year?

Jill

I've never danced a Justin Peck work before, so I'm really looking forward to *Everywhere We Go* [part of contemporary triple bill, *Instruments of Dance*]. Not just for the piece itself, but for the style of it – it's completely new to me and I can't wait to learn from the experience of working with another big name, and the energy that he will bring to the room.

I think as many different choreographers and styles you can work with, the better and more varied your career is. Which is probably why I also always enjoy *Bodytorque*. I created a piece last year and really loved the experience. It is a really special part of the repertoire.

Jarryd

In contrast, I'm really excited for *Harlequinade*. It's a nostalgic, family-friendly production and I can picture the energy and excitement it will bring to the audience. There will be such a magical buzz in the theatre!



Principal Artist Robyn Hendricks
and Senior Artist Jarryd Madden
rehearsing *Harlequinade*
Photo Christopher Rodgers-Wilson



Rising Stars

How The Australian Ballet and Telstra are helping Australia's brightest ballet talent shine.

Under the luminous lights of the Sydney Opera House stage, in front of their peers and an elated audience gathered for the opening night of *Anna Karenina*, newly-promoted Senior Artist Rina Nemoto and Corps de Ballet Dancer Lilly Maskery were recently crowned winners of the 2022 Telstra Ballet Dancer Awards.

Now in its nineteenth year, the Telstra Ballet Dancer Awards is one of the longest-running arts awards in the country and widely acknowledged as the most prestigious prize in Australian ballet today.

Rina, recipient of the Telstra Rising Star Award, was born in Tokyo, Japan, and began dancing at the age of three. Aged 15, she travelled to Paris for two years of classical ballet training with Daini Kudo and Dominique Khalfouni. In 2009, Rina was awarded a Prix de Lausanne scholarship and joined The Royal Ballet as an apprentice dancer. She moved to Australia and joined The Australian Ballet in 2011 where she was promoted to coryphée in 2016, to soloist in 2018, and to senior artist in 2022.

Lilly, who took out the 2022 Telstra People's Choice Award, was born and raised in Auckland, New Zealand. She began dance classes at the age of three and went on to train at the Philippa Campbell School of Ballet and The Australian Ballet School. Lilly joined The Australian Ballet in 2020, becoming one of the first Generation Z dancers to start a career with the national ballet company.

“This award means a lot to me. I love dancing with the Australian Ballet, and I think of it as my second family. I want to keep growing with this company.”

Rina Nemoto, Senior Artist

Principal
Partner



“The award means so much to me, being a young dancer at the start of my career. I am following in the footsteps of dancers I really look up to.”

Lilly Maskery, Corps de Ballet Dancer

Standing alongside the dancers on stage, Artistic Director, David Hallberg, congratulated Rina and Lilly on their success, “In my short time as Artistic Director, I have watched both Rina and Lilly grow as artists, showing that the combination of individuality and hard work truly do pay off. I know this recognition will surely give them the deserved spotlight for them to shine in.”

Rina and Lilly were nominated alongside fellow dancers, Soloist Lucien Xu, and Corps de Ballet Dancers Adam Elmes and Thomas Gannon, all of whom were selected by The Australian Ballet's Artistic Team and dancers based on their contributions both on and off the stage and in recognition for their hard work, talent and potential.

With thanks to Telstra, our Principal Partner of 38 years, we look forward to seeing these young dancers' futures continue to shine brightly.



Fresh Faces



Mio Bayly

Mio was born in Ballarat, Victoria and is an Australian Ballet School graduate. Mio began dancing at age four. She commenced her training at Carole Oliver School of Dance, eventually joining The Australian Ballet School for five years, before graduating in 2021.

Who are your role models?

The two role models who first come to mind are my mum and dad. They are extremely generous, caring and hardworking, and have been a great source of inspiration. I'm so grateful for their support and encouragement of my profession.

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

Taking to the stage of the State Theatre for my first performances was an incredibly exciting moment. I have also loved working with amazing choreographers and répétiteurs from around the world in the studio, especially for *Kunstkamer*.

What are your must-pack items when you go on tour?

I really enjoy listening to music, so I don't go anywhere without packing my headphones. Also, with all the makeup we wear on stage, looking after my skin after performances is important to me, so skin care products are a must.

What is your dream role or repertoire to perform?

Swan Lake and *Don Quixote* are both on my dream repertoire list. While these ballets are quite different, I love the beauty and excitement they both share.

What might we be surprised to learn about you?

I am half Japanese and have visited Japan multiple times to see family and friends.

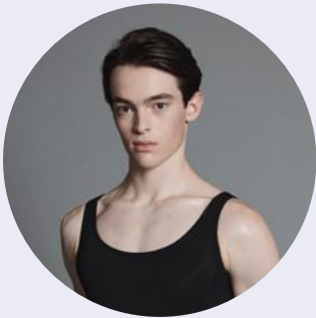
Meet the class of 2021 and the latest dancers to join the ranks of The Australian Ballet.

In late 2021, Artistic Director David Hallberg made the dreams of seven graduating dancers come true when he presented them with contracts to join The Australian Ballet's corps de ballet.

Despite completing most of their final two years studying virtually, this group of talented dancers distinguished themselves as ones to watch. And so, as they make their debuts in our 2022 season, we are excited to shine the spotlight on our newest recruits.

“It has been a graduation like no other for these dancers due to the pandemic. The *determination* and *tenacity* they have shown in their final years of study has been incredibly impressive and I'm sure will hold them in great stead as they begin life with The Australian Ballet.”

Artistic Director, David Hallberg



Harrison Bradley

Harrison is from Christchurch New Zealand and started dancing at the age of eight. He is an Australian Ballet School graduate from 2021.

Who are your role models?

Leonid Sarafanov is someone I really look up to. I love how clean his dancing is and he has a big jump that amazes people. He excites me to the point where I'm on the edge of my seat and, as a dancer, that's how I want people to feel when they see me perform.

Where do you find inspiration?

I find a lot of inspiration through art, photography as well as from the beauty of every day – such as my daily walk to work which calms and connects me to the world around.

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

Everything about my first few months with The Australian Ballet has been one big highlight but, if I had to choose, it would probably be the incredible opportunity we've had to learn *Kunstkamer*. To have been in the same room as Paul Lightfoot and learn from the répétiteurs was a fantastic experience.

What are your must-pack items when you go on tour?

I love photography, so I like to take my Nikon 35Ti film camera with me wherever I go. It's a small point-and-shoot, 'happy snappy' camera that I know will take a great photo of those awesome moments along the way.



Hugo Dumapit

Hugo is from Sydney and graduated from the Australian Ballet School. Hugo first started ballet when he was four years old and started his ballet training at The Hills Dance Factory, in 2010. He then went on to train at Robyn Kirkland School of Ballet and The McDonald College before joining the Australian Ballet School in 2018 and graduating in 2021.

Who are your role models?

My dance role models are Julio Bocca, Denis Rodkin, Vladislav Lantratov, Alexander Godunov and of course Mikhail Baryshnikov. I love how these male dancers are so athletic and have such a charismatic presence on stage.

Where do you find inspiration?

I am lucky to be surrounded by such amazing dancers every day. It's so moving to watch the more senior dancers express themselves in principal roles. Music is another big part of what drives me to dance whether it's to a Tchaikovsky waltz or 90s techno – I love it.

What are your must-pack items when you go on tour?

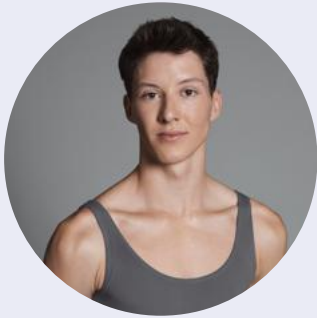
Definitely my Theragun massager – it's great for sore muscles; my PlayStation, and a few games.

What is your dream role or repertoire to perform?

There are two dream ballets that I want to perform. The first is the role of Albrecht in *Giselle*. It is such a challenging ballet, but I am in love with the emotional depth of his character. Another dream role would be performing Solor in *La Bayadère* as I find Ludwig Minkus' music so powerful and epic.

What might we be surprised to learn about you?

I like to DJ in my spare time for my friends and just for fun. I can also solve a Rubik's Cube in under a minute!



Bryce Latham

Bryce was born in the coastal town of South West Rocks in New South Wales and started dancing at his local dance school when he was eight years old. His training includes the Danae Cantwell School of Dance for three years, before moving to Melbourne in 2017 to attend The Australian Ballet School. After five years of full-time training Bryce graduated as dux of his cohort.

How and why did you get into dance?

I've always danced in some way. I started copying dance moves from the TV when I was two years old and always made friends and family watch me dance. When I was eight, I took my first dance class (jazz) and, from then, I slowly ventured into all genres of dance and discovered classical ballet. I immediately fell in love with the music, the costumes and the pure joy and happiness I felt after each ballet class.

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

Being able to take classes with the experienced Ballet Masters and Mistresses is something I have really enjoyed. I love to work in the studio so much!

What is your dream role or repertoire to perform?

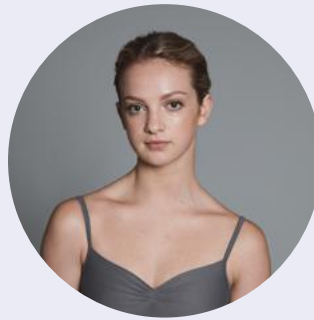
I have many dream roles I wish to achieve throughout my career. One would have to be The Knave of Hearts from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. I would also love to perform a character in *Marco Spada* and dance in *Études*.

What brings you joy outside of dance?

I love taking on little DIY and renovation projects around the house and really enjoy listening to classical ballet music.

What might we be surprised to learn about you?

I was an extremely shy and unconfident child. That all changed when I found dance!



Samara Merrick

Samara was born in Taree but grew up in Forster, New South Wales. An Australian Ballet School graduate, she started dancing at the age of three when she found her passion for dance. Samara started at Extreme Dance Studios and was selected for the Interstate Training Program by The Australian Ballet School. Samara was accepted into The Australian Ballet School in 2017 where she completed five years of full-time training.

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

My first performance in *Anna Karenina* was a really special moment for me. I remember sitting in that same theatre when I was younger watching the company perform *Cinderella*, dreaming about dancing on the State Theatre stage. It was very surreal to realise that dream.

Where do you find inspiration?

It's been incredibly inspirational to be in the studio with the other dancers in the company – especially the senior members of the company who I've looked up to since I was young. It takes me back to coming to watch The Australian Ballet perform when I was still at school, and the inspiration I would then experience when I went to my dance class the next day.

What are your must-pack items when you go on tour?

It would have to be my journal and all my skin care. I just wish I could pack my cat, Crosby, too!

What is your dream role or repertoire to perform?

The main role I aspire to dancing is Swanhilda in *Coppélia*. It was the first ballet I ever watched and, ever since, it has always stuck with me. I love how playful and entertaining it is.

What brings you joy outside of dance?

I enjoy going to the beach when it's warm, especially when I'm back at home in Forster. When I'm in Melbourne though, I love spending my Sundays at South Melbourne Market with my close friends, as well as painting landscapes and art.

What might we be surprised to learn about you?

If I wasn't a ballet dancer, I would be interested in studying to be a forensic scientist.



Hannah Sergi

Hannah grew up on Sydney's Northern Beaches and graduated from The Australian Ballet School in 2021. Hannah took her first ballet class at three years old and never looked back. Her training includes Lamont Dance Studio, Redlands Ballet and Dance Academy, as well as The Australian Ballet School.

Who are your role models?

My mum is my biggest role model. She's such a strong, brave, genuine and honest person, and I've looked up to her my whole life. In terms of dancers, I love watching videos of Marianela Núñez and Nikisha Fogo, and feel very grateful to be surrounded by an array of role models here at The Australian Ballet.

Where do you find inspiration?

I draw inspiration from anything and everything around me. I think there is such beauty to be found in the simplest of details. The emotion that comes with all forms of art brings me back to why I dance, and lately I've been very inspired in the studios and watching from side stage thinking about the dancer and artist I want to become.

What are your must-pack items when you go on tour?

I can't live without Vegemite, so I'll be packing a jar of it along with my Vegemite PJs, as well as a scented candle to make my hotel room feel a little more homely.

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

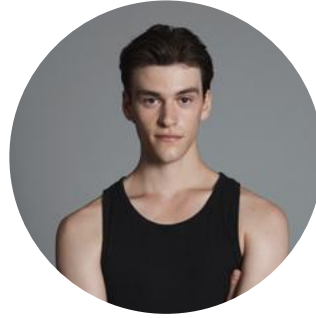
I'm extremely excited to begin learning, rehearsing and performing *Romeo and Juliet*. Prokofiev's compelling score is so powerful and iconic. I can't wait to dance to it with a live orchestra.

What is your dream role or repertoire to perform?

I have so many dream roles but one, in particular, is Juliet [*Romeo and Juliet*]. The story is fuelled by such raw emotion, it would be extremely rewarding taking on such a vulnerable and demanding role.

What might we be surprised to learn about you?

I'm a big *Star Wars* fan and my cat is named Kenobi.



Elijah Trevitt

Elijah joined The Australian Ballet as a Royal Ballet School graduate from London, UK. Elijah was born and raised in London and started dancing when he was eight years old. He trained at The Royal Ballet School for eight years from White Lodge (Lower School) right up until graduating at the Upper School in London. Elijah began his career with The Australian Ballet in October 2021.

How and why did you get into dance?

My parents were both professional dancers, so growing up I was always inspired by them and I wanted to follow in their footsteps. I have such a great love for dance though that, even if my parents weren't dancers, I think I would have found my way to it anyway!

Where do you find inspiration?

I've always been inspired by people who dare to stand out and carve their own path even if it's not appreciated, so I find inspiration in the artists who dared to push boundaries and question the norms of their time periods.

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

Without question, being involved with *Kunstkamer!* It was such an exciting and fulfilling experience to learn the piece as a whole company, all together in one room. I love contemporary dance, so it was a real joy to be challenged together and then perform the incredible work for our audiences.

What is your dream role or repertoire to perform?

I'm a huge fan of the three Kenneth Macmillan classics, *Manon*, *Mayerling* and *Romeo and Juliet*. So, I would love to challenge myself by performing one of the emotionally demanding roles of Romeo, Mercutio or Benvolio in *Romeo and Juliet*. I also really love *Onegin* and would love to perform the role of Lensky one day. Lensky's solo before his death is my favourite male variation in any ballet.

What brings you joy outside of dance?

I can be quite a homebody, so I like to spend time by myself writing songs, reading books, playing video games or drawing. Growing up in a big city like London, I've always felt a real affinity to nature, so I also like to take time by the beach to reset and wind down.

Ballet Family Events

Ballet Ambassador Soirée

At the home of Leah and Alexander Bischoff, in Vaucluse
Friday 11 March 2022

Northern Chapter members of the Ballet Ambassador program gathered for the first time this year to celebrate The Australian Ballet's imminent return to the Sydney Opera House, share the company's plans for the year ahead, and welcome the program's new Major Partner, RATIONALE.

RATIONALE Founder, Richard Parker and his team are very proud to partner with The Australian Ballet, and to support the meaningful work the Ballet Ambassador program achieves by nurturing the next generation of philanthropists and supporting dancer health and wellbeing programs.

Photo credit: Jacqueline Mitchell, Everline Imagery



RATIONALE

THE PHILANTHROPY TEAM

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

Kenneth Watkins AM

Philanthropy Director
03 9669 2780
kennethw@australianballet.com.au

Adam Santilli

Head of Philanthropy & Patrons Manager – SA
03 9669 2784
adams@australianballet.com.au

Sharyn Gilham

Philanthropy Manager Foundation Board
& Special Projects
03 9669 2785
sharyng@australianballet.com.au

Andrew Wright

Philanthropy Manager – VIC, TAS & WA
03 9669 2735
andreww@australianballet.com.au

Jane Harris

Planned Giving Manager – VIC, TAS, SA & WA
03 9669 2782
janeh@australianballet.com.au

Amelia Jones

Philanthropy Manager – NSW, ACT & QLD
02 9253 5317
ameliaj@australianballet.com.au

Sonia Brennan

Planned Giving Manager – NSW, ACT & QLD
02 9253 5316
soniab@australianballet.com.au

Elle Cahill

Patrons Manager – NSW & ACT
02 9253 5309
ellec@australianballet.com.au

David Wynne

Ballet Ambassador Program
02 9253 5311
davidw@australianballet.com.au

Kelly Winter-Irving

Senior Philanthropy Coordinator
03 9669 2775
kellyw@australianballet.com.au

Kasey Lack

Philanthropy Services Coordinator – VIC
kaseyl@australianballet.com.au

Katie Fraser

Philanthropy Services Coordinator – NSW
katief@australianballet.com.au

General Enquiries

1300 752 900
philanthropyservices@australianballet.com.au

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

Talking Pointe edited by

Hannah Cheale

Graphic Designer

Edita Knowler

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

**THE
AUSTRALIAN
BALLET**

PHILANTHROPY

