

THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

TALKING POINTE

SUMMER 2022

60 years
strong

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.



2022 Supporter Survey

Earlier this year, we invited some of our community to share their thoughts on the company, so we could plan for our future. Thank you so much for participating in the survey at that time. We were delighted to hear that so many of you consider The Australian Ballet to be an important part of your lives and plan to continue your generous support of the company.

Front and back cover Evie Ferris. Photos Isabella Elordi

Artists of The Australian Ballet with Artistic Director David Hallberg
Photo Simon Eeles

Welcome from the Philanthropy Director

Kenneth Watkins AM



“Without you, we would not still be dancing strong today.”

I can't tell you how good it feels to be seeing the company performing at full strength once again.

Coming through the last two years to find that our Ballet family is still here for us has been phenomenal and truly inspirational. A perfect and poignant backdrop for our 60th anniversary celebration.

A milestone such as this is a natural time for reflection, and I've taken great delight in sitting back with my colleagues to reflect on the collective solidarity and generosity that has allowed us to reach this landmark. Let me tell you, it didn't happen overnight ...

From the very first steps our dancers took on stage in 1962, we have been fortunate to feel the love and support of our auxiliary fundraising organisations. Previously known as the Friends of The Australian Ballet (SA and NSW) and The Australian Ballet Society (VIC), these groups were the forerunners of our broader suite of philanthropic programs. In August, as we stood on the cusp of the company's 60th anniversary celebrations, we made the exciting move to bring these organisations together to be known as The Ballet Society. We are all so grateful for the generosity of The Ballet Society's members and look forward to many more years in partnership together.

Many of you will be familiar with our Annual Giving program, which has been the bedrock of The Australian Ballet since its inception in 1989. Originally led by Lady Potter, the program is now overseen by the President of Annual Giving, Natasha Bowness. The power and potential of untied funding through annual giving is tremendous and the program continues to be one of the most significant ways you can reinforce the strength of the company.

The quiet achiever of philanthropy at The Australian Ballet is our Planned Giving program, established in 1990. Hundreds of generous supporters have built a stable foundation for the company by making a provision for us

in their will. The impact of this foresight and generosity was especially felt over the last couple of years, when income earned on bequests sustained us while times were particularly hard.

We mustn't forget our Ballet Ambassador program, which was founded by Sarah Murdoch in 2015 and welcomes the next generation of philanthropists into the life of the company through the support of our dancers' health and wellbeing programs.

Last year, philanthropy was the company's second-largest income stream, after ticket sales – a tangible reflection not only of the size of the community we are fortunate to be enveloped by, but the high regard we are held in by all of you.

This dedication can also be seen as we enter Season 2023. In our very special 60th anniversary year – and for the first time in our history – philanthropy will fund three full-length ballets. It is an outstanding result and signifies that you, our supporters, are demonstrating your devotion by supporting David Hallberg's vision for the company which enhances our experiences as audience members.

And so, as we celebrate this momentous milestone together, I would like to thank you all for giving us the confidence to keep evolving and setting bold new artistic benchmarks. Without your endless commitment and enthusiasm, we would not still be dancing strong today. I know you will continue to stand with us and cheer us on as we inspire and delight audiences all around the world for the next 60 years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kenneth Watkins'.

Kenneth Watkins AM
Philanthropy Director

Company news

From dancers rising through the ranks to new company members and the pitter-patter of tiny feet, there's plenty of great news to share as we reach the crescendo of our first full season since 2019.



Principal Artist Sharni Spencer
Photo Jim Lee

Principal promotion

At the conclusion of the final performance of *Harlequinade*, which featured Guest Artist Daniil Simkin, our Artistic Director David Hallberg announced the promotion of Sharni Spencer to principal artist, much to the delight of her peers and audience.

Sharni was born in Lismore, New South Wales, and grew up in Tamworth and Newcastle. She began dance classes when she was three years old and studied at Sally Kefts School of Dance and Marie Walton Mahon Dance Academy before joining New Zealand School of Dance. Sharni joined The Australian Ballet at the beginning of 2008 and was promoted to coryphée in 2012. She was the recipient of the Khitercs Hirai Foundation Scholarship in 2012, using it to spend three months rehearsing and performing *Giselle* with the Dutch National Ballet. Sharni was promoted to soloist in 2017 and senior artist in 2020, before her elevation to principal artist in June.

Praising Sharni on her promotion, David remarked, "Sharni embodies the delicate balance of star quality and humility, making this promotion to principal artist a joy to celebrate. She lights up the stage and with each opportunity has taken her artistry and technique to higher levels. Sharni is always open to growing, learning and stretching herself as a dancer and the joy she finds in this art form isn't lost on her audience that has enjoyed witnessing her growth. My utmost congratulations to this stellar artist."



New arrival

As well as lighting up the stage with their athleticism and artistry, Principal Artists Ako Kondo and Chengwu Guo are getting acquainted with two new leading roles: Mum and Dad to their gorgeous son, George, who entered the world earlier this year as a joyful new addition to their family.

Ako continued training and dancing well into her third trimester, under the world-class guidance and expertise of the company's Artistic Health team, and hopes to return to the stage in *Romeo and Juliet* towards the end of this year.

Principal Artists Ako Kondo and Chengwu Guo with George
Photo Rainee Lantry Cloud Nine Photography

Farewell

After six years as a permanent member of the Artistic team, Elizabeth Toohey's most recent tenure with the company will come to a close at the end of 2022 as she moves on to opportunities around the world as a guest teacher and re-stager.

A beloved dancer and esteemed coach, Elizabeth is an icon of The Australian Ballet. After her performances with David McAllister in Moscow in 1985, they were invited to dance with the Bolshoi in 1986 and the Kirov in 1988. Their performances in galas across the former Soviet Union are legendary, as is their appearance before Queen Elizabeth II at Covent Garden, and at The Metropolitan Opera House in New York.

Elizabeth has made an invaluable contribution to the company during her time as ballet mistress and répétiteur. Most notably, she led the team during some of the company's most ambitious productions, including *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*® in 2017 and 2019, when Christopher Wheeldon entrusted her to re-stage the production for The Australian Ballet, a task she has also undertaken for National Ballet of Japan.

Behind the scenes

Ebonie Rio has recently joined Dr Sue Mayes and the Artistic Health team as a senior clinical research fellow.

Ebonie is an experienced sports physiotherapist and clinical researcher who has toured extensively with the Australian Olympic and Commonwealth Games teams, and her research into tendon pain has changed the management of the condition around the world.

Ebonie's role, which is funded by the Ballet Ambassador program, occupies a unique space: she will give hands-on treatments to dancers while continuing to co-design and deliver the world-leading research undertaken in collaboration with our longstanding Official Research Partner, La Trobe University, to support optimum dancer health and performance.

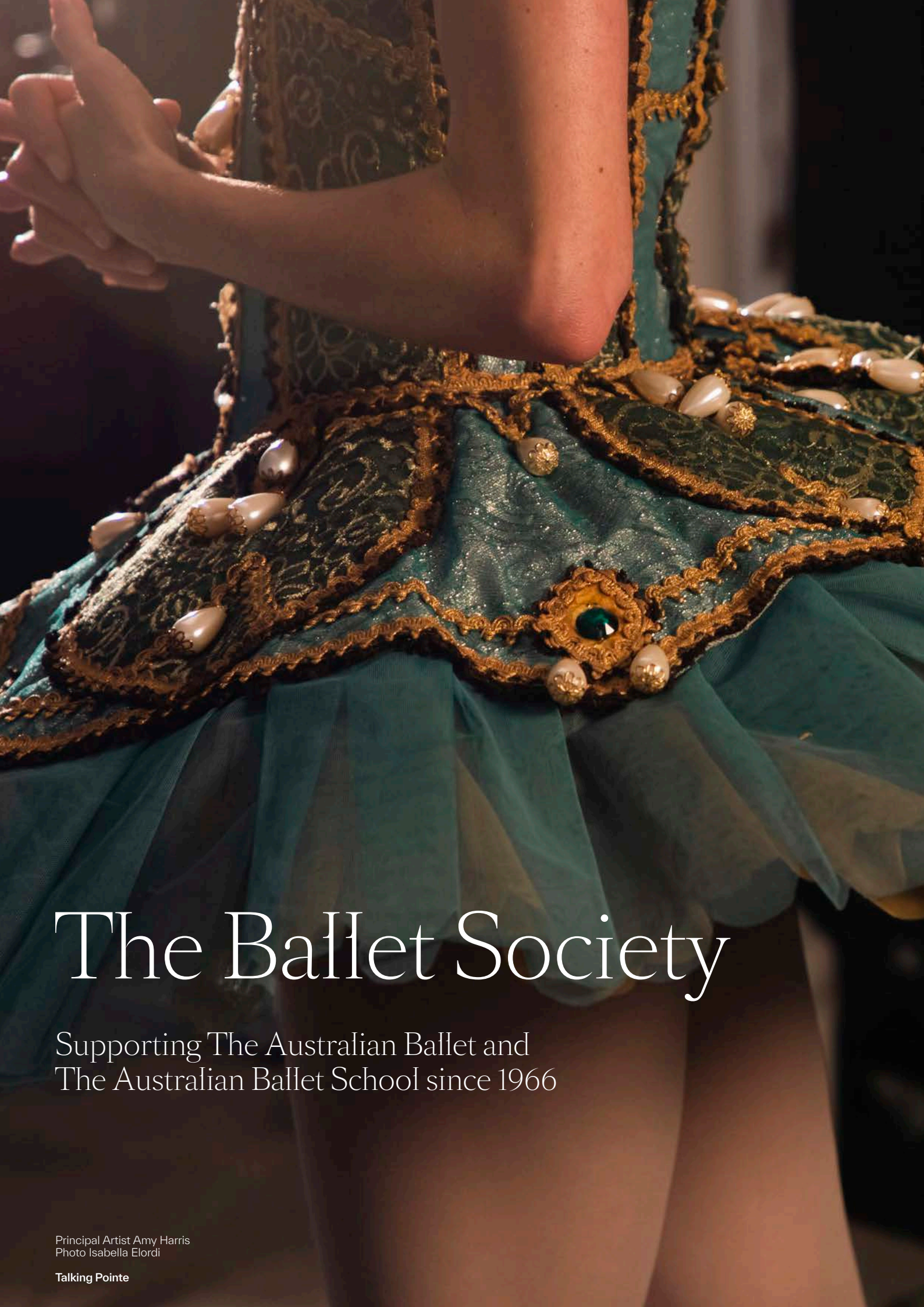
Artistic appointment

After spending the second half of 2022 working alongside Kirsty Martin and the company to prepare Wayne McGregor's *Obsidian Tear for Instruments of Dance*, Charles Andersen will permanently join the Artistic team as a ballet master in 2023.

A California native, Charles is an award-winning dancer with a career spanning 20 years, at companies including The Danish Royal Ballet and Hong Kong Ballet. Most recently Charles has been working closely with Christopher Wheeldon, staging his production of *The Winter's Tale* for the Bolshoi, *Cinderella* in Munich, and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*® for National Ballet of Japan. Charles was also choreographer in residence for the Australian tour of *An American in Paris*.



Senior Clinical Research Fellow Ebonie Rio
Photo Christopher Rodgers-Wilson



The Ballet Society

Supporting The Australian Ballet and
The Australian Ballet School since 1966

Principal Artist Amy Harris
Photo Isabella Elordi

Talking Pointe



Since our earliest days, The Australian Ballet Society (VIC) and Friends of The Australian Ballet (NSW and SA) have existed to support The Australian Ballet and The Australian Ballet School through financial support and scholarships, while making ballet more accessible and generating engagement and community among their members.

Coinciding with the company's 60th anniversary year, from August 2022 these three affiliated fundraising and membership organisations have collectively become known as The Ballet Society.

"We find ourselves at a pivotal point in The Australian Ballet's history. One made possible, in part, by the dedication and support of the many members, past and present, of what we now know as The Ballet Society," explains David Hallberg. "This union is as symbolic as it is strategic. It is a milestone that both celebrates our shared history and galvanises our future, and we are very excited to see what this next chapter together will bring."

For more information about The Ballet Society and your local organisation, visit: australianballet.com.au/the-ballet-society

Celebrate with The Ballet Society

In 2023, The Ballet Society will help to celebrate The Australian Ballet's 60th anniversary year with a series of fundraising galas in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney.

Sydney

Saturday 22 April 2023
Sofitel, Sydney

Melbourne

Friday 26 May 2023
Sofitel, Melbourne on Collins

Adelaide

Friday 9 June 2023
Adelaide Town Hall

We look forward to sharing further details about these very special events closer to the time.

Farewelling a dynamic duo

With a combined tenure of 30 years, two of The Australian Ballet's guiding lights – Executive Director Libby Christie and Music Director and Chief Conductor Nicolette Fraillon – will step down from their roles at the end of 2022.

While we look forward to welcoming incoming Executive Director Lissa Twomey and incoming Music Director Jonathan Lo to the Ballet family in 2023, let's take a moment to recognise and celebrate the enormous contributions Libby and Nicolette have made to our great company and the legacies they leave for future generations.

Libby Christie AM

Libby has been with The Australian Ballet for just shy of a decade and, in that time, has made an enduring contribution to the organisation, which has grown and evolved with amazing speed under her direction.

Since commencing the role in 2013, Libby has worked alongside both David McAllister and David Hallberg; she has overseen the expansion of the company and the growth of our audiences, and initiated Storytime Ballet - annual seasons for young children that are inspiring the next generation of ballet lovers.

Libby's outstanding direction has resulted in The Australian Ballet being able to undertake major international tours to the USA, China and the UK and invest in some brilliant new productions including *Anna Karenina*, *Sylvia*, *Harlequinade*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Spartacus* and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*®.

Moreover, during her tenure, Libby has overseen the acquisition of Orchestra Victoria and the extensive remodelling of The Australian Ballet's home, The Primrose Potter Australian Ballet Centre, to provide world-class facilities for our dancers and Artistic Health team.

In recent times, Libby's financial management ensured we remained in the best possible shape to meet the many challenges of the pandemic, subsequently laying the foundations for a vibrant and fruitful future.

Reflecting on Libby's departure at the launch of our 2023 season, David Hallberg commented, "Libby's exemplary leadership qualities came to the fore as she steered the company through the stress and upheavals of our time away from the stage with immense professionalism, energy, and resolve and helped to ensure we would all be standing here today. I am hugely grateful for the support and mentorship Libby has shown me since I joined the company and began the journey of my directorship."



“Given the important role this company plays in the world of ballet and Australia’s performing arts landscape, I have always been conscious of the tremendous responsibility entrusted to leaders of this beautiful company. I have loved every minute of my time with my beloved Australian Ballet, and I will not be too far away – forever a huge fan and supporter of the company.”

Libby Christie AM, Executive Director



Nicolette Fraillon AM
Photo Kate Longley

“Music is the perfect partnership to dance, and Nicolette’s creativity, her wealth of cultural knowledge and her drive for excellence has ensured that the artistry on stage is matched and enhanced by the artistry in the orchestra pit. She is a visionary and inspiring leader. A pioneer who departs this company having built a musical standard unmatched by most. Her contribution will be embedded in the history of this company she was so selflessly devoted to.”

David Hallberg, Artistic Director

Nicolette Fraillon AM

Nicolette Fraillon, the only female music director of a ballet company in the world and one of the longest serving Chief Conductors in Australia’s orchestral history, will take her final bow and descend from the podium after the company’s Sydney season of *Romeo and Juliet* in December.

Nicolette has had a distinguished career as The Australian Ballet’s Music Director and Chief Conductor since 2003, having first built an illustrious career in Europe.

In her 20 years with the company, Nicolette’s contribution to Australian cultural life and the international reputation of The Australian Ballet has been extensive. She has led thousands of performances across the nation and around the world, working with the world’s foremost choreographers in the creation and execution of their ballets. She has tirelessly advocated for new work and been instrumental in commissioning new scores and developing The Australian Ballet’s *Bodytorque* program. She oversaw the Ballet’s Education and Outreach programs for an extensive period and, since 2012, has established fellowships for conductors and pianists (enabled by philanthropists Robert and Elizabeth Albert) to introduce and mentor key young artists into the world of professional ballet.

Since 2014, Nicolette has also been Artistic Director of Orchestra Victoria. Over the past eight years in this role

she has established a new concert series, developed and expanded education programs, created new partnerships and regional music festivals, and established new philanthropic initiatives, including the Richard Bonyngue Orchestral Fellowships, which equip pre-professional orchestral players with the specialised skills required for ballet and opera performance.

Speaking of her tenure, Nicolette says, “It has been an honour to serve The Australian Ballet for the past two decades. The first time I walked into a studio with the dancers, I was struck by their grace, athleticism, incredible talent and infectious enthusiasm. No matter what has occurred in life or work, walking into the studio with them remains uplifting, as I marvel, every single time, at the incredible feats of which we humans are capable. Similarly, the countless gifted musicians across the country, giving voice to the brilliance of composers’ scores and to the visual artistry of the dancers, have provided endless inspiration.

“Most importantly, the audiences for whom we perform have been incredible: welcoming, wonderfully enthused, fierce, passionate, curious and joyfully honest. We all do what we do for the audience, and I have learned as much from them as from my colleagues. But we are all only custodians of the companies for which we work, and of the art forms we serve – and it is the right time to transition the baton to a successor.”

“A question that I ask myself every day is, ‘Is this the best that we can be?’”

How David Hallberg plans to move audiences beyond words in 2023

Sixty years ago, The Australian Ballet was born. Six decades of ambition, imagination and excellence have since shaped the company's identity and established its place as a jewel in the nation's artistic crown, with an enviable international reputation.

Inspired by the company's rich tradition and vibrant future, Season 2023 is a bountiful mix of repertoire carefully curated by David Hallberg to mark this milestone anniversary year, showcase the full arc of The Australian Ballet's artistry and define what the future of the company looks like.

Speaking about Season 2023, David reflects, “I lost a year with the pandemic in terms of programming and building momentum. So, in a way, I feel like I'm only just settling in. But I'm seeing things take shape in front of my eyes, which is really rewarding.

“I've seen such a surge of energy within the dancer community, and audiences are certainly responding to the diversification of repertoire. Whether that's in the sense of a production that they don't know or a new concept, it's an audience that's open to new experiences. Which is really promising, and fascinating for me when I think about where we're heading.”

This 60th anniversary season – the third season in David's tenure – will feature exclusive Australian premieres, new commissions and revivals of timeless classics from the company's archives, and will exemplify his vision to bring the best of the world, created both here and abroad, to audiences all around the country.

“We're bringing certain historic productions into today, with the new set design of *Don Quixote*, with the reimagining of *Swan Lake*, with the addition of *Jewels* and *Marguerite and Armand* to our repertoire. On the flip side, there's *Identity*, which is an important nod to Australian choreography and the role it plays within The Australian Ballet, where it is nurtured and continually explored.

“Audiences will see our dancers and musicians excel in repertoire that encapsulates our artistic ambitions, breathes new life into the heritage works that we know so well and expands the boundaries of what ballet can be. I'm really looking forward to presenting these gorgeous productions.

“A major motivation of mine is to connect to the community, to our supporters, to dance lovers and to audience-goers and to really give them what I think is the best, with an edge and an energy,” adds David. “And there's always more to do than I am able to do. There's such amazing choreography out there and I have to choose wisely as I think about the direction we're travelling in together.”

A company doesn't reach a milestone like this on its own. Throughout the history of The Australian Ballet there have been many extraordinary moments where our generous philanthropic supporters have joined together to make very special things happen. This is true once again in Season 2023. Over the following pages, we will shine the spotlight on three works in the coming season that have been entirely funded by the generosity of our Ballet community.



“Our company is truly shining bright like a diamond. Season 2023 shows us taking on productions that highlight the beautiful heritage of this company in a completely modern context, as well as additions to the repertoire that solidify our influence in the dance world.”

David Hallberg, Artistic Director







“If you love ballet, if you love story and if you love colour, then this is the ballet for you.”

David Hallberg, Artistic Director

Don Quixote

Don Quixote needs little introduction. It jumps, it turns, it lifts, and it's a huge challenge for those who have the great fortune of performing in it.

In 2023 The Australian Ballet will unite Rudolph Nureyev's acclaimed 1973 film adaptation – a movie that put the company firmly on the international map – with the stage, in a lavish new production.

Audiences can expect to see the energy of Nureyev and Robert Helpmann's cinematic feat transported to the theatre with reinterpreted sets of bustling markets, lively taverns and serene dreamscapes from Australian designer Richard Roberts, based on Barry Kay's original Spanish-inspired designs.

Recounting his inspiration for bringing *Don Quixote* to audiences in 2023, David says, “The idea came to me after viewing this gorgeous film. I thought, ‘Why not create the sets that they had in the Essendon Airport hangar on the stage?’ So next year we are realising Barry Kay's vision, which was to marry his sets and his costumes with the stage.”

“I have seen the first pass of the sets and they are unbelievable. It will basically be the film set on stage – bringing its lively atmosphere and energy fresh to today's audiences. I think it's going to be a huge success, not only for the dancers – because the roles are amazing – but for audience-goers as they experience the visual feast.”

The re-design and restoration of Don Quixote has been funded by Lady Primrose Potter and her co-contributors to The David Hallberg Fund, with additional support from The Barry Kay Fund.

Production Partner

Regent
SEVEN SEAS CRUISES®

Jewels

Over the course of their lifetime, some ballets create an aura of elegance and myth that holds up to society's expectation of them. That is true of one of George Balanchine's greatest masterpieces, *Jewels*.

In 2023, the artists of The Australian Ballet will bring Balanchine's celebration of three precious stones, Emeralds, Rubies and Diamonds – each of which symbolise a different period of Balanchine's life – to Australian audiences for the very first time. A sparkling celebration for the company's diamond anniversary.

Each of *Jewels*' three acts is distinct in style and mood, set to music by three different composers: Gabriel Fauré for Emeralds, Igor Stravinsky for Rubies, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky for Diamonds. The costumes for each jewel, created by Balanchine's legendary collaborator, Barbara Karinska, and the sets are equally as important as Balanchine's choreography, unifying each of the three sections to achieve one regal whole. Peter Harvey, the original set designer for the world premiere of *Jewels* by New York City Ballet in 1967, will be working with The Australian Ballet to create a revised version of his original sets, which were made to Balanchine's vision.

Bringing the work to Australian shores is no mean feat. There are many well-trodden and highly respected steps to follow when staging a Balanchine work. The expectation is excellence.

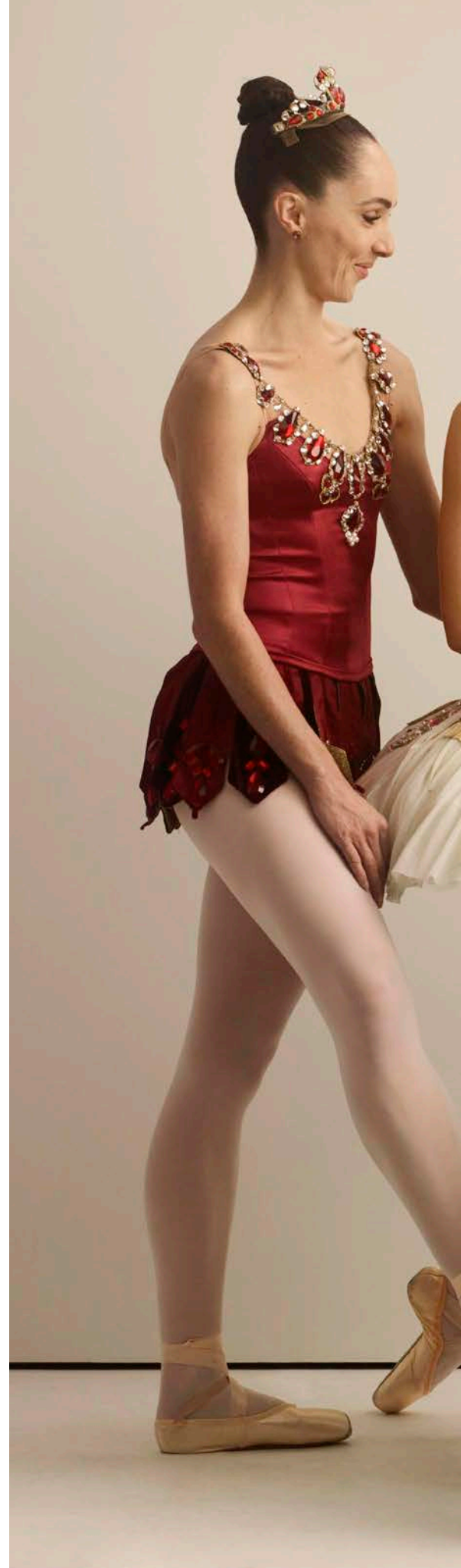
Asked why he wanted to bring *Jewels* to the company and audiences, David's answer is simple: "Because the company is ready. Part of how I curate is the nourishment of the work that the dancers are given to dance, and the dancers are ready to interpret a work of this scale. I'm also conscious of reading the room, which means reading what audiences should see or want to see in terms of art ... I think *Jewels* is something that audiences need to see performed by The Australian Ballet."

Jewels has also been made possible by the collective generosity of those who have contributed to The David Hallberg Fund. Thank you again to these visionary supporters, who have enabled this enormous opportunity for our dancers to tackle one of the great works of the classical ballet repertoire.

Production Partner

KAWAI

Talking Pointe



Lady Potter AC CMRI with Principal Artists Amy Harris, Benedicte Bemet and Dimity Azoury. Photo Simon Eeles

“Jewels is a major addition to any ballet company around the world, and I think it’s absolutely time that we tackle this major work.”

David Hallberg, Artistic Director





“What I love so much about *Swan Lake* is the sense of longing it creates that really connects audiences and the dancers on stage.”

David Hallberg
Artistic Director

Principal Artist Robyn Hendricks
Photo Isabella Elordi



Artists of the The Australian Ballet 1983
Photo Branco Gaica

Swan Lake

Swan Lake – arguably the most famous ballet ever created – will grace our stages once again in 2023 as the cornerstone of our 60th anniversary season. It will be a fitting tribute to the work that has played a recurring role in the history of The Australian Ballet since the company's first performance in 1962.

As David Hallberg explains, this felt like a commission that was meant to be. "I cannot take full credit for this. When I came to Australia I was talking to my predecessor, David McAllister, and he mentioned Anne Woolliams' version of *Swan Lake*. From that point on, I heard time and time again from people in the company and within our wider community how much of a jewel it was in the repertoire of The Australian Ballet. And so next year, we unearth Anne Woolliams' version: her gorgeous version, her beloved version of *Swan Lake*, one that will go on for decades to come."

In the years since Anne Woolliams' production first premiered, the company has almost doubled in size. So, while the steps on stage will be those from the original, audiences can look forward to a dynamic new version of the timeless classic created in concert with choreographer Lucas Jervies, who will work alongside David to expand the production for a company of 80 dancers.

Guided by his intuitive approach to style and detail, David has engaged long-time creative partners Daniel Ostling and Mara Blumenfeld as the team who will create realistic yet classic designs, lit by lighting designer T.J. Gerckens. "I have studied the ballet through and through and choreographically, it's beautiful. It's exactly what you would imagine *Swan Lake* to be. But to enliven it, we will be bringing new sets and costumes that will create realism on stage. These celebrated designers, who have worked extensively at the Metropolitan Opera in New York and across the world, will bring it squarely into the 21st century while ensuring Anne's production returns to its place as a jewel in our repertoire," explains David.

There's no doubt that the bar is high and expectations are higher, but David is excited about the challenge and opportunity that lies ahead. "I'm thrilled for the dancers to tackle such iconic roles again in such an iconic work, but I'm also thrilled to bring this beautiful ballet to audiences ... to have the opportunity to convince them that the content and the heritage of this art form is still relevant, and to show that *Swan Lake* continues to move audiences time and time again."

Swan Lake will be entirely funded through donations from nearly 1,000 members of our generous ballet community.

Lead and Production
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Leadership
Gifts





Leaps and bounds

How The Australian Ballet's
newest principal artist is
finding his feet Down Under

Principal Artist Joseph Caley in *Manon*
Photo Laurent Liotardo

In August this year, British dancer Joseph Caley – an exuberant artist known for his striking lines and boundless energy – took the next giant leap in his career as he arrived in Melbourne to start a new chapter as principal artist of The Australian Ballet.

Born in Hull, Joseph started ballet as a youngster – first tagging along to his sister's dance class before getting the dancing bug himself. Following initial training with the Skelton Hooper School of Dance, Joseph joined The Royal Ballet Lower School in 1997, quickly progressing to The Royal Ballet Upper School where he met his future

wife (former Birmingham Royal Ballet [BRB] Principal Artist Jenna Roberts).

Joseph joined BRB in 2005 and was promoted to principal in 2011. After guesting with The Australian Ballet in our 2017 Sydney season of *Nutcracker – The Story of Clara*, Joseph joined the English National Ballet (ENB) that year and was promoted to lead principal later that same year. The rest, as they say, is history.

We sat down with Joseph shortly after his arrival in Australia to find out what brought him to our shores ...

“Joseph is a dancer of beautifully refined elegance. I saw his performance with the English National Ballet in London earlier this year and was impressed by his artistic inclinations and his solid proficiency in classical technique. Joseph will be a very welcome addition and a great asset to the top rank of the company.”

David Hallberg, Artistic Director

How are you settling into Australian life so far?

I've really hit the ground running to be honest. Aside from setting ourselves up – finding a home, and our favourite local coffee shop etcetera – I've been getting stuck into rehearsals for *Instruments of Dance* and *Romeo and Juliet*. I've never danced [John] Cranko's *Romeo and Juliet* before, and Wayne McGregor and Justin Peck's works are also new to me, so I've been really enjoying all the new material. Every day is brain-frazzling, but it's great.

You've had an enviable career so far. What have been some of your highlights to date?

There have been so many! One of the things that sticks out from my time with BRB is performing Albrecht in *Giselle*. I was very young – maybe only 21 – and they were short on guys so I got cast. It's a very mature role, and the experience that came from playing a character with such depth was incredible.

ENB also presented some amazing opportunities. Dancing *Song of the Earth* with Tamara [Rojo, former Artistic Director at ENB] was awesome. That was the first thing I did with the company, and I still remember the first full call in front of everybody ... doing this hard pas de deux with all these big lifts. I was terrified about doing something wrong or dropping Tamara. But we did it and it was great!

Akram Khan's *Giselle* is another one. It was one of the most rewarding things I've done on stage. Akram's work really focuses on the intention you put behind every movement; on finding the connections on stage and with your partner. You really have to be in it. We were encouraged to speak what we were thinking out loud, so they knew that our intentions were true. As scary and exposing as these processes can be, it makes you approach everything else differently and has a lasting impact.

It must be exciting to be at this stage of your career and still be tackling new material ...

It's one of the main reasons why I wanted to join The Australian Ballet. I want to push myself and try new things, find new inspiration and experience new coaches. As humans, we like to keep learning – that's what keeps us going and growing. New experiences and pushing yourself into uncomfortable situations keep you feeling alive.

Speaking of which, our 2023 repertoire is fantastic.

What a year to join the company! What are you most eager to get stuck into?

Don Quixote has always been a ballet I've wanted to dance, so that's going to be great. But I'm really looking forward to dancing *The Dream* again too. I performed that a lot at Birmingham and was lucky to have a lot of coaching with Anthony Dowell and Antoinette Sibley [the original Oberon and Titania], which is really as close as you'll get to being coached by Frederick Ashton himself. Hopefully I'll be able to share some of those experiences and insights with the company when we start to tackle it.

What prompted the move to Australia?

It was actually quite a long time in the making. I guested with the company in 2017 – my last year in Birmingham – which, I guess, is where the seed was planted. Then, when David Hallberg started, The Australian Ballet was well and truly back on my radar. I reached out to him and, when we [ENB] were performing Tamara's *Raymonda* at the London Coliseum in January of this year, I got a message saying that David was in town. It turned out that he came and watched the Saturday matinee I was performing in, and everything went from there. You know, these things are funny – it's all about timing.

And how does it feel to be here now?

It's been a big move but it's so great to finally be here. Jenna, my wife, is Australian so I knew that that coming here would please her too. The biggest challenge was getting our two dogs, Lily and Reggie, out. But they've arrived now and we're all back together again so we can get on with exploring our new home. We both have family here, on the Sunshine Coast and in Newcastle, so we're looking forward to getting about a bit to see them all and enjoying the ride.

I can already tell that the move has been one of the best decisions I've made. To be a new principal coming into an established company, you're so aware of the responsibility and the expectations but I've done it before and, because I have that experience, I know it'll be alright!



Bringing sunshine after the rain

**Our 2022 Regional Tour:
Spreading the joy of dance across the nation**



Riley Lapham and Marcus Morelli
Photo Emma Murray

After a two-year hiatus, The Australian Ballet's Regional Tour returned in dazzling form in 2022, bringing dancers of The Australian Ballet and emerging artists of The Australian Ballet School together to unite lovers of dance all over the country with the highest calibre of performance.

Bringing more vibrancy than ever before, the 2022 program was a wholehearted celebration of the diversity and talent of today's dancers. The jubilant repertoire featured classical and contemporary works reflecting the past, present, and future of the art form.

For four decades, The Regional Tour has been a defining highlight of The Australian Ballet and The Australian Ballet School's annual calendars – delivering over 800 performances in 71 locations, travelling to both major cities and regional communities over the course of its 40-year history. In 2022 alone, an estimated 16,000 people across regional Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales and the Northern Territory attended the Regional Tour and interacted with its Community Engagement program.

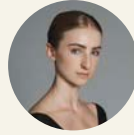
The Regional Tour is a milestone for company dancers and a significant rite of passage for the school's senior students. The opportunity is formative – a patchwork of invaluable, immersive experiences co-created with their role models, which will ultimately shape the next generation of artists.

Reflecting on the significance of his first Regional Tour since joining the company, Artistic Director David Hallberg recounts how the experience affected him. "I have so loved seeing the company reach far and wide – travelling to smaller towns and creating powerful connections with communities through the beauty of performance. It's been amazing to witness how meaningful people have found it to have The Australian Ballet visit their community, how supportive they have been, and how enthusiastically the repertoire has been received."

The Regional Tour is an expression of the company's continued and evolving commitment to create meaningful and inspiring connections with communities and dance lovers around Australia. David takes this commitment and the responsibility he has incredibly seriously. "With any major arts organisation, one has to ask: 'what are we contributing?'" As a company, we believe the arts and dance are vital to our country's culture and wellbeing and, to me, it's not just about *Swan Lake*. It's about our societal responsibility to make dance more accessible, and how we create opportunities for everyone to be able to share in the joy and power of dance."

Freshly motivated by the success of the 2022 tour and his first-hand experiences on the road, David's ambitions for the future of the tour have been catalysed. "Looking ahead, I feel an even greater sense of responsibility for the tour. There's something so unique about the shared experiences those on both sides of the curtain have as a result of this program.

"It's our responsibility [as Australia's national ballet company] to make sure we're connecting meaningfully with people. And that's not just about what we do on stage, it's about how we create exposure to dance, in our conversations and collaborations in the communities we have the privilege of engaging with."



Riley Lapham

Reflections from the road

For the six Australian Ballet dancers in the touring party, being part of the Regional Tour meant being away from home and their loved ones for a considerable length of time. Coryphée Riley Lapham took some time between shows to share some of the unique experiences she had along the journey.

What have been your highlights from your time on the Tour?

Aside from deepening my connections with members of the touring party, I've loved hearing the appreciation from our audiences. Hearing the vocal responses of the regional audiences has been such a special and satisfying feeling as a performer. The mutual respect and appreciation between the audience and us [the company] was just wonderful.

Artistically, having so many opportunities to perform principal roles on stage is unusual compared to our mainstage programming. So, it was very freeing to have the time and space to be experimental and push boundaries that I might not have the opportunity to otherwise.

How do you create your home away from home when you're travelling?

Personally, routine is what makes me feel most at home when on tour. A warm-up routine, a post-show routine, a grocery routine ... When everything else is changing every couple of days – studios, stages, theatres, hotels, beds, commutes – settling into my routine where I can in each place helps me feel prepared for shows.

How do you look after yourself while you're on the road?

I always travel with a neck pillow, sleeping mask, noise-cancelling headphones and compression socks so that I can fit in some extra 'zzzs' on the journey between towns. I also ice my lower legs for recovery after every show when possible. Sometimes this means putting them in the freezing pool back at the accommodation if we don't have access to ice buckets.

What are your three must-pack items when you're on tour?

I have a hydrolyte mixed with magnesium powder every night. I find that this concoction replenishes the electrolytes I've lost throughout the day and the magnesium helps my muscles relax, rest and recover for the next day. I also couldn't be on the road without my headphones for long journeys and pre-show focus, as well as Vegemite and Pic's smooth peanut butter. Enjoyed separately that is!

Creating a window into the world of ballet with Education and Outreach

Beautifully in step with the Regional Tour, The Australian Ballet's Education and Outreach team has also been on the road delivering a curation of high-quality, artistic and innovative dance programs to schools and communities along the way.

Focusing on communities in regional and rural Australia, our Education and Outreach program is key to reaching and connecting with people beyond the traditional theatre setting, many of whom have never experienced ballet before.

From workshops, incursions and holiday programs for children, to dance classes for seniors, professional development for teachers and pop-up performances of *The Story of Pomi and Gobba* by Wiradjuri choreographer Ella Havelka, the programs aim to establish vital pathways that create safe spaces for all Australians to experience ballet and ignite a life-long love of dance and the performing arts.

Reflecting on the impact of this year's activity, Jasmin Dwyer, Acting Head of Education and Outreach, says, "The participatory nature of our program is significant: it allows people to connect with dance in a way that is relevant to them. We've seen a great response so far this year. In particular, the performances of *The Story of Pomi and Gobba* have been very well received. Teachers have commented how relevant the story is to key curriculum areas, as students are building on their experiences in the sessions to explore their own strengths (as the characters in the story do) and relating it to the waterways and animals in their local communities."

Facilitated by generous support from our incredible donors, sponsors and community partners, the extensive program of inherently accessible and inclusive activities is delivered for free by a team of trained dance education specialists to more than 30,000 students and teachers every year.

If you would like to learn more about the Regional Touring Fund or how you can support our Education and Outreach program, we invite you to contact us on 1300 752 900 or by emailing philanthropyservices@australianballet.com.au



The Regional Touring Fund

The 2022 Regional Tour was supported by our Principal Partner Telstra, and our Government Partners, the Australia Council for the Arts, Creative Victoria and Create NSW, as well as the generous supporters of The Australian Ballet's Regional Touring Fund. Together, this giving community is enabling the company's commitment to inspire and delight audiences in smaller communities across the country, on and off the stage.



The Vow. Regional Tour.
Ballet Gala, Launceston.
Photo Daniel Boud

Swan Lake Variations. Regional Tour.
Ballet Gala, Launceston.
Photo Daniel Boud



Creativity in motion

**Jill Ogai and Jarryd
Madden in conversation
with Natasha Bowness**

As a lifelong ballet lover and dedicated supporter of The Australian Ballet, Natasha Bowness, our President of Annual Giving, loves nothing more than diving into a heart-to-heart conversation about the art form with those who share her affection for the craft.

With one mesmerising season coming to an end and another about to begin, Natasha sat down with Philanthropy Ambassadors and Senior Artists Jill Ogai and Jarryd Madden before class to take stock of the evolution underway at The Australian Ballet and the role creativity and camaraderie is playing as the momentum continues to build.



Jarryd Madden and Dana Stephensen
Photo Kate Longley

Watching the company perform this year has been an absolute delight. From *Kunstkamer* to *Romeo and Juliet*, you seem to be going from strength to strength. As a dancer, how do you find being part of a creative process and not always knowing what the end looks like?

Jill

I think creating is always really tough, but I love it. Yes, it can be stressful, but it's fun and you never know what's going to happen next.

Jarryd

Thinking about working with Alice Topp [The Australian Ballet's Resident Choreographer] on *Annealing* [part of *Instruments of Dance*], we always felt comfortable and safe in the knowledge that something amazing would come of the process, because Alice always delivers something really spectacular.

Equally, when you're working with someone completely unknown to you, it can be really exhilarating. *Kunstkamer* is a great example of when you don't know what it's going to be in the end, or what is actually going to happen.

Jill

Ooh, that's a good one. The energy was incredible for *Kunstkamer*. Every single show was really enjoyable.

Yes, I saw *Kunstkamer* three times – as well as the live stream – and I thought it was an extraordinary piece of creative work. The company really rose to the occasion.

Jill

I think it was one of those perfect cases where the company looked great in it and the piece itself was important.

Was it difficult? The choreography looked very challenging ...

Jill

For me, getting the style was the hardest. You could get the steps, but that's not actually what it was about. They [Choreographers Paul Lightfoot, Sol León, Marco Goecke and Crystal Pite] weren't just after the steps, ever.

There's a moment I remember from working with Ralitzza [Malehounova], who was helping us with Marco's sections, when, all of a sudden, she was like, "That's it!" I think everyone who danced this section had that moment in the studio. Some people got it straight away, some took a bit longer, but she got us all to a point where you felt it click inside. That was really cool to watch.

How does that feel in the moment?

Jill

That transition from steps to something quite visceral is really emotional. It feels like you're suddenly understanding the choreographer and their language.

Jarryd

Sol [León] is very particular about that as well. She's such an artist and her artistry flows through her feedback. All of her feedback was beyond the steps; it was all about the intention. And she took her time to make sure we were creating the very best art for our audiences. That's how and why she creates these game-changing pieces that hit the mark every time. It's the best thing to be a part of.

Jill

Sol was really into energies and really insightful which, as a dancer, really helps to bring out your individuality and then just keeps flowing ...

That's what I've sensed. Do you feel like your creative experiences with *Kunstkamer* have informed and changed the dynamic of the company?

Jarryd

I do. I think the experience has greatly informed our future endeavours, because David [Hallberg] has now seen what we're capable of when we push the limits.

Jill

I think everyone in the company has their unique signature, but *Kunstkamer* certainly helped the younger dancers find it more quickly. I also think David's direction has been incredibly enlightening. He has an amazing eye. He sees what we need as dancers to create the best possible work and instinctively knows how to get that out of us.

It does seem like David's commitment to diversity of repertoire is pushing and challenging you all, and giving you the opportunity to try different things. Is that how you feel?

Jill

That's his vision for the company. He wants us to be versatile and I feel like we're really striving for that.

Jarryd

There's definitely still a buzz in the air from having a new Artistic Director with a new approach. He's brought fresh energy and passion to the space, and I think everyone's still bouncing and feeding off that. It's really exciting to be around.

The casting seems to be more open now too. Guided more by individual styles than seniority ...

Jill

Definitely. I think David casts really well. He sees each dancer for who they are, and how the essence of someone could work well in something. So, he gives opportunities where he really thinks it will work. And it does.

There's a lot of consideration of individual capability across the whole company generally. He identifies what different dancers need at different times, which then creates a great energy and sense of connection through the whole company. It's lovely to see everyone sharing their expertise and helping each other.

Jarryd

In traditional companies, as dancers, you can often find yourselves separated by the hierarchy. Even just in the sense of how the more senior artists will be rehearsing in a different studio from the corps de ballet, because they've been practising different parts and don't come together until the end. But, at the moment, we're all crossing over more than ever, which is really nice. It gives us all an opportunity to share our wisdom, and to be exposed to more members of the company and their artistry.

Jill

Yes, I feel like I'm super-inspired by the younger dancers. It's really exciting to see their talent, their energy and their fearlessness.

Jarryd

So much so! The new ones are coming through and they're flooring us with their confidence and their own unique talent. They're definitely ones to watch!



Speaking of which, I'd love to hear what you're most excited for in the 2023 season?

Jill

I'm looking forward to all of it! There's such a great balance of repertoire and it's exactly the right time for us to be doing all of these different, challenging pieces.

Take the *Identity* program, for example. The collaboration with past dancers for Alice's piece, and then to be working with Australian Dance Theatre [ADT], Dan Riley and Deborah Cheetham, who will be the first First Nations woman to compose for the company. Amazing!

Jarryd

You did a workshop with ADT and Deborah in Adelaide. Did you have the opportunity to meet her then?

Jill

I did! The way she speaks about dance and music is just so inspiring. There was one point when she was teaching us about conducting and she was using her conducting movements to inform our movement in dance. It was brilliant.

Jarryd

In contrast, I'm excited for the story ballets. The big, meaty productions, like the revamping of *Swan Lake*. There's so much depth to them and I'm always drawn to telling the stories. *Don Quixote* is going to be so exciting too. It's such a gem of a ballet and I love the idea of restaging the Nureyev movie. It's going to look really lush.

I must say though, one of the nicest things about being back in a 'regular' season is having the chance to go along to Philanthropy events again. To be able to say "thank you" in person to the amazing people who have shown such generous support and funded repertoire that will shine on stage this year and beyond is really special!

Telstra Emerging Choreographer



**Erin O'Rourke
crowned 2022
award winner**

Erin O'Rourke, a dancer and choreographer from Melbourne, has had her exciting talent recognised by being named winner of the 2022 Telstra Emerging Choreographer (TEC) award.

TEC is an industry-leading pathway for young creators to develop their talent, nurture their potential and propel their career forward with the support of The Australian Ballet and Telstra.

Aged 23, the young artist spent 2021 undertaking Honours Research at the Victorian College of the Arts (University of Melbourne) finishing with First Class Honours. Erin is invested in giving the dancer a voice and privileging the dancer's value in and of itself. Her research focused on the multiplicity of the dancer as they dismantle and challenge their moving identity in working with numerous artists.

Beyond research, Erin has connected with and worked with artists in Melbourne, including Jenni Large, Harrison Hall, and FORT HEART, as well as extending into choreographic realms through residencies at Lucy Guerin Inc and Dancehouse as part of the Emerging Choreographers Program.

Further afield, Erin has engaged widely with the independent scene in Brisbane and surrounds, working on numerous projects with artists including Claire Marshall, Liesel Zink, Ashleigh Musk, Prying Eye Productions and Supercell: Festival of Contemporary Dance, after graduating from Queensland University of Technology with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance Performance in 2019.

Erin was shortlisted alongside fellow finalists Amber McCartney and Ko Yamada. Each up-and-coming choreographer was provided with a budget of \$3,000 to create a work responding to the 2022 theme, 'Identity'. Their choreographic creation was then reviewed by the TEC Judging Panel, which included David Hallberg; Stephanie Lake, a multi-award-winning Australian choreographer and dancer, and the Director of Stephanie Lake Company; and Josh Wright, creative producer, curator and CEO/ Artistic Director of Dancehouse, Melbourne.

Now in its second year, the TEC initiative has been spearheaded by Artistic Director David Hallberg, who has advocated for choreographic creativity throughout his career and said he saw enormous potential in all of the 2022 finalists, but in particular Erin and her winning work, *yellow mellow*. *yellow mellow* captures the essence of how identity is constantly and inevitably tarnished by external factors through the lens of Erin's personal experiences with mental health.

Erin receives a cash prize of \$10,000, courtesy of Telstra. The prize money will go towards supporting the development of her choreographic practice and allow her to connect with the broader dance community.

Speaking about TEC, Erin says, "This program has been an incredible opportunity. It is wonderful that such a large institution like The Australian Ballet has created this program for emerging artists in the independent landscape by sharing their resources to extend the capacity of the whole of the dance industry. Having that support for any artist is so important but especially for emerging artists. To have that platform during the earliest stages in an artist's career is instrumental to push them further."



Erin O'Rourke performing *yellow mellow*

Creating the future of dance together, the partnership between Telstra and The Australian Ballet is one of the longest running arts partnerships in the country. Telstra has been the Principal Partner of The Australian Ballet for 38 years. Through the Telstra Emerging Choreographer initiative and the Telstra Ballet Dancer Awards (TBDA), Telstra helps to celebrate emerging talent by shining a spotlight on ballet's rising stars.



Principal
Partner



Ballet Family events

Mother's Day Lunch

Tuesday 3 May 2022

Yallamundi Rooms, Sydney Opera House

This year's annual Mother's Day Lunch, hosted by the Foundation Board and Ballet Ambassador Board, brought together members of The Australian Ballet's giving community to fundraise for our special 60th anniversary production of *Swan Lake*.

Held in the Yallamundi Rooms at the Sydney Opera House, the event treated guests to an intimate fireside conversation between well-known Channel 7 presenter and event MC Kylie Gillies and special guest, Artistic Director David Hallberg.

Photos Grace Hampshire Photography



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1. (L-R) Olivia Hopkirk, Sarah Vick, Josie Nyssen, Stephanie Glass, Annabel Millet and Marine Mariolle De Tizac
2. (L-R) Jane Freudenstein and Georgina Curran
3. (L-R) Adene Paykel, David Hallberg, Brooke Cassen
4. Adene Paykel, Chair of the Mother's Day Lunch Committee, addressing the room
5. (L-R) Channel 7's Natalie Barr and Kylie Gillies

60th Anniversary Season Launch Celebration

Thursday 1 September 2022

The Australian Ballet's Production Centre, Melbourne

Surrounded by the sets and costumes from six decades of the company's history, friends and supporters of The Australian Ballet gathered at our Production Centre. The bespoke facility, built with the support of our loyal giving community, was the perfect setting for a celebratory dinner to mark a momentous milestone in the company's history and the launch of Season 2023.

CHANEL, The Australian Ballet's Living Heritage Partner, kindly dressed the company's female principal artists and senior artists for this very special occasion.

Photos Casey Horsfield



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- 1. David Hallberg addressing guests
- 2. Pianist Emma Lipka playing on the Kawai Crystal Baby Grand Piano, kindly donated by our Official Piano Partner Kawai for the event
- 3. Libby Christie AM
- 4. (L-R) Deborah Cheetham AO and Nicolette Fraillon AM
- 5. (L-R) Kenneth Watkins AM, Natasha Bowness and Andrew Fairley AM



1.



2.



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5.

1. (L-R) Callum Linnane and David Hallberg in conversation
2. (L-R) Libby Christie AM, Susan Templeman MP and David Hallberg
3. (L-R) Jarryd Madden and Amy Harris
4. (L-R) Ty King-Wall, Steven Heathcote AM, Natasha Stott Despoja AO, Brett Chynoweth and Nathan Brook
5. (L-R) Jane Freudenstein, Lady Potter AC CMRI and Georgina Curran



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1. (L-R) Richard Jasek and Kerry de Lorme, representing the James & Diana Ramsay Foundation
2. (L-R) Susan Morgan OAM, Libby Cousins AM, Barbara Duhig and Barbara Bedwell
3. Lady Potter AC CMRI and David Hallberg
4. (L-R) Sharni Spencer, Ako Kondo, Lucie Juhel and Benedicte Bemet
5. (L-R) Amber Scott, Rina Nemoto, Valerie Tereshchenko, Ako Kondo, Imogen Chapman, Benedicte Bemet, Robyn Hendricks, Dimity Azoury, Dana Stephensen, Sharni Spencer, Jill Ogai and Amy Harris

60th Anniversary High Tea hosted by the Planned Giving Team

Friday 14 October 2022

Castlereagh Boutique Hotel, Sydney

Planned Giving Ambassador David McAllister and special guests from the company's history, including former Principal Artists Joshua Consandine, Lucinda Dunn

and Olga Tamara welcomed members of our ballet community to a special high tea celebrating 60 years of The Australian Ballet.

Photos Rowena Clarke



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1. (L-R) David McAllister AC, Lucinda Dunn OAM, Joshua Consandine and Olga Tamara

2. Guests at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel

3. Dr Carolyn Lowry OAM

4. (L-R) Sue Perini, Sonia Brennan and Linda Perini

5. (L-R) Joshua Consandine, David McAllister AC, Lucinda Dunn OAM and Kenneth Watkins AM

6. Suellen Enestrom

THE PHILANTHROPY TEAM

If you have any questions about how your generosity is supporting The Australian Ballet of today and tomorrow, please get in touch.

Kenneth Watkins AM

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

Louise Topple

Executive Assistant to Philanthropy Director & Special Events Coordinator
03 9669 2732
louiset@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
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 a range of special events each season. If you would like to find out more, please contact us.

Event Enquiries

1300 752 900
philanthropyevents@australianballet.com.au

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