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THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

Giselle

1 - 18 MAY 2019 | SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE

Cover: Dimity Azoury. Photography Justin Ridler
Above: Ako Kondo. Photography Lynette Wills
Giselle has a special place in The Australian Ballet’s history, and has been a constant in our repertoire since the company’s earliest years. The superstars Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev danced it with us in 1964, in a production based on the Borovansky Ballet’s. Our founding artistic director, Peggy van Praagh, created her production in 1965; it premiered in Birmingham on the company’s first international tour, and won a Grand Prix for the best production staged in Paris that year. It went on to become one of the most frequently performed ballets in our repertoire. Peggy’s production came to a tragic end when the scenery was consumed by fire on our 1985 regional tour. The artistic director at the time, Maina Gielgud, created her own production a year later.

Maina’s Giselle premiered in Adelaide. With its hauntingly beautiful designs by Peter Farmer and magical lighting by William Akers, it quickly became just as popular as Peggy’s production. We have danced it across the globe, delighting audiences in New York and London, Japan and China. With its meticulous detail and stylistic authenticity, it is one of the jewels of our repertoire, and has been staged by top ballet companies around the world. Giselle is a lasting, tangible reminder of Maina’s 14 extraordinary years as the artistic director of our company and the living legacy of her tenure.

We loved having Maina with us to restage her production last year. For this season, we had the pleasure of welcoming Leanne Benjamin back to Australia, where she grew up. An international star and one of the great Giselles of her generation, Leanne first danced the role in her graduating performance with The Royal Ballet School and returned to it throughout her career. In 2006, she guested with The Australian Ballet in Maina’s production, dancing with Steven Heathcote. It has been such a privilege to have the benefit of her experience and artistry.

Our 2019 season celebrates ballet’s power to enchant us, and Maina Gielgud’s Giselle does just that. I hope you love it as much as I do, and that this Sydney-exclusive season allows you either to revisit the joys of the ultimate Romantic ballet, or to fall in love with Giselle for the very first time.

David McAllister AM

NOTE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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We are so delighted to bring our Sydney audiences this season of Giselle, a very significant production for The Australian Ballet. Maina Gielgud’s celebrated staging, with Peter Farmer’s atmospheric designs, is a true classic, much admired by audiences around the world, and a benchmark for our company. In 2018, we had the pleasure of bringing Maina’s Giselle to Western Sydney for our free Ballet Under the Stars event, followed shortly after by performances in Nanjing as part of our China tour. It is fitting that we bring the production back home to the Sydney Opera House in 2019.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who extend essential support, loyalty and friendship to The Australian Ballet. The company is supported by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria and the NSW Government through Create NSW, as well as by our generous corporate partners. This assistance makes it possible for us to develop new talent, showcase our artists and creative collaborators, and perform around Australia and internationally. Our Principal Partner Telstra has supported the company for almost 35 years and is a part of our family in every sense. Our Lead Partner Qantas carries this busy company safely and efficiently wherever we travel. Lead Partner Aqualand, the Australian luxury property company, supports our artistic ambitions. Thank you all for your support of this beautiful ballet.

Libby Christie
GISELLE

SYNOPSIS

Act 1

The story of Giselle is a romantic tale of innocent love and betrayal; of philandering Count Albrecht and a trusting peasant maid, Giselle. Although she has a weak heart, Giselle loves to dance.

Her beauty has enchanted Albrecht. On the day of the village wine festival, Albrecht, in order to court Giselle, disguises himself as a peasant. Giselle, in her innocence and unaware of his noble birth, resists Albrecht’s advances – only to succumb to his ardour and persistence. He gently induces her to trust his pledge of eternal love. His plans are thwarted by the arrival in the village of a hunting party which includes the Duke of Courland and his beautiful daughter Bathilde, to whom Albrecht is already engaged.

Bathilde is enchanted with Giselle and her youthful innocence. When Giselle tells the princess that she is engaged, Bathilde gives her a necklace, unaware that they are betrothed to the same man.

Hilarion, a gamekeeper in love with Giselle, discovers Albrecht’s disguise. Consumed with jealousy, he reveals his rival’s true identity. Giselle loses her reason, and the first act ends with the famous mad scene, and her death.

Act 2

Giselle has been buried deep in the forest and has now become a will. The wills are ghostly apparitions of folklore, girls who have died betrayed by their faithless lovers on the eve of their weddings.

Hilarion is discovered mourning at Giselle’s grave. Myrtha, Queen of the Wills, summons her maidens, who haunt the forest, luring wayfarers to dance with them until they die from exhaustion before the dawn. Hilarion is forced to dance until he dies.

Albrecht, full of remorse, comes to mourn at Giselle’s grave. The Queen commands Giselle to come from her grave and entice Albrecht to join her in dance. Giselle continues dancing with Albrecht through the night. Although she has been betrayed by Albrecht, Giselle still loves him, and helps him to stay alive until the dawn, when the wills lose their power and will not be able to destroy him.

With the arrival of the dawn, Giselle vanishes back into her grave, and Albrecht is left alone with his sorrow. But his life is saved.
Ako Kondo and Ty King-Wall. Photography Jeff Busby.
THE SPELL OF GISELLE

EACH TIME MAINA GIELGUD STAGES HER GISELLE, SHE MUST CREATE THE CONDITIONS FOR MAGIC. SHE TALKS TO DEBORAH JONES ABOUT THE HARD SLOG BEHIND THE ETHEREAL BEAUTY ON STAGE.

In 1985 The Australian Ballet was in Whyalla, South Australia, on a regional tour when a blaze at the Middleback Theatre engulfed the sets for Peggy van Praagh’s production of Giselle. Eerily, the only thing left standing was the large cross from the heroine’s grave. Maina Gielgud, artistic director at the time, was reminded that in Russia Giselle is known as ‘the holy ballet’. It was pleasing to think that was why the cross survived.

The loss was a blow to the company, but an opportunity too. Three years into her long tenure at The Australian Ballet, Gielgud could create her own production of a ballet she has loved passionately all her life. Her Giselle premiered the following year, replacing van Praagh’s decade-old version. For a time it was staged almost annually, and is still programmed regularly.

You could say Gielgud’s Giselle is embedded in The Australian Ballet’s DNA; that it’s as familiar to the company as morning class. Yes: and no. For every person who is an old Giselle hand there are junior members of the corps for whom it’s uncharted territory. Among those who know the ballet, someone who was part of the crowd as a peasant in 2015 – or even back as far as 2008 or 2006, when Giselle was also staged – may now have a featured or leading role. Yet others will be revisiting the central roles, reawakening the choreography in their bodies, rethinking and refining.

No matter where the dancers are on their journey, there’s one shared imperative. Everything must mesh seamlessly on stage – and on time. “I always have to think that the curtain goes up at 7.30pm on a certain day,” Gielgud says.

And when that curtain goes up, audiences want to see Giselles and Albrechts who they have seen as weightlessly as feathers on a breeze. They crave rich drama and soul-stirring poetry. They need to understand why Giselle still has such power more than 170 years after its creation.

Each time the ballet is revived the work has to begin anew. Choreography rehearsed in discrete sections over many months is put in place; corps de ballet and soloists are integrated with principal artists; the set, costumes, props, lighting and orchestra come into play. It’s a hard, painstaking process, yet represents just the nuts and bolts of the ballet: the basic material. Giselle only truly resides. They give the ballet its divine spark.

Gielgud’s association with Giselle goes back more than 60 years. As a young audience member she danced in the roles of wiliis, a role people thought she was suited to and which I loved doing. But I desperately wanted to do Giselle. I think I was in my late 20s when Rosella Hightower gave me the chance.”

Thanks to all those experiences, Gielgud knew precisely what she wanted from Giselle. The first half should feel as naturalistic as possible, in strong contrast to the ethereal, supernatural quality that follows. If the audience is inspired to really care about the characters it will be deeply moved by the transcendent second act and its portrayal of eternal, unconditional love and forgiveness.

It’s here that style is inextricable from meaning. The Romantic quality of movement isn’t easy for all dancers to achieve, but achieve it they must. “There is a look of lightness, of floating, of not touching the ground. I want the feeling for the wiliis as if they are moved by the wind in the forest,” Gielgud says. She found that contemporary technique could give dancers a way in. “The way of moving is the same. Often dancers think they create an illusion of lightness by trying to feel light. In fact it’s by using their weight in the right way.”

Along with the appearance of moving off balance, there is more use of the head in Romantic ballet and the arms almost always stay below the shoulders. There’s guidance to be found in lithographs of the great Romantic dancers, who display a soft, relaxed, forward-leaning posture that couldn’t be more different from the upright classical technique.

The choreography itself is traditional – “I would never think to depart from it” – but there are as many acting choices to be made as there are aspirants to the roles of Giselle and Albrecht. “I’m open. For me it depends on whom I’ve cast and what suits them best. I’m not going in with any pre-conceived ideas. In the first rehearsal, no doubt we’ll go from the beginning. As soon as Giselle meets Albrecht I’ll have an idea of where they’re at and if I think they’re working along the right lines for them.”

As well as working with Gielgud, the leads have meticulous coaching sessions with Artistic Associate and Principal Coach Fiona Tonkin (an acclaimed Giselle in her day). The roles may have been danced before but must never be repeated mechanically. The exploration never stops.

Gielgud trusts her sharply honed instincts about what suits an artist, but equally the dancers have to feel it’s possible to find their own path. It’s a tricky balancing act. Dancers need to feel that what they have to offer is valid, and confidence can be inadvertently shattered. “It’s so different with each one, and it’s not even to do with youth or experience.” Whatever has happened in the studio, “I tell dancers, especially getting near a performance, please don’t think I want you to do everything exactly as I’ve suggested. You have to do what is right for you at the moment, and that’s what I’m looking for. Then it becomes your own. That might mean doing something very different. And I don’t mind.”

Former principal artist Lisa Bolte was just one to benefit from Gielgud’s quest for individuality. “She never settled for the ideas already formed but worked tirelessly, stretching us and herself to discover new truths, taking the best of ballet heritage and striving to find even more truth and beauty.” The process was both confronting and fulfilling.

In 1989 Lisa Pavane, now director of The Australian Ballet School, was coached by one of the greatest of the ballet greats, Galina Ulanova. There were intricate demonstrations of body language in...
which “every moment was a real conversation” and a lengthy concentration on the brief but critical moment in Act I when Bathilde gives Giselle a gift of jewellery. Touchingly, after a gruelling session, Ulanova, then nearly 80, would take a towel and wipe the sweat from Pavane and her partner, Greg Horsman, who were both exhausted.

Bolte didn’t make her debut as Giselle until 1992, but she observed Ulanova coaching, and has her own precious memories. Gielgud smoothed the way for her to have “an incredibly inspiring hour” on the phone with Svetlana Beriosova, a former prima ballerina of The Royal Ballet, when she was having difficulty with the mad scene, and to get insights from Natalia Makarova on dynamics, phrasing, the lift of an elbow, and the articulation of lower legs and feet in the Romantic style. The adjustments may seem minute, but they can make or break an interpretation.

On occasion Gielgud has changed a partnership because she felt the chemistry between the Giselle and Albrecht wasn’t right. If she didn’t believe in the couple’s connection, why would an audience? This kind of thinking extends right through the cast, with the corps being encouraged to create histories for themselves that make them part of a community in Act I. “How friendly are they with Giselle’s mother, with Giselle and with Hilarion? Are they sympathetic to him, for instance?” With dancers who aren’t instinctively musical, and there are some, Gielgud may speak about not dancing to the music, but with music, around music, over the top of the music. “Sometimes I say, here you need to make the music happen. It’s as if you’re the conductor. Other times, it’s a matter of waiting for the music to tell you what to do.”

And on it goes, the big picture of the whole production built from the smallest details and suggestions. All performances will look familiar in broad outline, but each moment should be a revelation. Ultimately, how that comes to be is a mystery, and it’s why we go to Giselle again and again. The hard slog of preparation is transformed into art, made new every time.

Deborah Jones is a Sydney-based arts writer who specialises in dance.
Carlotta Grisi as Giselle.
Photography DEA/A. DAGLI ORTI/De Agostini/Getty Images
The classical ‘pancake’ tutu, in all its leg-baring, gravity-defying glory, might be the star of ballet costuming, but the Romantic tutu is the stuff dreams are made of. Its layers of gossamer tulle have been used to conjure spirits, sprites and sylphys since 1832, when the Romantic tutu made its debut in La Sylphide. Softer, more ethereal and more, well, romantic than the pancake, this bell-shaped diaphanous skirt has endured for almost two centuries, recurring in endless iterations across ballet, fashion, and popular culture.

From ballet’s earliest days in the Italian Renaissance courts of the 15th century to well into the 19th century, ballet costumes reflected the opulence of court fashion. Men’s costumes evolved in this time to allow greater freedom of movement, but women’s became ever more elaborate. Heavily embroidered tunics and high-heeled boots dominated the 1500s, lavish embellishments like precious jewels and gold thread the 1600s, and towering wigs and headdresses the 1700s. None of this was particularly conducive to jetés or pirouettes. But by 1720 there were hints of things to come with the first appearance on Parisian stages of a pannier (a hooped petticcoat), which lifted hems a critical few inches off the ground. In the same period, the dancer and choreographer Marie Sallé abandoned corsets and performed in loose muslin dresses. Her rival, Marie Camargo, a ballerina of the Paris Opera Ballet, pushed both technique and costuming even further. She shortened her ballet skirts to the calf, removed the heels from her ballet slippers and wore close-fitting drawers, a precursor of ballet tights. Once the ballerina’s legs were liberated, there was no going back.

The premiere of La Sylphide at the Paris Opera in 1832 was a watershed moment on many fronts. Its popularity established the Romantic ballet as a cultural phenomenon, and it introduced dancing en pointe as genuine technique rather than a party trick. It was also the dawn of the Romantic tutu’s long reign.

La Sylphide was created by the Italian choreographer Filippo Taglioni to showcase the prodigious talents of his daughter, Marie Taglioni. The story was not revolutionary – a young man is beguiled by a supernatural enchantress, and sacrifices everything in his pursuit of her – but the costuming was. Taglioni’s skirt fell halfway between knee and ankle, a scandalously short length engineered to show off her pointe work. Layers of ethereal white tulle over stiffened, sheer muslin conjured the Sylph’s otherworldly aura. Newly invented ‘flying machines’ suspended the dancers with wires, giving them (at least fleetingly) the vertiginous elevation of pointe shoes. Tutus and pointes would become ballet’s most powerful talismans, haunting the dreams of would-be dancers to this day.

If La Sylphide was the tutu’s debut, Giselle was its full flowering. The Italian ballerina Carlotta Grisi was the original Giselle, dancing the ballet’s premiere in June 1841. In the first act, the Romantic tutu (a vision of pale, buttery yellow in Peter Farmer’s design for The Australian Ballet) is deployed to signal youth and innocence. It floats behind Giselle, light as her heart in all the exultation of first love. It amplifies her tremulous throes as that heart gives way after her betrayal.

In the second act, the earthly gives way to the supernatural, and the village to the ether. The tutu is pivotal in this transition. The ghostly apparitions of the willis, seemingly hovering in mid-air, are summoned not with wires or trickery but by the quiver of massed tutus, shadowy under a spectral moon. As the willis dance, their tutus seem to leave a vapour trail. Human rules don’t apply here, the costumes proclaim: this is no longer the domain of man. Illustrations of Grisi in the role clearly show the Romantic tutu’s ethereal translucency – and the alluring outline of her legs.

The Romantic tutu, shot through with soft gas light, was clearly a potent combination – but also dangerous one. Several ballerinas perished when their tutus brushed against open flames and caught fire, a phenomenon romanticised by the press. “Lovely butterfly of the passing hour, she attracted the gaze of the gay votaries of fashion and pleasure, and like the doomed moth, fluttering in the flame, consumed her ephemeral existence!” mused The Public Ledger after the death of ballerina Clara Webster. Tutus could be fireproofed by being soaked in a chemical solution, but this rendered them dingy and stiff. Dancers often refused the fireproofing, including Emma Livry, who at 21 died from her burns. Countless more ballerinas would die, either by fire, smoke inhalation or toxic gases. And yet, even as the era of the Romantic
ballet waned, the Romantic tutu persisted. Edgar Degas’ *The Dancing Class*, dated 1870, is believed to be the first of his ballet pictures; it immortalised the frothy swish of the tutu. He would paint ballerinas for the rest of his life.

The Australian Ballet’s Head of Costume Workshop, Musette Molyneaux, has overseen the creation of countless Romantic tutus. Construction, she says, hasn’t changed much throughout the company’s history. Giselle’s tutus are typical in that three layers of soft net are stitched to a basque, overlaying a stiffer net base. The layers of tulle are stitched at intervals, so there’s no extra bulk at the hips. “Because the tutus are made from very fine net, you can see all the different layers when they’re lit, which creates this very romantic, wistful, not-quite-present feeling,” she says. Peter Farmer’s white tutus for *Giselle* are actually hand-painted with grey. “It creates a watercolour look,” says Musette. “It’s very shadowy and otherworldly.”

Once ballerinas’ legs were freed by the pancake tutu, ballet technique evolved apace, and the pancake came to dominate the public imagination. Still, the Romantic tutu would recur in classical repertoire throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Although the Ballets Russes is remembered for its revolutionary approach to costuming, it paid breathtaking homage to the Romantic tutu in 1909 with Michel Fokine’s *Les Sylphides*. Described as a “Romantic reverie”, it presented rows of sylphs in floaty tulle, dreamy in the imagined moonlight. George Balanchine returned to this look in 1951 for the corps of his *Swan Lake*, as did Anthony Dowell in his 1987 *Swan Lake* for The Royal Ballet. And the regal green tutus that Balanchine created with his long-time designer Barbara Karinska for the ‘Emeralds’ section of his 1967 ballet *Jewels* remain standouts in the genre, so much so that they were reimagined by the French designer Christian Lacroix for Paris Opera Ballet in 2005.

Lacroix’s iconic ‘puffball’ skirt, a favourite of 80s pop stars, owed no small debt to the Romantic tutu. But then, so do many fashion moments. Christian Dior’s New Look, which debuted in 1947, was a radical rejection of the utilitarian women’s fashion that had dominated the lean years of the Depression and wartime rationing. This return to hyper-femininity shared many characteristics with the Romantic silhouette: a strong emphasis on shoulders, an implausibly small waist, and a luxuriously full skirt, falling to mid-calf. In the 1954 film *Sabrina*, Audrey Hepburn’s dresses recall the costumes of Marie Taglioni: fabric enticingly scarce at the shoulder, and extravagant at the skirt.

The Romantic tutu has always straddled the line between supernatural and sexy, as evidenced by the revealing lithographs of Carlotta Grisi. Marilyn Monroe would move it squarely into the latter category in a series of photographs taken by Milton H. Greene in 1954. The white Romantic tutu ordered from fashion designer Anne Klein didn’t fit, so Monroe held it to her chest instead, alluringly blending innocence and provocation. The television show *Sex and the City* would conjure this combination when it premiered in 1998. Carrie Bradshaw wears an abbreviated Romantic tutu in the credits, paired with a semi-transparent tank top. She wore a tutu again for the final episode in 2014 – this time a fuller vintage version in antique green. Veteran costume designer Patricia Field had a clear message here: this was an older Carrie, a wiser Carrie, but forever romantic at heart.

In 2011, the Romantic tutu bloomed again as the star of the French fashion house Chloé’s Spring collection, which boiled the skirt down to its fundamentals: the heavenly rustle of tulle in a monochromatic palette. Closer to home, the Sydney fashion label Lover premiered their *A Dance for One* collection with a film starring The Australian Ballet’s Amber Scott. Romantic lines abounded, paired with slouchy, 80s-inspired rehearsal wear.

Senior Artist Valerie Tereshchenko describes the Romantic tutu in rapturous terms. “They’re really quite light: you have to be very delicate and smooth because they move so much. If you move quickly across the stage, part of your dress is left behind, which gives the illusion that you’re floating or flying.” If so much movement, so much meaning, and so much feeling can be summoned with just 20 metres of net, the reign of the Romantic tutu will not soon subside.

Kate Scott is the editor of *Luminous*: celebrating 50 years of The Australian Ballet.
Marie Camargo. Image courtesy of the New York Public Library. Photography Smith Collection/Gado/Getty Images

Design by Edith Head for Audrey Hepburn in Sabrina. Photography Honeymoon Image/Art/Arctic Images

Artists of The Australian Ballet. Photography Lynette Wills
After completing a theatrical design course with honours, British-born Peter Farmer became Loudon Sainthill’s assistant, which subsequently led to his first commission: Jack Carter’s Agonoria for the London Dance Theatre in 1964. That production featured Joyce Graeme, who in 1965 asked him to design his first production of Giselle for Ballet Rambert, and it is this particular ballet which has been associated with Peter Farmer since; he has designed 14 productions for leading companies around the world.

Other ballet work includes Swan Lake (Royal Winnipeg Ballet), The Sleeping Beauty (Munich Opera House and The Royal Ballet), The Nutcracker (Rome Opera House), Tales of Hoffmann (The Hong Kong Ballet), Winter Dreams (The Royal Ballet), Manon (Vienna State Opera), Coppélia (Birmingham Royal Ballet) and many modern pieces for London Contemporary Dance Theatre.

His designs for drama include Night of the iguana, A Woman of No Importance and What Every Woman Knows. His first work for The Australian Ballet was The Dream in 1969. He has since completed the following works for the company: Anna Karenina (1979), The Three Musketeers (1980). Giselle (1986), Manon (1994) and Madame Butterfly (1995), which he worked on again with The National Ballet of Canada in 2000.

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GISELLE: A DANCER’S PERSPECTIVE

PRINCIPAL ARTISTS TY KING-WALL AND AKO KONDO, WHO WILL DANCE ALBRECHT AND GISELLE IN THIS SEASON, TALK ABOUT INTERPRETATIONS, THE ROMANTIC STYLE AND THE PERILS OF JUGGLING DOGS.

TY KING-WALL

Giselle is one of my all-time favourite ballets. I would take any chance I get to dance it – I would dance Giselle in a broom cupboard. It’s a real privilege to get to do it again. To me it’s the perfect ballet. It’s not a particularly long ballet, but so much happens, and everything that happens is so important to the story. It still resonates strongly because its themes are still relevant today. It’s a timeless story.

This will be my fourth season of Giselle, and each time I try to bring a fresh outlook to it. The first time I did it I was in my first year with the company. I was standing up the back, in the painting party, holding the two dogs. It’s actually one of my most memorable moments on stage. I was holding the borzois’ lead in one hand, and supporting a bunch of pheasants on a rack with the other. Borzois have these long, slippery necks, and one of them got a bit antsy and slipped his collar. I had both my hands full so I couldn’t grab him, and I had visions of him running around the stage during this really powerful moment in the ballet. Luckily my fellow dancer Ben Davis saw the whole thing, and he grabbed the dog and quietly ushered him off into the wings.

So that was my first experience of the ballet, and it was great to get a taste of it from the best seat in the house, so to speak. I danced the Act II pas de deux a couple of times, and then in 2015 I danced Albrecht for the first time, with Amber [Scott, now Ty’s wife] as my Giselle. Then I got the chance to do it again on our regional tour, with Dana Stephensen. That was really nice, because you’re performing in smaller theatres, closer to the audience, and the acting felt very natural, you didn’t have to project so far, it felt like you could just be yourself.

In 2018 I was fortunate enough to perform the role again, this time with Ako Kondo, with whom I’ve always enjoyed dancing. Whenever you perform a ballet like Giselle with a new partner, you respond to the individuality they bring to the role. In this way, the story you’re telling subtly changes, and it feels completely new once more.

Each time, I take a different tack with the character. In the past I’ve tried to make Albrecht quite sympathetic, to look for his redeeming qualities. But I think this time around, I like the idea of him being more thoughtless, a bit more selfish. He’s quite dismissive of the peasants’ beliefs, he has a sense of superiority. It feels like that will make the transformation and catharsis of the character in Act II even stronger, as it’s a greater contrast. So I may look at giving him a harder edge.

The 32 entrechat six that Albrecht does in Act II – they’re fun! It’s a good challenge. The audience plays a part in this one. They often start applauding half-way through, and that really does give you a lift. So please, everyone, start clapping as soon as you want! At that point in time, you’ve done the pas de deux, you’ve done the solo – you’ve done a lot of dancing, and then you have to do those 32 entrechat six [jumps in which the dancer crosses his legs six times before landing]. And you do feel like you’re about to expire, just as Albrecht is in the story. When the audience cheers you on, it gets you through, it really helps.

The Romantic style for the male dancer...

There’s a softness to the port de bras, there’s a way of holding your head, there’s a gentle undulation to the arms. When you’re partnering, you have to be aware that the girl’s weight is not going to be in the usual place, because the Romantic technique requires her to lean forward. There’s actually a lot of counter-balancing – you push her forward over an arabesque rather than having her on her leg: it’s an elongated, almost horizontal line. There’s a lot of flow, and there’s some beautiful moments when you create that ethereal quality by the way you partner, especially the way you lift the girl. You can let the dress move, you can let her legs drift. It’s easier said than done – it takes a while to get the hang of it, but it’s beautiful when you get it.

AKO KONDO

Giselle was a role that I always wanted to do. In Japan, my ballet teacher always said, “it’s not really for you, you’re too hyperactive.” I was always steered towards Kitri or Gamzatti – jumping, turning roles, strong women; the Queen of the Wilis rather than Giselle. But when Maina [Gielgud] came out to cast the ballet, she could see me doing the role.

I did my first seasons of Giselle with Chen [Principal Artist Chengwu Guo, Ako’s husband], and that was so special, because of our connection. The first time Maina saw us rehearse together, she said, “Oh, the love is really believable!” We laughed and said, “Yes – because it’s real love!”

At the end of my last show in the Sydney season, I was very happy - I had enjoyed my performance, really cherished the moment, and my mum had flown out from Japan and was in the audience. Then at the end of the show, David [McAllister, the company’s artistic director] pulled a huge surprise and promoted me to principal artist on stage!

When you’re dancing Giselle, there’s a real transformation between Act I and Act II. In Act I you’re human, full of life and joy, a pure, innocent girl. In Act II, you are a ghost – white, weightless; you barely land on the floor. I love watching famous ballerinas dance Giselle because they look like a completely different person in Act II. That’s what attracted me to the role.

Last year I got to do Giselle with [Principal Artist] Ty King-Wall. To dance it with a different partner changes your interpretation. Ty really loves this ballet and has a lot of ideas about it, and we had a great conversation about how we’d play it. He’s a gentle Albrecht, he’s not domineering or princely – he’s pretending to be the pure innocent guy who just met the pure innocent girl. We talked about the musicality, the accents, where we’d breathe together. It really helped us to get in sync.

The mad scene is so special for ballerinas. I love acting, and that’s why I adore this ballet. The first time I did Giselle, I was a bit ‘in my shell’ with the mad scene. I struggled with it. [Principal Coach] Fiona Tonkin, who was a great Giselle, spent a lot of time with me, doing the mad scene in front of the mirror. One time she did it just for me in the studio, and it was amazing – I felt it in my heart. I was in tears. Even when you’re on stage, you don’t see the ballerina that close from the front, you don’t see the details. That opened up a lot of ideas for me.

Maina has Giselle in her heart. She’s really particular about the Romantic style, the angle of your arms and body, leaning the way you want to go. I learnt a lot about how to use my eyes. Sometimes as a dancer you try to act with your face, but she’d say, “Eyes can tell the audience the story.” In Act II, she coached me particularly on the moment when the bell chimes at dawn, and Giselle realises that she’s done it, she’s saved Albrecht. I was trying to hold a nice ballet placement in that moment, but she told me, “Let everything go. The man you loved was going to die, but now he’s going to live. How do you feel?” One night she came back to my dressing room after the performance; she had tears in her eyes, and she said, “You really understood what I said. I felt it.”

GISELLE: A DANCER’S PERSPECTIVE

PRINCIPAL ARTISTS TY KING-WALL AND AKO KONDO, WHO WILL DANCE ALBRECHT AND GISELLE IN THIS SEASON, TALK ABOUT INTERPRETATIONS, THE ROMANTIC STYLE AND THE PERILS OF JUGGLING DOGS.
The extraordinary journey of Giselle began in Paris, during the summer of 1841. Choreographed jointly by Jules Perrot and his older colleague Jean Coralli, the ballet was a “transcendent success” from the outset – “all Paris is resounding with it,” raved the French correspondent for London’s Morning Post. The production quickly transferred to London itself, where Perrot and the ballet master Deshayes supervised a somewhat pared down version for the smaller stage of Her Majesty’s Theatre. One French visitor, having seen Giselle in Paris, predicted a “fiasco” on account of cuts and changes. But the local audience loved it, and Giselle has been accounting revisions through countless revivals ever since.

Maina Gielgud’s production, like most modern stagings, derives from Russian notions of Perrot’s ballet, which made its way to St Petersburg in 1850. The notations, created decades later, reflected the influence of subsequent performances, including stagings overseen by the French choreographer Marius Petipa, who worked in St Petersburg’s Imperial Theatres. Some aspects of the choreographic script are of even more recent vintage. Gielgud’s production pays tribute to a great 20th-century interpreter of the role, the Russian ballerina Olga Spessivtseva, whose willowy figure, fragility and huge kohl-darkened eyes lent a peculiarly spectral aspect to her performance. The ballerina’s brilliant technique is immortalised in the ‘Spessivtseva variation’ of Act I, in which Giselle executes a series of coy, dainty hops en pointe across the stage.

Traces of the 1841 production also survive in Gielgud’s version. Peter Farber’s costume design for Giselle in Act I – a daffodil-yellow dress worn by the Italian ballerina Carlotta Grisi. Other elements hint at surprising features of the original version, now lost. Strange but true is the history behind the dances of Myrtha’s two lead wilis. Many a bemused spectator has wondered why Giselle’s Rhineland village produced such a surfeit of comely maidens jilted before their wedding day. But, in fact, in the ballet’s early scenarios, the Queen of the Wilis originally summoned “her subjects from all quarters of the globe”.

Every modern production of Giselle contains traces of the ballet’s former versions. Caitlyn Lehmann excavates its deeper meanings.

Many a bemused spectator has wondered why Giselle’s Rhineland village produced such a surfeit of comely maidens jilted before their wedding day. But, in fact, in the ballet’s early scenarios, the Queen of the Wilis originally summoned “her subjects from all quarters of the globe”.

In Romantic ballets of Giselle’s era, and reflected the period’s fascination with folk culture. Indeed, from its inception Giselle was a perfect distillation of Romantic ideals and artistic conventions, which had been refined for more than half a century before the ballet’s premiere. The wilis were part of a long line of supernatural characters that appeared on the stage of the Paris Opera, including diaphanous sylphs, ondines and the diabolical ghosts of nuns. Theophile Gautier, the French author and critic who worked on Giselle’s libretto, had initially encountered the wilis in the literary tale De l’Allemagne (1835), by the German poet Heinrich Heine. Gautier immediately perceived the potential of Heine’s nocturnal spectres, “white as snow” and full of bloodlust. Indeed, he had quite a penchant for gothic seductresses. In 1836 he had penned his own ghoulsh short story, La Morte Amoureuse, about a beautiful vampire countess, Clarimonde, who rose nightly from her tomb to destroy her lovers.

Thanks to Gautier, who openly acknowledged Heine’s tale as the ballet’s inspiration, the legend of wilis has always been passed down intact. But another element of the Giselle story is surrounded by great confusion: the matter of how Giselle dies. Gautier actually wrote two versions of the Giselle story, the libretto (prepared in collaboration with Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges) and a literary telling, published in Les Beautés de l’Opéra (1844). While the libretto described Giselle’s death from heartbreak, the latter detailed Giselle’s death as a suicide, the result of the distraught maid seizing Albrecht’s sword and inflicting “a deep and fatal wound” upon herself. There has been much debate about which version was used at the ballet’s premiere, with many dancers and scholars accepting the readily available 1844 account as the original. American musicologist Marian Smith has urged him to remain, the conniving Myrtha plays Albrecht protection from the wilis. Unable to move Albrecht from the haven of the cross, where Giselle has urged him to remain, the conniving Myrtha plays a trump card: she compels Giselle to dance, luring Albrecht with her beauty away from safety and back into the magic circle where the wilis hold sway.

Further symbolic richness is found in the use of flowers to intensify the story’s emotional nuances. Giselle’s premiere coincided with a vogue for sentimentalist flower books (mostly written for young women), which attempted to distil the Christian and mythological associations of flowers into a ‘language’ for everyday use in posies and bouquets. The appeal of this floral symbolism has endured. Although the blooms featured in the ballet vary between productions, they typically evoke some widely-shared associations. The daisy, used in Giselle’s fortune-telling game of ‘he loves me, he loves me not’, is traditionally ascribed ‘innocence’; the rosemary described in the original libretto. The myrtle is a symbol of love and fidelity, often used in wedding bouquets, and the wilis are dressed as the brides they were never able to be.

Strands of tradition, flecked with innovation, individual parts forming a logical whole: it’s what distinguishes the best productions of Giselle. As Gielgud’s production is revived, the task of unearthing the nuances buried in the ballet’s text continues.

Dr Caitlyn Lehmann is a cultural historian specialising in dance history and 18th-century studies.
NICOLETTE FRAILLON AM

Music Director & Chief Conductor

Nicolette Fraillon began her music studies on violin and piano at an early age. At 16 she conducted her first concert with the Victorian Junior Symphony Orchestra. She graduated on viola from Melbourne University in 1982, gaining an equal first place in her year in Performance. From 1984–87 she furthered her instrumental studies at the Hochschule für Musik in Vienna and from 1987–88 in Hannover. During her time in Germany and Austria Nicolette toured with many orchestras, including the Salzburger Chamber Ensemble and the Chamber Orchestra of Bassano, and was a member of the Haydn Quartet, based at the Esterhazy Palace in Eisenstadt.

In 1990 Nicolette moved to the Netherlands, where she became assistant musical director for the 1991–92 season of Les Misérables in Amsterdam and The Hague. In 1992 she was admitted to the Netherlands Broadcasting Association’s International Conductors’ Masterclass, resulting in a performance with the Dutch Radio Symphony Orchestra in the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. This led to an invitation to conduct for the Nederlands Dans Theater. She was then invited to become music director and chief conductor of the National Ballet of the Netherlands, working with such renowned choreographers as Hans van Manen, Toer van Schayk, Rudi van Dantzig and Krzysztof Pastor, and conducting numerous world premieres. During the following five years she worked with the North Holland Philharmonic Orchestra, the New Sinfonietta Amsterdam, Noord Nederlands Orchestra, the Gilders Orchestra in Arnhem, the Limburg Symphony Orchestra, the Residentie Orkest in The Hague, the Kanazawa Chamber Orchestra in Japan, and the Finnish Ballet.

In 1996 she took up the position of Director at the School of Music, Australian National University, and continued her conducting work with the West Australian Ballet, the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, the Australian Youth Orchestra and the Canberra Symphony Orchestra.

She debuted with The Australian Ballet in 2002, conducting Spartacus, and was then invited by David McAllister to become music director and chief conductor, beginning in January 2003. Since joining the company, Nicolette has conducted all programs for The Australian Ballet, including all of its overseas tours, and has been a guest conductor for San Francisco Ballet. Following The Australian Ballet’s 2005 tour to the UK, Nicolette was, in 2006, invited back to conduct The Sleeping Beauty with Birmingham Royal Ballet. She conducted the ballet again on Birmingham Royal Ballet’s 2018 tour of Japan. In 2007 she guested with New York City Ballet. In 2008 she returned to the Birmingham Royal Ballet for a season of The Nutcracker, then finished the year with a New Year’s Gala in Skopje with the Macedonian Philharmonic Orchestra. In early 2011 Nicolette guested with San Francisco Ballet, conducting their production of Giselle; in 2014 she guested with New York City Ballet. In 2016 she conducted the opening night of Birmingham Royal Ballet’s production of Peter Wright’s The Nutcracker, which was also the choreographer’s 90th birthday.

Since 2014, Nicolette has also been artistic director of Orchestra Victoria, establishing new concert series, education programs and two regional music festivals.

SIMON THEW

Conductor

Simon Thew has undertaken conducting studies in Sydney, Vienna, Berlin, and Barcelona with mentors including Sebastian Weigle, Nicolette Fraillon, Harry Spence Lyth, Richard Bonynge, and John Hopkins.

In 2007 Simon was awarded the Dame Joan Sutherland/Richard Bonynge Travel Scholarship, which enabled further study in Europe, culminating in his position as musical intern at the Bayreuth Festival in 2008.

In 2010 he was awarded the Hephzibah Tintner Fellowship, which gave him performance and mentoring opportunities with The Australian Ballet, Opera Australia, and the Sydney Symphony. Simon was The Australian Ballet’s Conducting Fellow in 2011, and in the same year was awarded a Churchill Fellowship. This enabled him to undertake professional development opportunities with ballet companies, opera houses and orchestras in London, Birmingham, Vienna, Berlin, and New York across 2012.

Simon was an assistant conductor with Opera Australia from 2007 – 2010. In 2010 he conducted Opera Australia’s Oz Opera regional tour, and in the same year made his conducting debut with The Australian Ballet. In 2012 he acted as assistant conductor on the company’s New York tour.

Simon was a regular guest conductor with The Australian Ballet between 2013 and 2016. He conducted performances in most of the company's seasons during that time. In 2017 he accepted an invitation to become The Australian Ballet’s assistant conductor. He has also worked as a guest conductor for English National Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet and Houston Ballet.

He has an active concert-conducting career and is committed to the education of young conductors and instrumentalists.
Adolphe Adam (1803 - 1856) was a prolific composer and a very enterprising man. Not only was he responsible for a huge catalogue of music, ranging from piano arrangements of popular songs through to sacred music, operas and ballets, he was also a chorus master and a theatre owner. When the latter enterprise failed due to circumstances beyond his control – the 1848 Paris revolution – Adam became a journalist and Professor of Composition at the Paris Conservatoire.

Adam's father was himself a professor of music at the Conservatoire, although it seems he did little to encourage Adolphe to pursue a career in music. Adam was inspired instead by Ferdinand Hérold, who is known to balletomanes as the composer/arranger of the score for *La Fille mal gardée*. A career in music theatre beckoned, and by 1830 Adam's portfolio boasted a clutch of popular songs, an operetta and a three-act opera. The 1830 Paris revolution (yes, they were turbulent times) made life difficult in the theatres of the capital, and it was in London that Adam presented his first ballet, *Faust* (1833). Adam's first work for the Paris Opera was the score for the ballet *La fille du Danube* (1836). The composer's international reputation was secured with performances of *La fille* and other works in a season given at St Petersburg in 1840. *Giselle* received its premiere at the Paris Opéra in June 1841.

Adam once boasted that he found composing ballet scores easier than writing operas and, moreover, that he composed them for his own amusement. If that’s the case he must have enjoyed composing *Giselle*, which he completed in just three weeks, working at night, as was his usual practice. The score marked a quantum leap in the way music for ballet was regarded by composers, choreographers and audiences. Up to this point, as those who recall the score of *La Fille mal gardée* would agree, music for ballet tended to be little more than a potpourri of well-known popular tunes and classical favourites. Not only was the score for *Giselle* composed specifically for the ballet, but the music succeeds in marrying movement with the dramatic narrative – in what was then an innovative, if rudimentary, kind of way.

While Adam's melodic inventiveness is occasionally a little pedestrian, there can be no denying his craftsmanship. As Tchaikovsky was to do later (albeit with a far greater degree of sophistication), Adam employs leitmotifs, or recurring musical themes. These are linked to specific characters and emotions: Giselle’s theme is in G major; Count Albrecht’s in C major; the principal love scene in A major.

Adam’s approach is not so much to develop or elaborate on his themes, but rather to change the context in which they are heard. So, for example, when the pastorale theme first heard in the first part of Act I reappears later in the mad scene, it adds a further dimension to the plot. The overall effect of Adam’s score is that of a collection of musical episodes that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Adam’s original score was published initially as a piano version in 1841, and it was not until 1924 that an orchestral score was published. By this stage a number of additions and alterations had been made. The first of these appeared at the premiere performance, when Frederic Burgmüller prudently added the Peasant Pas de deux to the first act in order to placate a wealthy patron, whose mistress was dancing the part of the peasant girl. Ludwig Minkus took it upon himself to add a variation for Giselle to the 1864 St Petersburg season.

Adam’s music was savaged in the first edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, published in 1890; the writer sniffed that “his melodies are frequently trivial to the point of absolute vulgarity.” Trivial they may seem in comparison to Tchaikovsky, whose star was well and truly in the ascendant in 1890. But Adam’s melodies are never vulgar. These days we would call it ‘elegant simplicity’, and *Giselle* is the richer for a score that has continued to delight audiences for over 150 years.

Dr Mark Carroll is a Professor at The Elder Conservatorium, University of Adelaide.
Feel at home all the way there

Hatice Kaynak, Qantas Cabin Crew

qantas.com
What was your first experience of ballet?
I was three or four years old when I saw my first ballet. I was so young, I can't remember if the ballet was Giselle, but I have these images in my mind of girls in long white dresses, floating across the stage. It was that Romantic era of ballet that was the reason I started dancing.

Is there a ballerina whose performance of Giselle has really inspired you?
Madeline Eastoe danced her last show ever as Giselle, which was a very special performance. Also Amber Scott, Kirsty Martin and Rachel Rawlins … I could keep going! But those three in particular are beautiful, and they captured different parts of Giselle, which I really admire.

In a previous season of Giselle you danced the role of Myrtha, Queen of the Wilis. What was it like to work with Maina Gielgud during rehearsals for that season?
It was fantastic for me. She was really encouraging. Also, she’s so interested in the characterisation, which is a really lovely way to work: the movement is character-driven rather than purely about the steps.

I was also lucky enough to understudy Giselle, and just being at the back of the studio for those rehearsals gave me a little taste of the role.

What is your own approach to the characterisation of Giselle?
When I began rehearsing Giselle, I was actually recovering from an injury to my calf. So I really started the process from the ground up. Giselle just loves to dance, but she’s got this weak heart, so she’s not allowed to. I felt in a similar position! As I built up my dancing again, I was trying to do it with her in mind, and think of how she might feel, which was quite interesting.

In the second act, I love that she finds a strength and a resolve that she didn’t have in life. She has the strength to be able to forgive Albrecht. So I try to find the fragility of Act I, and then the strength of Act II.

How do you feel about performing the famous mad scene?
The mad scene is what appeals to me most about the role. I love the drama.

The stage is a funny sort of place. You can let go of who you are, and become someone else, and experience something that you might not ever experience otherwise (hopefully I don’t ever go mad)! It’s a really powerful place.

What are some of the roles you would really like to dance?
Juliet, in Romeo and Juliet, and the most dramatic roles, like Manon. I was lucky enough last year to dance Hanna in The Merry Widow, which was on my bucket list.

How do you keep a feeling of balance in your life during especially busy periods?
I do a lot of outdoors stuff like hiking, mountain biking, and walking the dog. We [Dimity is married to Rudy Hawkes, a former dancer of The Australian Ballet] have a wolfhound cross. He’s our first rescue dog, and he’s a challenge. He’s a sweet boy, but a bit psychotic, for a wolf hound; they are usually very calm.

When things get a bit too intense, we pack up and go camping. Even if it’s just for 24 hours, or late at night, like after a show on a Saturday. We’ll shove the camping stuff in the car, and drive down the highway somewhere. Waking up in the bush the next day really calms me down.

Chloe Gordon is a freelance copywriter and communications specialist with a zest for the arts. Her website is chloegordon.com.au

Photography Daniel Boud
PHILANTHROPY AMBASSADOR

“Tender and self-deprecating … a true danseur noble”

The Observer, UK

Adam Bull’s principal artist position is generously supported by Lachlan & Sarah Murdoch

Adam Bull was born in 1983 and began training at Dance World 301 with Brian Nolan before joining The Australian Ballet School. In 2000, he represented Australia in the Paris International Ballet Competition, before graduating from The Australian Ballet School with honours in 2001. Adam joined The Australian Ballet in 2002, going on to dance in many leading roles. After just six months as a senior artist, Adam was promoted to principal artist in June 2008, capping off a string of critically acclaimed lead performances. Adam has danced a vast range of the male classical repertoire; he has a fondness for works by George Balanchine, Sir Kenneth MacMillan, Graeme Murphy, Alexei Ratmansky, Christopher Wheeldon and Wayne McGregor. Performing in principal lead roles on the company’s tours to Paris, London, New York, Los Angeles and Japan have been career highlights.

Repertoire highlights

— Albrecht in Mama Gelgud’s Giselle 2015, 2006
— Prince Siegfried in Graeme Murphy’s Swan Lake 2008 – 2015
— James in La Sylphide 2013, 2005
— The Prince in Alexei Ratmansky’s Cinderella, 2013
— Onegin in John Cranko’s Onegin 2012
— Bedroom Pas de deux from Sir Kenneth MacMillan’s Manon with American Ballet Theatre’s Julie Kent, The Australian Ballet 50th Anniversary Gala, 2012
— Danilo in Ronald Hynd’s The Merry Widow 2011

Guest appearances

— Cinderella Pas de deux, Northern Ballet Sapphire Gala 2015
— Prince Siegfried in Derek Deane’s Swan Lake, Shanghai Ballet 2014
— 1st Chinese International Ballet Gala 2013
— Fall for Dance Festival, New York 2011
— Stuttgart Ballet 50th Anniversary Gala 2011
— The Dancers Company tour 2006

Awards

— Green Room Award “Year’s Work” nomination 2009
— Benois de la Danse Best Male Dancer nomination for Graeme Murphy’s Swan Lake 2009
— Khitersits Hrai-Foundation Scholarship 2009
— Green Room Award nomination for Albrecht in Giselle 2006

You may not know ...

“I have ticked off a lifelong dream of visiting the Antarctic continent, doing so in our summer break at the end of 2009. Landing at the same site as the famous Australian explorer Sir Douglas Mawson was an awe-inspiring and life-changing experience.”

“Very special artist”

Arts writer Deborah Jones

Brett Chynoweth was born in Melbourne. At age five, he began training at a local ballet school. He soon moved to The Australian Ballet School, where he received, among other awards, the Dr HC (Nuggett) Coombes Travelling Scholarship, which enabled him to train in New York and Toronto. He graduated dux from The Australian Ballet School with honours and joined The Australian Ballet at the beginning of 2009; he was promoted to principal artist on stage at the end of the 2018 season in his home town of Melbourne. Since joining The Australian Ballet, Brett has performed a variety of classical and contemporary works by choreographers such as Carlos Acosta, Nacho Duato, Tim Harbour, Jiří Kylián, Wayne McGregor, Graeme Murphy and Alexei Ratmansky, and his principal roles include works by some of the greats - Frederick Ashton, George Balanchine, Serge Lifar, Kenneth MacMillan, Christopher Wheeldon and Peter Wright.

Repertoire highlights

— Franz in Peggy van Praagh’s Coppélia 2016
— Puck in Frederick Ashton’s The Dream 2015
— The Prince in Peter Wright’s The Nutcracker 2014
— Lescaut in Sir Kenneth MacMillan’s Manon 2014
— Mazurka in Serge Lifar’s Suite en blanc 2014

Guest appearances

— The Prince in Peter Wright’s The Nutcracker, Birmingham Royal Ballet 2018

Awards

— Walter Bourke Scholarship 2013
— Telstra Ballet Dancer Award Nominee 2011
— Maurice Sullivan Memorial Scholarship 2011/12

You may not know ...

Brett’s favourite city is London; so much so, he once flew there for 24 hours just to see a show at the Royal Opera House.

Explosive energy”

The Age

Growing up in China, Chengwu Guo began dance classes at the age of eleven. He was accepted into the Beijing Dance Academy where he was able to combine his ballet training with academic studies. Chen’s talent for ballet was soon evident when he received a gold medal at the Ta Li Bei of China Competition, and also at the Beijing International Competition. In 2006 Chen became a prize winner at the prestigious PRIX de Lausanne competition in Switzerland, receiving a full scholarship to complete his vocational ballet training. He chose to take up this scholarship at The Australian Ballet School. During his time at the school Chen toured regional Australia with The Dancers Company, and received glowing reviews for his roles in The Sleeping Beauty, Graduation Ball and Coppélia. Chen joined The Australian Ballet in 2008 and was promoted to principal artist in 2013.

Repertoire highlights

— Albrecht in Maina Gielgud’s Giselle 2015
— Puck in Frederick Ashton’s The Dream 2015
— Solor in Stanton Welch’s La Bayadère 2014
— The Prince in Peter Wright’s The Nutcracker 2014
— Basilio in Rudolf Nureyev’s Don Quixote 2013
— Principal Man, Mazurka, in Harold Lander’s Études 2012
— Mercutio and Tybalt in Graeme Murphy’s Romeo & Juliet 2011
— First Red Knight in Ninette de Valois’ Checkmate 2011
— Sir Kenneth MacMillan’s Concerto 2011
— Graeme Murphy’s Firebird 2009

Guest appearances

— The Dancers Company tour 2008

Awards

— Green Room Award nomination for Don Quixote and La Sylphide 2013
— Maurice Sullivan Scholarship 2013
— Telstra Ballet Dancer Award and Telstra People’s Choice Award 2011

You may not know ...

Chengwu likes to watch Japanese anime in his spare time.
Amy Harris was born in Ararat, Victoria and began jazz and tap classes at her local ballet school at the age of three. From the age of ten, Amy trained in the Cecchetti method with the Carole Oliver School of Ballet in Ballarat, and as a Cecchetti scholar she won bronze and silver medals. In 1999, aged 15, Amy successfully auditioned for The Australian Ballet School. She joined The Australian Ballet in 2002 and was promoted to coryphée in 2007, soloist in 2011 and senior artist in 2012. In 2018 she was promoted to principal artist on stage after her performance as Tertulla in the world premiere of Lucas Jervies’ Spartacus.

**Repertoire highlights**
- The Queen of Hearts in Christopher Wheeldon’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland© 2017
- Wayne McGregor’s Infra 2017
- Aurora and the Lilac Fairy in David McAllister’s The Sleeping Beauty 2017
- The Stepmother in Alexei Ratmansky’s Cinderella 2016
- Baroness von Rothbart in Graeme Murphy’s Swan Lake 2016
- William Forsythe’s In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated 2016
- Swanilda in Peggy van Praagh’s Coppélia 2016
- Romola in John Neumeier’s Nijinsky 2016
- Twyla Tharp’s in the Upper Room 2015
- Hanna in The Merry Widow 2011

**Guest appearances**
- Principal Lady in Paquita and Odille in Swan Lake, The Dancers Company tour 2015

**Awards**
- Telstra Ballet Dancer Award 2012
- Telstra People’s Choice Award 2008, 2010

**You may not know ...**
Amy is married to fellow dancer Jarred Madden, and they have a daughter, Willow Ava Madden.

South African-born Robyn Hendricks began ballet classes aged eight after her grandfather observed her dancing on her toes all the time. Growing up in an academic family, Robyn was the first family member to pursue a creative passion. Training in the Cecchetti syllabus, Robyn travelled to Melbourne in 2001 to participate in the annual Cecchetti International Competition. During the competition, she was approached by The Australian Ballet School and was asked to audition formally for entrance into the prestigious national school. During her time at The Australian Ballet School, Robyn was one of four students selected to participate in a student exchange to Canada, where she studied for four weeks with the National Ballet School in Toronto. She joined The Australian Ballet in 2005; she was promoted to soloist in 2011, to senior artist in 2016, and to principal artist the same year.

**Repertoire highlights**
- Gamszti in Stanton Welch’s La Bayadère 2014
- Wayne McGregor’s Chroma 2014
- Jirí Kylián’s Petite Mort 2014, 2005
- Cigarette solo in Serge Lifar’s Coppélia 2016
- Second Ballerina in George Balanchine’s Ballet Imperial 2014
- Black Swan Pas de deux 2012
- Principal Lady in Paquita 2014
- Christopher Wheeldon’s After the Rain® 2011
- Wayne McGregor’s Dyad 1929 2009
- Nacho Duato’s Por vos muero 2009

**Guest appearances**
- Fall for Dance Festival 2014, 2012
- The Dancers Company tour 2014, 2008

**Awards**

**You may not know ...**
Robyn is interested in the horse-breeding industry and owns a horse with her husband Charles Thompson, a former member of The Australian Ballet.

Kevin Jackson’s principal artist position is generously supported by Lynnette Harvey

**Repertoire highlights**
- Vaslav Nijinsky in John Neumeier’s Nijinsky 2016
- Prince Desiré in David McAllister’s The Sleeping Beauty 2015
- Albrecht in Matthew Golding’s Giselle 2015
- Oberon in Frederick Ashton’s A Dream 2015
- Onegin and Lensky in John Ccranko’s Onegin 2012
- Prince Siegfried in Graeme Murphy’s Swan Lake 2014, 2013, 2009
- Romeo in Graeme Murphy’s Romeo & Juliet 2011
- Jerome Robbins’ A Suite of Dances 2008
- George Balanchine’s Apollo 2007

**Guest appearances**
- The Prince in Stanton Welch’s The Nutcracker, Houston Ballet 2016
- des Grieux in Kenneth MacMillan’s Manon, American Ballet Theatre (exchange artist) 2014
- Lucas Jervies’ Human/Abstract, JACK Productions, 2010

**Awards**
- Nomination for the Benois de la Danse award for Jack/Knave in Christopher Wheeldon’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland©, 2017
- Helpmann Award for Best Male Dancer, Nijinsky, 2017
- Telstra Ballet Dancer Award 2008
- Khilfers Hrai Foundation Scholarship 2007

**Choreographic works**
- Encomium for Bodytorque.Muses 2011
- Enter Closer for Bodytorque.2.2 2009

**You may not know ...**
Kevin holds a Vocational Graduate Diploma in Elite Dance Instruction from The Australian Ballet School, and has a keen interest in teaching the next generation of dancers.
Melbourne-born Andrew Killian, a student of The Australian Ballet School, joined The Australian Ballet in 2000 and was promoted to principal artist in 2011. During his time with The Australian Ballet Andrew has thoroughly enjoyed performing leading roles in the company’s extensive classical repertoire including Lescaut in Sir Kenneth MacMillan’s Manon, the Prince in Peter Wright’s The Nutcracker, Prince Siegfried in Stephen Baynes’ Swan Lake and the Cavalier in George Balanchine’s Ballet Imperial. Andrew has also been involved in the creation of many new works including Stephen Baynes’ Constant Variants and Tim Harbour’s Wa, and has performed in most of The Australian Ballet’s Bodytorque seasons. He enjoys working closely with choreographers and offers a unique versatility that places him in high demand. Andrew has toured with The Australian Ballet to Auckland, Tokyo, Shanghai, New York, Los Angeles, London and Paris.

**Repertoire highlights**
- Prince Siegfried in Graeme Murphy’s Swan Lake 2015, 2014
- Jirí Kylián’s Petite Mort and Bella Figura 2014, 2013
- Christopher Wheeldon’s After the Rain 2011, 2007
- The Prince in Peter Wright’s The Nutcracker 2010
- Jerome Robbins’ A Suite of Dances and The Cage 2008
- Stephen Page’s Rites 2008
- Jirí Kylián’s Snapshots Stones 2005 and Forgotten Land 2005

**Awards**
- Green Room Award ‘Year’s Work’ nomination 2012
- Telstra Ballet Dancer Award nominees 2009, 2006

**Guest appearances**
- Fool’s Paradise with Morphoses 2009
- The Nutcracker with Houston Ballet 2007

You may not know ...
Andrew is still struggling to learn how to cook and cried like a baby at his best friend’s wedding.

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Born in Waihi, New Zealand, Ty King-Wall started dancing at the age of seven. He received his early ballet training at the Dance Education Centre in Tauranga. A Junior Associate of the New Zealand School of Dance, he left New Zealand at 16 to study full-time at The Australian Ballet School. Upon graduating with honours, Ty was accepted into The Australian Ballet in 2006. Since joining the company, Ty has danced numerous principal roles, and had the role of Ceyx created on him in Tim Harbour’s Halcyon. He was promoted to soloist in 2010, to senior artist in 2011, and to principal artist in 2013.

**Repertoire highlights**
- Albrecht in Miana Gielgud’s Giselle 2015
- Solor in Stanton Welch’s La Bayadère 2014
- Basilio in Rudolf Nureyev’s Don Quixote 2013
- Principal Man in Harald Lander’s Etudes 2012
- Prince Siegfried in Stephen Baynes’ Swan Lake 2012
- Lensky in John Cranko’s Onegin 2012
- Pinkerton in Stanton Welch’s Madame Butterfly 2011
- The Prince in Peter Wright’s The Nutcracker 2014, 2010
- Franz in Peggy van Praagh’s Coppélia 2010
- Prince Florimund in Stanton Welch’s The Sleeping Beauty 2015

**Awards**
- Telstra Ballet Dancer Award 2010
- Khitecns Hirai Foundation Scholarship 2013
- Lisa Black Scholarship 2011
- Silver Medal, Asia Pacific International Ballet Competition 2005
- PACANZ Young Performer of the Year Award 2002

**Guest appearances**
- Prince Siegfried in Russell Kerr’s Swan Lake 2015
- Les Sylphides and Aurora’s Wedding, The Dancers Company tour 2008

You may not know ...
Ty is an avid follower of cricket, rugby union and AFL. He is also a long-time fan of Hergé’s The Adventures of Tintin comics, and wants to start brewing his own beer.

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Ako was born in Nagoya, Japan in 1991. At three years old she began her training at the Shii Kanazawa Ballet Studio. In 2005 Ako won second prize at the Japan Grand Prix, and in 2006 she studied at The Royal Ballet School’s International Summer School. In 2007 she was awarded The Australian Ballet School Tuition Scholarship, which was announced at the Youth America Grand Prix. Ako toured with The Dancers Company in 2008 and in 2010 joined The Australian Ballet. She was promoted to principal artist in April 2015 following her debut as Giselle, becoming The Australian Ballet’s first Japanese principal artist.

Since joining The Australian Ballet, Ako has performed a variety of classical and contemporary works by choreographers such as Forsythe, McGregor, Murphy, Ratmansky and Wheeldon, and danced principal roles in ballets by choreographers such as Ashton, Balanchine, Lifar, MacMillan and Wright.

**Repertoire highlights**
- Alice in Christopher Wheeldon’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland© 2017
- Wayne McGregor’s infra 2017
- Aurora in David McAllister’s The Sleeping Beauty 2017, 2015
- Swanilda in Peggy van Praagh’s Coppélia 2016
- Odette/Odile in Stephen Baynes’ Swan Lake 2016
- William Forsythe’s In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated 2016
- Cinderella in Alexei Ratmansky’s Cinderella 2015
- Giselle in Miana Gielgud’s Giselle 2015
- Lescaut’s Mistress in Kenneth MacMillan’s Manon 2014
- Kitri in Rudolf Nureyev’s Don Quixote 2013

**Guest appearances**
- Odette/Odile in Derek Deane’s Swan Lake, Shanghai Ballet 2017
- Yokohama Ballet Festival 2017, 2016
- The Dancers Company tour 2012, 2011

**Awards**
- Helpmann Award for Best Female Dancer for Christopher Wheeldon’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland© 2018
- Nomination for Australian Dance Award for Outstanding Performance by a Female Dancer for Christopher Wheeldon’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland© 2018
- Nomination for the Bneois de la Danse for Alice in Christopher Wheeldon’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland© 2017
- Australian Dance Award for Outstanding Performance by a Female Dancer in Peggy van Praagh’s Coppélia 2016
- Telstra Ballet Dancer Award nominee 2015, 2012
- Susan Morgan Scholarship 2013

You may not know ...
Ako is currently learning her third language, Chinese, and plans to learn more languages in the future.
AMBER SCOTT

“Alluring calmness and superb artistry”
Fjord Review

Amber Scott’s principal artist position is generously supported by Barbara Duhig

Amber Scott joined The Australian Ballet School at age eleven. After graduating as dux, she joined The Australian Ballet in 2001. In 2003 she spent four months on a dancer exchange at the Royal Danish Ballet, giving her the opportunity to learn the Bournonville technique firsthand. Amber was promoted to principal artist in 2011 after performing the Second Movement from Sir Kenneth MacMillan’s Concerto. Career highlights include working with Wayne McGregor on Dyad 1929 and Chroma, dancing with Robert Tewsley during the 2008 Manon season, Damian Smith in Christopher Wheeldon’s After the Rain Pas de deux in 2012 and David Hallberg in Alexei Ratmansky’s Cinderella in 2013.

Repertoire highlights
— Swanilda in Peggy van Praagh’s Coppélia (with David Hallberg of American Ballet Theatre) 2016
— Aurora and the Lilac Fairy in David McAllister’s The Sleeping Beauty 2015
— Giselle in Maina Gielgud’s Giselle 2015
— Nikiya in Stanton Welch’s La Bayadère 2014
— The Sugar Plum Fairy in Peter Wright’s The Nutcracker 2014, 2010
— Odette in Graeme Murphy’s Swan Lake 2004 - 2015
— Tatiana in John Crago’s Onegin 2012
— Hanna in Ronald Hynd’s The Merry Widow 2011

Awards
— Helpmann Award nomination for Stephen Baynes’ Swan Lake 2013
— Telstra Ballet Dancer Award and Telstra People’s Choice Award 2004
— First Place Junior Asian Pacific Competition, Tokyo 1999
— Adeline Genée Awards, bronze medal 1998

Guest appearances
— Odette/Odile in Derek Deane’s Swan Lake with the Shanghai Ballet 2014
— National Ballet of China International Gala 2013
— Odette/Odile in Russell Kerr’s Swan Lake with Royal New Zealand Ballet 2013
— Fall for Dance Festival, New York City (Glen Tetley’s Gemini) 2011
— The Stuttgart Ballet’s 50th Anniversary Gala (Motto Vivace Pas de deux) 2011

You may not know ...
Amber first danced with David Hallberg, principal dancer of American Ballet Theatre, in The Australian Ballet’s 2013 Sydney season of Alexei Ratmansky’s Cinderella. In 2016, she again partnered David in the company’s Sydney season of Coppélia, his first performances after a two-and-a-half-year break recovering from injury.
DIMITY AZOURY

“deliciously precise”
Simon Parris: Man in Chair

Dimity Azoury began dancing at the age of four in her home town of Quaanbeyan, NSW. She studied for eleven years at the Kim Harvey School of Dance in Canberra before moving to The Australian Ballet School in 2005. She was accepted into The Australian Ballet in 2008, where she had the opportunity to travel to Paris, London, New York, Japan, San Francisco and Los Angeles. She has loved working with many choreographers including Nicolo Fonte, Graeme Murphy, Tim Harbour, Stephen Page and Stephen Baynes. Dimity was promoted to soloist in 2015 following her debut as Barbroos von Rothbart in Graeme Murphy’s Swan Lake, and to senior artist in 2017.

Repertoire highlights

— Alice in Christopher Wheeldon’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland® 2017
— Aurora in David McAllister’s The Sleeping Beauty 2017
— Clara in Graeme Murphy’s Nutcracker – The Story of Clara 2017
— Wayne McGregor’s Infra 2017
— Swanilda in Sergey Filin’s Coppélia 2016
— Baroines von Rothbart in Graeme Murphy’s Swan Lake 2016, 2017
— Tim Harbour’s Filigree and Shadow 2015
— Twyla Tharp’s In the Upper Room 2017
— Myrtha in In the Upper Room
— Jiri Kylian’s Bella Figura 2013

Awards
— Telstra Ballet Dancer Award 2014
— Telstra Ballet Dancer Award nominee 2012
— Susan Morgan Scholarship 2012

You may not know ...
Dimity loves animals, especially wombats, giant anteaters and draft horses.

BENEDICTE BEMET

“sweetness, buoyancy and freedom”

Arts writer Deborah Jones

Benedicta Bemet was born in Mackay in 1994, and started ballet at the age of three. She grew up on the Gold Coast and began her training at the Rasleys’ Ballet Centre. When she was ten her family relocated to Hong Kong, where she continued her ballet training at the Jean M. Wong School of Ballet. She was accepted into The Australian Ballet School at age 14. In her time at the school she received the Award for Excellence in Level 6; in 2009 she was sent to New York and Canada to represent the school in the student exchange program. Benedicta toured with The Dancers Company in 2010 and 2011. She joined The Australian Ballet in 2012; she was promoted to coryphée in 2013, to soloist in 2016 and to senior artist in 2018.

Repertoire highlights

— Jack/Kneive of Hearts, Mad Hatter and Catapiller in Christopher Wheeldon’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland® 2017
— Doctor/Beloved Officer in Graeme Murphy’s Nutcracker – The Story of Clara 2017
— Franz in Peggy van Praagh’s Coppélia 2016
— William Forsythe’s in the Middle Somewhat Elevated 2016
— Wayne McGregor’s Infra 2017
— Trepak in Peter Wright’s The Nutcracker 2016
— Faris in Edgar Scheath’s The Dream 2017
— Frederick Ashton’s Symphonic Variations 2015
— Jiri Kylian’s Petite Mort 2015

Awards
— Telstra Ballet Dancer Award nominee 2014
— You may not know ...
Benedicta is still best friends with her first dancing partner, whom she’s known from the age of ten; she often comes to see him dance.

JARRYD MADDEN

“Superb”

The Daily Telegraph

Encouraged by his dance teacher mother, Jarrry Madden started dancing at the age of three at his local dance school in Wauchope, NSW. He remained there until 2005 when, aged 16, he joined Melbourne’s National Theatre Ballet School. After a guest stint with The Australian Ballet during the 2007 season of Peter Wright’s The Nutcracker, Jarrry officially joined the company at the beginning of 2008; he was promoted to coryphée in 2011, to soloist in 2015 and to senior artist in 2017.

Repertoire highlights

— Sérénade Variation in Serge Lifar’s Symphonic Variations 2015
— Earl’s Equerry in Graeme Murphy’s Swan Lake 2015
— Earl’s Equerry in Graeme Murphy’s Swan Lake 2015
— Trepak in Peter Wright’s The Nutcracker 2016
— Agni the Fire God and Kindred Spirits in workshop piece 2016
— Aurora and Princess Florine in David McAllister’s The Sleeping Beauty 2015
— Peasant Pas de deux in Carabosse in David McAllister’s Sleeping Beauty 2015
— Pas des Chats in Acte I in the Middle, Somewhat Elevated 2016
— Pas de cinq in Sérénade Variation 2015
— Peasant Pas de deux in Carabosse in David McAllister’s Sleeping Beauty 2015
— Pas de deux in Carabosse in David McAllister’s Sleeping Beauty 2015
— Pas des Chats in Acte I in the Middle, Somewhat Elevated 2016
— Peasant Pas de deux in Carabosse in David McAllister’s Sleeping Beauty 2015

Awards
— Telstra People’s Choice Award 2015
— You may not know ...
Jarrry is an avid comic book collector, movie buff and music lover. He is a first-time parent to beautiful daughter Willow with fellow dancer Amy Harris.

CRISTIANO MONTINO

“fresh and ailing”

Backtrack

Cristiano Montino began ballet in his hometown of Adelaide at The Barbara Jayne Dance Centre. He moved to Melbourne in 2009 to join The Australian Ballet School, where he trained for four years before graduating as dux. He joined The Australian Ballet in 2013, he was promoted to coryphée in 2015, to soloist in 2017 and to senior artist in 2018.

Repertoire highlights

— Aurora and Princess Florine in David McAllister’s The Sleeping Beauty 2017
— Wayne McGregor’s Infra 2017
— Benno in Stephen Baynes’ Swan Lake 2015
— Viktor Gsovsky’s Grand pas classique 2016
— Obaron in Frederick Ashton’s The Dream 2015
— Frederick Ashton’s Symphonic Variations 2015
— Jiri Kylian’s Petite Mort 2016

Awards
— Telstra Ballet Dancer Award nominee 2014
— You may not know ...
Cristiano is still best friends with his first dancing partner, whom he’s known from the age of ten; he often comes to see him dance.

MARCUS MORELLI

“fleet-footed precision”

Sydney Morning Herald

Marcus Morelli was born in Melbourne and started dancing classes at the age of ten. He studied at the Jane Moore Academy of Ballet and The Australian Ballet School, and toured with The Dancers Company in 2013. He joined The Australian Ballet in 2014; he was promoted to coryphée in 2015, and to soloist in 2017, after dancing the Bluebird in The Sleeping Beauty. He was promoted to senior artist after the 2018 season of Spartacus.

Repertoire highlights

— Stanislav Nikitnyn in John Neumeier’s Nijinsky 2016
— Action in Dana and Acteon Pas de deux 2016
— The Bluebird in David McAllister’s The Sleeping Beauty 2015
— Puck in Frederick Ashton’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream 2015
— Paquin Pas de deux in Maina Gielgud’s Giselle 2015
— Earl’s Equerry in Graeme Murphy’s Swan Lake 2015
— Pas de cinq in Sérénade Variation 2015

Awards
— Telstra People’s Choice Award 2015
— You may not know ...
Marcus enjoys playing video games, watching TV, and skateboarding in his spare time.

DANA STEPHENSEN

“a true delight”

Backtrack

At the age of three Dana Stephensen began her training in ballet, jazz, tap and singing with Davida Liff in her hometown of Brisbane. She later trained with Mary Heath and Sandra Ashley. In 2001 she obtained her Royal Academy of Dance Solo Seal from the Queensland Dance School of Excellence. Dana joined The Australian Ballet School in 2002. In her graduating year she was seconded to The Australian Ballet to perform in various seasons before joining the company full-time in 2005. She has since enjoyed international tours to Los Angeles, New York, UK, Auckland, Shanghai, Tokyo, and Paris. Her Khitercs Hirai Scholarship enabled her to gain invaluable experience training with numerous ballet companies in Europe. Dana was promoted to coryphée in 2010 and later that year won the Telstra Ballet Dancer Award. Dana was promoted to soloist in 2012 and to senior artist in 2018.

Repertoire highlights

— Stepmother and Fairy Godmother in Maina Gielgud’s Cinderella 2016
— Tertulia in Luis Jervis’ Spartacus 2018
— Tim Harbour’s Filigree and Shadow 2018
— Valentina in Ronald Hynd’s The Merry Widow 2018
— Princess Florine and the Fairy of Temperament in David McAllister’s The Sleeping Beauty 2018, 2017
— Trepak in Peggy van Praagh’s Coppélia 2016
— Alice in Christopher Wheeldon’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland® 2016
— Pas de cinq in Sérénade Variation 2015

Awards
— Telstra People’s Choice Award 2015
— You may not know ...
Dana has a young son called Jasper who is the light of her life. She writes when she can on her blog The Balance Point(e) (thebalancenote.com)
VALERIE TERESHCHENKO

“Magnificent”  
The Border Mail

Valerie Tereshchenko was born in Kiev, Ukraine. She immigrated to Australia with her family when she was six years old and a year later took her first ballet class. Valerie’s talent for movement was nurtured at a number of Melbourne-based dance schools, including West Point Ballet Academy, Ballet Theatre of Victoria, and the Australian International School of Coaching. Valerie later joined The Australian Ballet School. In 2008 she participated in a school exchange in North America and that same year performed with The Dancers Company tour for the second time. In 2009 she joined The Australian Ballet; she was promoted to coryphée in 2015, to soloist in 2017 and to senior artist in 2018.

Repertoire highlights
— The Lilac Fairy in David McAllister’s The Sleeping Beauty 2017, 2015
— Wayne McGregor’s Infra 2017
— Lead Swan in Stephen Bayner’ Swan Lake 2016
— Viktor Gvosky’s Grand pas classique 2016
— William Forsythe’s In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated 2016
— Myrtha, Queen of the Wills in Maria Galgut’s Giselle 2015
— Guardian Swan in Graeme Murphy’s Swan Lake 2015
— Stepmother in Alexei Ratmansky’s Cinderella 2014 – 2016

Awards
— Telstra Ballet Dancer Award 2017
— Telstra Ballet Dancer Award nominee 2013

Guest appearances
— Paquita and Swan Lake Act III, The Dancers Company tour 2015

You may not know ...
Valerie speaks fluent Russian.

JADE WOOD

“Graceful strength”  
Dance Australia

Jade Wood was born in Cairns, Queensland, and started dancing at the age of three at the Jillanne Reynolds School of Dance. After moving with her family to Portugal for a year when she was ten, she returned to Cairns and joined The Australian Ballet School’s Interstate Junior Programme, traveling to Melbourne a few times per year. In 2004, Jade relocated to Melbourne to attend The Australian Ballet School. She toured with The Dancers Company in 2009 and 2010 and joined The Australian Ballet in 2011. She has toured internationally with the company to New York, Los Angeles, Berkeley, Beijing, Shanghai and London. She was promoted to coryphée in 2015, to soloist in 2017 and to senior artist in 2018.

Repertoire highlights
— Cinderella in Alexei Ratmansky’s Cinderella 2018
— Alice in Christopher Wheeldon’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland® 2017
— Giselle in The Australian Ballet’s Regional Tour of Giselle, 2017
— Valencienne in Ronald Hynd’s The Merry Widow 2018
— Firebird in Graeme Murphy’s Firebird 2018
— Viktor Gvosky’s Grand pas classique 2016
— William Forsythe’s In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated 2016
— Russian Dancer in Stephen Bayner’s Swan Lake 2016, 2012
— Myrtha, Queen of the Wills in Maria Galgut’s Giselle 2015
— Guardian Swan in Graeme Murphy’s Swan Lake 2015
— Stepmother in Alexei Ratmansky’s Cinderella 2014 – 2016

Awards
— Telstra Ballet Dancer Award 2017
— Telstra Ballet Dancer Award nominee 2013

Guest appearances
— Paquita and Swan Lake Act III, The Dancers Company tour 2015

You may not know ...
Jade and her fiancé are proud owners of two long-haired miniature dachshunds named Bentley and Winter.
Imogen was born in Perth, Western Australia. She began ballet at the age of three, and at the age of eleven moved to Melbourne to continue her training at The Australian Ballet School. In 2007 she moved to London to accept a place at The Royal Ballet School, graduating in 2010. During her time at The Royal Ballet School, she performed with The Royal Ballet in productions including La Bayadère, Giselle and Cinderella, toured to Japan with the School, and was chosen (in her second year of training) to tour with Carlos Acosta, performing Apollo in Valencia. After her graduation she joined the Scottish Ballet before joining The Australian Ballet in 2011. She was promoted to coryphée in 2016 and to soloist in 2018.

Repertoire highlights
- Prayer in Peggy van Praagh’s Coppélia 2016
- Guardian Swan in Graeme Murphy’s Swan Lake 2016, 2015
- Lead Swan in Stephen Baynes’ Swan Lake 2016
- William Forsythe’s In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated 2016
- Venus in Alexei Ratmansky’s Cinderella 2016, 2015
- Fairy of Joy in David McAllister’s The Sleeping Beauty 2015
- Twyla Tharp’s In the Upper Room 2015
- Tim Harbour’s Filigree and Shadow 2015

Awards
- Telstra Ballet Dancer People’s Choice Award 2014

You may not know ...
- Imogen is very fond of animals, the bush, live music and spending time at her family home in Perth’s hills.

Nicola Curry grew up in Colorado Springs, USA. At the age of 14, she moved to Toronto to train at Canada’s National Ballet School, where she received the Erik Bruhn Memorial Award for Excellence in Ballet at 17. At the age of 18, Nicola moved to New York City to join American Ballet Theatre, where she danced for ten years. While at ABT, she performed featured roles such as Asia in Christopher Wheeldon’s The Dream, a Big Swan in Kevin McKenzie’s Swan Lake, Her Stepisister in James Kudelka’s Cinderella, Lady Capulet in Sir Kenneth MacMillan’s Romeo and Juliet, and Tall Pas d’Action in Natalia Makarova’s La Bayadère, along with a variety of other featured roles in ballets by George Balanchine, Twyla Tharp, John Neumeier and Alexei Ratmansky. She has toured with American Ballet Theatre to Moscow, Muscat, Oman, Abu Dhabi, London, Paris, Tokyo, Beijing, Seoul, Taipei and numerous US cities. Nicola joined the Australian Ballet in 2015.

Repertoire highlights
- Brónislava Njinska in John Neumeier’s Nijinsky 2016
- Lead Swan and Spanish Dancer in Stephen Baynes’ Swan Lake 2016
- William Forsythe’s In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated 2016
- The Lilac Fairy and Fairy of Grace in David McAllister’s The Sleeping Beauty 2015
- ‘Stomper’ in Twyla Tharp’s In the Upper Room 2015

Guest appearances
- Maria Advelm of the Willis in Giselle, The Australian Ballet Regional Tour 2016

Awards
- Telstra Ballet Dancer Award 2016

You may not know ...
- Nicola is a qualified Pilates instructor. She can also be seen performing in the ballet class scenes in the 2010 Oscar Award-winning film Black Swan.

Brodie James was born in Randwick, Sydney in 1987. She knew from the age of four that she wanted to grow up to be a ballerina. Her training began at Academy Ballet in Sydney and continued at the National School of Dance. In 2007 Brodie successfully auditioned for Royal New Zealand Ballet, where she danced for three years. Brodie joined The Australian Ballet in 2010; she was promoted to coryphée in 2013 and to soloist in 2018.

Repertoire highlights
- Princess Royal in Graeme Murphy’s Swan Lake 2015
- Richard House’s Control and Finding the Calm in Bodyspace 2014, 2013
- Frederick Ashton’s Symphonic Variations 2015
- Jill Kylian’s Petite Mort 2014
- Jill Kylian’s Bella Figura 2013
- Skinny Stepisister in Alexei Ratmansky’s Cinderella 2016, 2015, 2013
- Garry Stewart’s Monument 2013
- Lady Capulet in Graeme Murphy’s Romeo & Juliet 2017
- Grand Matranch in Ronald Hynd’s The Merry Widow 2011

Awards
- Telstra Ballet Dancer Award nominee 2014

You may not know ...
- Brodie loves reading and adding to her high-heal collection.

Natalie Kusen was born in Sydney. Natalie Kusen began dancing at the age of four. She trained with Nichollia Kuner’s Academy Ballet in Randwick. In 2001 Natalie was offered a scholarship to attend The Australian Ballet School; while there she spent time studying at Canada’s National Ballet School as an exchange student. She toured with The Dancers Company in 2011 and joined The Australian Ballet in 2012. In 2014 she participated in a dancer exchange, performing with the Royal Ballet of Flanders in Antwerp. He was promoted to coryphée in 2017, and to soloist in 2018.

Repertoire highlights
- The Prince in Alexei Ratmansky’s Cinderella 2018
- Tim Harbour’s Filigree and Shadow 2018
- The Catepillar in Christopher Wheeldon’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland® 2017
- 1st Movement Soloist in George Balanchine’s Symphony in C 2017
- Albrecht in Giselle (Regional Tour) 2016
- ‘White Couple’ in Jill Kylian’s Forgotten Land 2016
- Frederick Ashton’s Monotones II 2015
- Lead Swan in Stephen Baynes’ Swan Lake 2012
- Suzuki in Stanton Welch’s Madame Butterfly 2011
- Prayer in Peggy van Praagh’s Coppélia 2010
- Nacho Duato’s Por vos muero 2009
- Calliope in George Balanchine’s Apollo 2009
- Christopher Wheeldon’s Continuum® 2004

Awards
- Telstra Ballet Dancer Award 2013, 2010
- George Garrett Scholarship 2006

You may not know ...
- Natalie curates her own style blog, Studio to Street (studiotostreet.com.au), an additional creative outlet where she combines her two passions, dance and fashion, through creative writing and photography.

Callum Linnane grew up in Ballarat, Victoria, where he began tap-dancing classes at the age of seven. He started ballet classes when he was eleven. He trained with Lauren Young before being accepted into The Australian Ballet School in 2008. Callum toured with The Dancers Company in 2013 and 2014; he joined The Australian Ballet in 2015. He was promoted to coryphée in 2017 and to soloist in 2018.

Repertoire highlights
- Jack/Knave of Hearts in Christopher Wheeldon’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland® 2017
- Second Movement Principal in George Balanchine’s Symphony in C 2017
- Wet Lilies in John Neumeier’s Nijinsky 2016
- William Forsythe’s In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated 2016
- First Movement Principal in George Balanchine’s Symphony in C 2016
- ‘Stomper’ in Twyla Tharp’s In the Upper Room 2015
- Tim Harbour’s Filigree and Shadow 2015

Awards
- Telstra Ballet Dancer Award 2016

You may not know ...
- Callum is related to Lieutenant-Colonel Vivian Bullwinkel, AC, AFC, AVP, ED, RN, an Australian Army nurse during the Second World War and the sole surviving nursing of the Battle of the Coral Sea, which took place on 16 February 1942. Vivian was an Australian hero.
JAKE MANGAKAHIA

Jake was born on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland. As soon as his parents discovered that his baby was dropping his little head to any music he heard, they put him into dance classes. At the age of ten Jake successfully auditioned for The Australian Ballet School. At the age of 18 he joined The Australian Ballet. He was promoted to coryphée in 2017 and to soloist in 2018.

Repertoire highlights
- Tim Harbour’s Squander and Glop 2017
- Vaslav Nijinsky in John Neumeier’s Nijinsky 2016
- Stephen Page’s Waramuk - in the dark night 2012
- Graham Murphy’s Beyond Twelve 2012
- Gary Stewart’s Monument 2011

Awards
- Telstra People’s Choice Award 2017, 2012
You may not know ...
- In 2014 Jake made the decision to take a two-year sabbatical and pursuit a life-long dream to serve for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day-Saints. In 2016.
- You may not know ...
- In 2015 Karen participated in an exchange with the Royal Swedish Ballet and performed in Rudolf Nureyev’s production of Don Quixote.

KAREN NANASCA

Karen Nanasca was born in Auckland, New Zealand. Hailing from an athletic family, she followed in their footsteps by studying ballet from the age of seven. Her natural talent was immediately noticed and nurtured by her teachers at the Mt Eden Ballet Academy. She won The New Zealand National Ballet Award in 2004, followed by a placing in the semi-finals of the Prix de Lausanne in 2005. In 2006 she was the recipient of the Elizabeth McDonald Scholarship, allowing her to cross the Tasman and join The Australian Ballet School. Karen became a member of The Australian Ballet’s corps de ballet in 2009 and was promoted to coryphée in 2012; she was promoted to soloist in 2016.

Repertoire highlights
- Giselle in (The Australian Ballet’s Regional Tour) 2015, 2016
- Fairy of Temperament in David McAllister’s The Sleeping Beauty 2017, 2015
- 3rd movement Soloist in George Balanchine’s Symphony in C 2017
- Wayne McGregor’s Infra 2017
- ‘Stomper’ in Twyla Tharp’s In the Upper Room 2015
- Cygnet in Graeme Murphy’s Swan Lake 2016 - 2015
- Clara in Peter Wright’s The Nutcracker 2014
- Wayne McGregor’s Dyad 2013, 2009

Awards
- Telstra Ballet Dancer Award 2016
You may not know ...
- In 2015 Karen participated in an exchange with the Royal Swedish Ballet and performed in Rudolf Nureyev’s production of Don Quixote.

RINA NEMOTO

Rina Nemoto was born in Tokyo, Japan, and began dancing at the age of three. At the age of 15, she travelled to Paris for two years of classical ballet training with Dahní Kudo and Dominique Khafrou. In 2009, Rina was awarded a Prix de Lausanne scholarship and joined The Royal Ballet as an apprentice dancer. She then moved to Melbourne at age 14 to begin full-time studies at The Australian Ballet School. Rina was promoted to coryphée in 2016 and to soloist in 2018.

Repertoire highlights
- Alice in Christopher Wheeldon’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland® 2017
- Fairy of Grace and Fairy of Generosity in David McAllister’s The Sleeping Beauty 2017, 2015
- 3rd movement Soloist in George Balanchine’s Symphony in C 2017
- Waylon Tharp’s Coppeliana 2017
- Countess, Lead Swan and Russian Dancer in Stephen Baynes’ Swan Lake 2016
- Telstra Ballet Dancer Award 2018, 2014
You may not know ...
- Rina is interested in pottery, and would like to explore it when she has more time.

JILL OGAII

Jill Ogi was born in Sydney in 1993, and grew up on Bondi Beach. At the age of four she and her twin brother, after watching a ballet video, surprised their parents by asking if they could start ballet classes. She began at The Ballet Class Rose Bay. When her family moved to Adelaide she continued training with Sheila Laing and Elayne Cherry before moving to Melbourne at age 14 to begin full-time studies at The Australian Ballet School. Jill joined The Australian Ballet in 2011, she was promoted to coryphée in 2016 and to soloist in 2018.

Repertoire highlights
- Fairy of Temperance and Princess Florine in David McAllister’s The Sleeping Beauty 2017, 2015
- Tim Harbour’s Squander and Glory 2017
- 2nd Movement Soloist in George Balanchine’s Symphony in C 2017
- Tchaikovsky’s Swan Lake 2016
- The Fairy of Temperance and Shadow 2015
- Tchaikovsky’s Swan Lake (Baynes’) 2015, 2014
- Fairy of Generosity in David McAllister’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland® 2017
- The Sleeping Beauty, Act III, Pavane 2014
- You may not know ...
- Jill paints, draws and makes her own clothing.

CHRISTOPHER RODGERS-WILSON

Christopher Rodgers-Wilson was born in England but grew up in Melbourne, starting ballet classes at the age of six. He trained at the Camberwell District Ballet School before moving to London to study at The Royal Ballet School, where he won the Charles Wall scholarship and the Kenneth MacMillan Trust Scholarship, and toured to Germany and Dubai. Chris joined the Birmingham Royal Ballet in 2007. Career highlights included the pas de quatre in Peter Wright’s The Sleeping Beauty, the pas de deux in Swan Lake, Rose Fairy Cavalier in Peter Wright’s The Nutcracker, First Sari in David Bintley’s Carmina Burana, the Mandolin Dance in Sir Kenneth MacMillan’s Romeo and Juliet, Grosse Fugue by Hans van Manen and in The Dream.

Repertoire highlights
- Alice in Christopher Wheeldon’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland® 2017
- Fairy of Temperance and Princess Florine in David McAllister’s The Sleeping Beauty 2017, 2015
- Tim Harbour’s Squander and Glory 2017
- The Sleeping Beauty, Act III, Pavane 2014
- You may not know ...
- In addition to dancing and his family and friends, Chris has a passion for all kinds of breakfast foods.

SHARNI SPENCER

Sharni Spencer was born in Lismore NSW and grew up in Tamworth and Newcastle. She began dancing classes when she was three years old and studied at Sally Keefe 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 and to soloist in 2017. She was the recipient of the Khiterski Hira Foundation Scholarship in 2012, and used it to spend three months rehearsing and performing Giselle with Dutch National Ballet.

Repertoire highlights
- Cinderella in Alexei Ratmansky’s Cinderella 2018
- Valencienne in Ronald Hynd’s The Merry Widow 2018
- The Fairy of Temperance in David McAllister’s The Sleeping Beauty 2017, 2015
- The Countess in Stephen Baynes’ Swan Lake 2016
- You may not know ...
- Sharni has swum with manta rays in Hawaii.

Awards
- Telstra Ballet Dancer Award nominee 2017, 2015
- Khiterski Hira Foundation Scholarship 2012

You may not know ...
- Sharni is promoted to coryphée in 2017.
Coryphées

Shaun Andrews  Nathan Brook  Jacqueline Clark  Timothy Coleman  Jasmin Durham  Drew Hedditch  Corey Herbert  François-Eloi Lavignac

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Philanthropy Ambassador
**Corps de Ballet position supported by The Susan and Sam Chisholm Fund
^Corps de ballet position supported by The Ross Trust
Mason Lovegrove is the 2018 recipient of the Walter Bourke Award
PROUDLY SUPPORTING AUSTRALIA’S INSPIRATIONAL ARTISTS AND CREATORS

SIT BACK, RELAX AND ENJOY THE PERFORMANCE

Callum Linnane and Isobelle Dashwood. Photography Taylor-Ferné Morris
Elizabeth Toohey was born in Newcastle and entered The Australian Ballet School at the age of 16 and was offered a contract with The Australian Ballet in 1983. Elizabeth received a rapid rise to the rank of principal dancer and she has been actively engaged in specialised coaching for dancers, public speaking, presenting and acting.

In 2010 Steven conceived and directed a new production of Mendelssohn’s The Hebrides Overture for ABC Television broadcasts of La Fille mal gardée. In 2011, he returned to opera as Sir Kenneth MacMillan’s Don Carlos, with the Stuttgart State Opera and Opera Australia. Steven has had professional teaching appointments at companies including the Royal Swedish Ballet, the Royal Danish Ballet, the Berlin Opera Ballet, the Royal Flemish Ballet, and the Miami City Ballet. Steven has been a guest artist with many major ballet companies, including American Ballet Theatre, Birmingham Royal Ballet, the Royal Danish Ballet and the Mariinsky Ballet.

After retiring from the dance stage in 2007 as The Australian Ballet’s longest serving principal artist, Steven appeared in the 2009 feature film Mac’s Last Dancer and has been actively engaged in specialised coaching for dancers, public speaking, presenting and acting.

In 2010 Steven conceived and directed a new production of Mendelssohn’s The Hebrides Overture for ABC Television broadcasts of La Fille mal gardée. In 2011, he returned to opera as Sir Kenneth MacMillan’s Don Carlos, with the Stuttgart State Opera and Opera Australia. Steven has had professional teaching appointments at companies including the Royal Swedish Ballet, the Royal Danish Ballet, the Berlin Opera Ballet, the Royal Flemish Ballet, and the Miami City Ballet. Steven has been a guest artist with many major ballet companies, including American Ballet Theatre, Birmingham Royal Ballet, the Royal Danish Ballet and the Mariinsky Ballet.
PLAYBILL ADS 42
PHILANTHROPY

A NOTE FROM EDWINA McCANN

Along with everyone on the Foundation Board, I am delighted to experience Maina Gielgud’s Giselle with our Sydney audiences in 2019. Maina’s much-celebrated production, with Peter Farmer’s beautiful designs, has been a vital piece of the company’s repertoire since it first premiered in Adelaide in 1986; it has since toured around the country and the world. On our 50th anniversary tour of New York in 2012, the sublime Act II pas de deux was a highlight of our Infinity mixed bill.

Maina’s Giselle is an essential part of the company’s history, and is one production that I happily come back to again and again.

In 1997, to celebrate Maina’s tenure as artistic director (from 1983 to 1996), the company created The Maina Gielgud Fund. The fund, which sits within The Australian Ballet Foundation, was established with donations from the public and the Friends of The Australian Ballet NSW. We are so fortunate to have such passionate ballet lovers who support the company right around the country; to all of you who made the creation of this fund possible, thank you.

With best wishes,

Edwina McCann
Chair
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Italics denotes this commitment includes a bequest to The Australian Ballet
We also wish to acknowledge and thank those individuals who have chosen to remain anonymous

THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

Ty King-Wall. Photography Lynette Wills
PHILANTHROPY

THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET FOUNDATION

The acts of generosity that sustain The Australian Ballet Foundation will support the company’s aspirations for generations to come. Major gifts from individuals and organisations underpin all of the company’s activities, from our outreach and access projects to developing a new generation of choreographers and supporting our dancers as they enter the next stage of their careers. Specific-purpose major gifts, grants and endowments have built, and will continue to build, an incredible platform from which the company will present the best the art form has to offer.

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INTERNATIONAL TOURING FUND

International touring was an original objective of The Australian Ballet, and the company continues to be a proud cultural ambassador for Australia on the world stage. The International Touring Fund was established by Frances Gerard after experiencing opening night of Graeme Murphy’s Swan Lake at the London Coliseum in 2005. It has considerably strengthened our touring program, enabling our dancers to perform regularly on the world stage. This important financial base gives The Australian Ballet the resources to take the best of the country’s artists to theatres across the globe.

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Touring across Australia has been a fundamental component of The Australian Ballet’s annual activities since 1962. The creation of the Regional Touring Fund demonstrates our commitment to making Australia’s national ballet company accessible to all, inspiring, delighting and challenging audiences.

“The Australian Ballet is one of the principal pillars of cultural activity in Australia. I believe it is important, indeed essential, that rural and country audiences away from the big cities are provided with the opportunity to see the company’s repertoire – to experience the contribution that the ballet is making to our cultural life.”

Lord Glendonbrook

Founding supporter of the Regional Touring Fund

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The Glendonbrook Foundation

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At the heart of philanthropy at The Australian Ballet are our Annual Giving supporters, whose inspiring generosity makes possible everything you see on stage. Ballet lovers across Australia support the artistic director’s vision to present an ever-changing and evolving program of seasons showcasing the breadth and depth of the company’s talents. All gifts to our Annual Giving program, large or small, are magnified well beyond their monetary value, as they support our artists each time they step onto the stage.
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2019 SEASON
Initiated in 2014 by The Australian Ballet’s Global Ambassador Sarah Murdoch, our Ballet Ambassador program connects an international network of individuals, leaders of a new generation of ballet lovers advocating for the company around the world. Through intimate ‘behind the curtain’ access, our ballet ambassadors become deeply committed to the development of the art form and promotion of the company to new audiences.

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“The Australian Ballet is truly central to my passion for ballet and I am committed to representing the company as Global Ambassador. I want every Australian, whether in Australia or around the world, to look up to our company and be proud. Our dancers and our productions are a true representation of who we are.”

Sarah Murdoch
Global Ambassador

* Ballet Ambassador Board
** Ballet Ambassador

Correct as at 02.04.2019
Artists of The Australian Ballet. Photography Lynette Wills
The renovation of The Primrose Potter Australian Ballet Centre will have both an immediate and a far-reaching impact on our dancers’ health and wellbeing; the development of new ballets; and ultimately, our performances.

The contributions of our Ballet family have been the keystone of this once-in-a-generation project, and we gratefully acknowledge those individuals and organisations whose generosity is celebrated in the new spaces of The Primrose Potter Australian Ballet Centre.
The impact of making a gift in your will to The Australian Ballet is truly profound, and will continue to benefit generations of ballet lovers and dancers, as well as the art form we all love and admire. Nearly 300 members of the Ballet family have confirmed a bequest to The Australian Ballet.

“The Australian Ballet has not only been my career but also my life’s passion, so by including the company in my will I hope I can assist many others to experience the wonderful joy of dance.”

Colin Peasley OAM
Planned Giving Ambassador
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The Australian Ballet gratefully acknowledges all the bequests it has received from the following ballet lovers. We are exceptionally privileged to be able to realise the dreams and aspirations of these individuals to see their legacy become a part of the company’s history.

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Mail: The Australian Ballet Philanthropy Department Primrose Potter Australian Ballet Centre Level 6, 2 Kavanagh St Southbank VIC 3006

PHILANTHROPY TEAM

FOR A CONVERSATION ABOUT PHILANTHROPY PLEASE CONTACT:

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THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

GISELLE

Correct as at 02.04.2019
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE
In business, as in dance, the right partner is everything. Our corporate partners provide much-needed funds that help us realise our artistic vision, from producing exciting new ballets and staging iconic works to making a splash on the world stage. They also assist us behind the scenes, giving us product and in-kind support, which allows us to achieve excellence on both sides of the curtain.

Importantly, sponsors bring us closer to you. They help us to keep ticket prices affordable, visit communities across Australia and broadcast our ballets. We’d like to acknowledge the generosity of our current partners, whose support enables us to care for tradition, while daring to be different.

If you would like to learn more about our corporate partnerships program, please contact Penny Waitzman on 02 9253 5308 or email pennyw@australianballet.com.au.
Open Masterclasses & National Audition Tour 2019

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