

NEWS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

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Benedicte Bemet, Photo Georges Antoni

The year of enchantment sets the tone for The Australian Ballet's 2019 season

The Australian Ballet today announced its 2019 program, a journey through mythical lands, filled with colourful characters and poetic beauty. Showcasing the work of some of the world's top choreographers, the season features five spellbinding story ballets as well as the return of a lauded contemporary triple bill.

At the centre of the season is ***The Happy Prince***, the brand-new ballet by legendary Australian choreographer Graeme Murphy. The Year of Enchantment will also bring the Australian debut of Stanton Welch's new ballet ***Sylvia***; a co-production with Houston Ballet, and the first visit to Australia by Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo. This much-acclaimed company will bring ***LAC***, a sensuous and chic twist on the well known Swan Lake story, to Melbourne in late June. The Australian Ballet's award-winning, sell-out hit of 2017, Christopher Wheeldon's ***Alice's Adventures in Wonderland***[®], makes its Brisbane debut and returns to Melbourne, and the highly-acclaimed contemporary triple bill ***Verve*** comes to Sydney. Finally, Peter Wright's beloved production of ***The Nutcracker*** closes the season with festive cheer.

Artistic Director David McAllister said, "This year our dancers will once again soar both physically and emotionally in this mix of enchanting and compelling works. It is so exciting to present works by each of our resident choreographers as well as Mr Murphy who was one of our company's first creators and continues to inspire. It will be a thrill to host the Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo and enjoy once again the work of their creative leader Jean-Christophe Maillot."

Executive Director Libby Christie said, "David McAllister has put together a wonderful program for 2019. The range of productions in this season, from our much loved classic ***The Nutcracker***, exciting premieres of ***Sylvia*** and ***The Happy Prince***, to our acclaimed reimagining of ***Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*** and the unique cutting edge ***Verve*** program, this season will be a wonderful showcase for the artistry, versatility and creativity of The Australian Ballet. In addition to our mainstage program, Australian Ballet will once again perform in outer metro and regional theatres to bring the joy of ballet to communities around Australia. We will record and broadcast our performances to Australia and audiences around the world. Our education program will be working with primary and secondary level students in schools around the country. There will be something for everyone in The Australian Ballet's 2019 season."

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland[®] opens the 2019 season with all the madcap characters and spectacular visual design that made it the most successful Melbourne season in the company's history when it made its Australian debut in 2017. Winner of the Helpmann Award for Best Ballet in 2018, this dazzling and witty production by renowned choreographer Christopher Wheeldon, sets the stage for a wondrous year. Brisbane audiences will experience ***Alice's Adventures in Wonderland***[®] in February, and the production returns to Melbourne in June.

Australia's greatest living choreographer, Graeme Murphy, will create a brand-new ballet on the company in 2019, based on Oscar Wilde's celebrated story ***The Happy Prince***. This stunning new production tells the tale of a beautiful golden statue whose compassion for others leads

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him to make the ultimate sacrifice. Like Murphy's bold interpretations of *The Nutcracker* and *Swan Lake*, *The Happy Prince* gives an inventive, modern twist to a classic story. *The Happy Prince* will capture the imaginations of adults and children alike when it has its world premiere in Melbourne in March, before performing in Sydney in May.

Three homegrown works showcase the artistic breadth and virtuosity of choreographers from within The Australian Ballet in the contemporary triple bill *Verve*. Resident Choreographer Stephen Baynes' elegant work *Constant Variants* is a stylish portrait of neoclassical technique. *Aurum*, the latest work from emerging choreographer and Coryphée Alice Topp, is a powerfully emotional work exploring the beauty of imperfection. Resident Choreographer Tim Harbour's *Filigree and Shadow*, takes audiences on an exhilarating journey through aggression and catharsis. *Verve* shows exclusively in Sydney in April.

The renowned contemporary ballet company Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo brings its full troupe to Australia in 2019. The boundary-pushing company will perform Jean-Christophe Maillot's *LAC*, its sinister, erotic take on *Swan Lake*. Bringing a modern edge to the traditional tale through striking visual design and a unique dance style fusing neoclassical and contemporary ballet, *LAC* plays exclusively in Melbourne from June.

Female dancers will learn sword fighting to embody the superheroines of *Sylvia*, a new work from Stanton Welch, resident choreographer of The Australian Ballet and artistic director of Houston Ballet. This co-production with Houston Ballet will transport audiences to the world of Greek mythology, complete with intertwining love stories, interfering gods and wild revelry. *Sylvia* will have its world premiere in Houston in February 2019, and will debut in Australia in Melbourne in August before a Sydney season in November.

Widely considered the world's most beautiful version of *The Nutcracker*, Peter Wright's sumptuous traditional production closes The Australian Ballet's 2019 season. *The Nutcracker* famously tells the story of a young girl swept away on a magical journey one Christmas Eve. With its charming cast of characters, dreamlike design and unforgettable music, *The Nutcracker* will delight audiences in Melbourne in September, before playing in Adelaide in October, and finally in Sydney from November.

The Australian Ballet's 2019 activities will also include a range of audience engagement events, a regional tour, a free outdoor event in regional Victoria, a children's ballet

and an education program that tours to schools across the country.

For full season details, visit www.australianballet.com.au. 2019 Season Packages for Melbourne and Sydney performances are available from midnight on Tuesday 25 September.

The Australian Ballet

The Australian Ballet exists to inspire, delight and challenge audiences through the power of its performances.

It is one of the world's premier ballet companies and has delivered extraordinary performances for almost 60 years. A commitment to artistic excellence, a spirited style and a willingness to take risks have defined the company from its earliest days, both onstage and off.

The company regularly represents Australia on the world stage and has performed to critical acclaim in 87 cities worldwide, including New York, Shanghai, Tokyo, London and Paris. Caring for tradition yet daring to be different, The Australian Ballet performs beloved classical ballets and commissions new work annually. It presents upwards of 250 shows and 1,700 education and audience engagement events each year.

In addition to 80 exceptional dancers, The Australian Ballet employs master craftspeople and leaders in injury prevention, dance education, marketing and philanthropy as well as an orchestra of 62 musicians (Orchestra Victoria).

Moving effortlessly between the great classical ballets and new contemporary commissions, the company has a uniquely Australian style, powered by artistry and athleticism.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

australianballet.com.au

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