

THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

SPARTACUS

Artistic Director

David McAllister AM

Executive Director

Libby Christie

Music Director & Chief Conductor

Nicolette Fraillon AM

with Orchestra Victoria

Concertmaster: Gonzalo Acosta

Arts Centre Melbourne, State Theatre

Friday evening

28 September 2018

There will be two intervals of 20 minutes.

This performance will conclude at approximately 9.10pm.

Please note that this performance will be filmed and recorded for future broadcast.

THE POWER OF GIVING

Our exciting new version of *Spartacus* was brought to the stage by the collective enthusiasm of our supporters, and by the Dame Margaret Scott Fund for Choreographers. The creation of this ballet is an example of philanthropy helping us to deliver the very best to Australian stages for the delight of our loyal audiences. Every gift, big or small, helps create what you see on stage. To learn how you can make a difference, visit australianballet.com.au/donate

The 12th performance of SPARTACUS

Spartacus

Kevin Jackson

Flavia

Robyn Hendricks

Crassus

Ty King-Wall

Tertulla

Amy Harris

Crixus

Marcus Morelli

Caius

Brett Chynoweth

Eustacia

Natasha Kusen

Hermes

Jake Mangakahia

Scorpius

Andrew Killian

Batiatus

Tristan Message*

Auctioneer

Timothy Coleman

Gladiators, Nobles, Civilians, Slaves, Soldiers

Artists of The Australian Ballet

*Guest artist

The children in this ballet appear courtesy of The Australian Ballet School.

OUR 2019 SEASON

Passionate love stories, timeless fables and fresh perspectives: our 2019 season is a captivating Year of Enchantment. Season Packages now on sale.

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STEP INSIDE

Enhance your enjoyment with our series of talks, events and classes, designed to take you deeper into ballet. Don't miss *Once Upon a Time: The Nutcracker*, an interactive version of the classic Christmas tale made especially for children. Book and find out more at australianballet.com.au/step-inside

SPARTACUS ON THE PHONE

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THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

SPARTACUS

Choreography Lucas Jervies
Music Aram Khachaturian
Costume and set design Jérôme Kaplan

Lighting design Benjamin Cisterne

Dramaturge Imara Savage

Fight Director Nigel Poulton

Lucas Jervies is supported by The Dame Margaret Scott Fund for Choreographers

These performances of *Spartacus* by Aram Khachaturian are given by permission of Hal Leonard Australia Pty Ltd, exclusive agents for Boosey & Hawkes Ltd of London

Lucas Jervies' epic production of *Spartacus* was made possible by an outpouring of generosity from thousands of our passionate supporters. Together, they donated close to 80% of the production costs. We would particularly like to acknowledge the following supporters, whose extraordinary contributions will be recognised for *Spartacus*' life.

Spartacus

Mr Kenneth R Reed AM

Flavia

Malcolm, Tonya & Carolyn McCusker

Crassus

Friends of The Australian Ballet (NSW) Ltd

Tertulla

Mrs Roslyn Packer AC

Batiatus

The Australian Ballet Society

SYNOPSIS

Act I

At a street parade to honour the successful return of the consul Crassus from war in Thrace, his conquered prisoners are paraded through the streets. Among them is Spartacus and his wife Flavia; the couple are

sold at a slave auction. Crassus claims the beautiful Flavia for his own house. Spartacus fights to stay with her, but to no avail. Batiatus, the local gladiator trainer, notes his great strength and buys him for the ring, along with his friend Hermes.

Batiatus trains the slaves to be fierce fighters, and both quickly rise to the same rank as Crixus, Batiatus' top gladiator. Spartacus dreams of a simple, dignified life with Flavia. Instead, he is selected to fight against his friend Hermes in gladiatorial games to honour Crassus.

Spartacus is forced to kill Hermes in the arena. Horrified by his deed, he is spurred to rebellion and incites his fellow captives to break free of their chains.

Act II

Flavia endures life as a slave in Crassus' villa, where the powerful consul indulges his every whim.

The rebels force their way into the villa, rescue Flavia and confront Crassus. On the point of killing him, Spartacus chooses mercy; he and his followers flee the villa.

Act III

Spartacus and Flavia share a moment of passion as the rebels exult in their freedom – but Spartacus knows their happiness will be fleeting. Crassus has summoned his legions to seek vengeance on them. After a long and bitter fight, the Roman army eventually overpowers the rebels, who, under Spartacus' leadership, fight courageously to the end. They are sentenced to death by crucifixion along the Appian Way. Flavia, who has escaped the clutches of Rome, vows that Spartacus' memory will live forever.

CHOREOGRAPHER'S NOTE

Aram Khachaturian's *Spartacus* was written in Soviet Russia, at a time when artists were oppressed or murdered for speaking out against the state. Khachaturian was blacklisted by the regime for being too experimental – until he wrote *Spartacus*. The Soviet regime saw Stalin as Spartacus, with Crassus representing the Russian Empire. However, I think Khachaturian actually saw Spartacus as the oppressed artist – and Crassus as Stalin.

Creating a *Spartacus* in 2018 comes with social and cultural responsibilities. I felt it was important that our interpretation looked at ancient Rome through a contemporary filter. I wanted to avoid the clichéd iconography associated with the period, and to align the contemporary ballet form with its content; I also didn't want to glorify the oppressions of the era. We have created an allegorical work with bold simplified imagery that references totalitarian regimes throughout history, recognising that this kind of tyranny is still very much alive today.

It took nearly three years to create *Spartacus*, and I want to thank the creative team for their hard work and commitment to collaboration. My deepest thanks to David McAllister for commissioning this production and to all the dedicated staff who work tirelessly on it: the Philanthropy team; the costume, technical and production teams; Nicolette Fraillon and her musicians. A big shout-out to my family and friends, and last but not least, to the beautiful dancers. We made this together – thank you.

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