

NEWS FROM  
**THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET**

**UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 10:30AM AUSTRALIAN EASTERN STANDARD TIME, March 3, 2020:**



## **THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET APPOINTS DAVID HALLBERG AS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

### **The appointment of a new Artistic Director heralds a brilliant new era for The Australian Ballet and for dance globally**

**UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 10:30AM AUSTRALIAN EASTERN STANDARD TIME, March 3, 2020:** The Australian Ballet today announced the appointment of David Hallberg to succeed current Artistic Director David McAllister who retires in December 2020. David Hallberg is currently The Australian Ballet's Resident Guest Artist and is a Principal Dancer with both American Ballet Theatre and The Bolshoi Ballet, and is Principal Guest Artist with The Royal Ballet. He has been a regular guest artist with The Australian Ballet for ten years.

Announcing the appointment at the company's headquarters, The Primrose Potter Australian Ballet Centre in Melbourne this morning, Chair Craig Dunn said: "I am delighted to announce that The Australian Ballet's search for an internationally recognised outstanding artistic talent with an exciting vision for The Australian Ballet has been successful and that the Board has appointed David Hallberg as our eighth Artistic Director. David's highly successful international career as a classical ballet dancer and his leadership roles in the companies he has danced with regularly, mean David will bring a unique artistic lens and global view to his leadership at The Australian Ballet. David is very well known to our dancers, the company and our Australian audiences through his regular visits, including a 14 month-long "residency" during injury rehabilitation. It is our very good fortune that David has chosen to transition from his career as dancer to that of Artistic Director with The Australian Ballet. David's appointment heralds an exciting new era for both The Australian Ballet and for dance in Australia and we look forward to welcoming him as our Artistic Director in January 2021."

At the announcement in Melbourne earlier today, David Hallberg commented: "It is a great honour to join this iconic cultural institution as its next Artistic Director. We have had a long history, first as an invited dancer, then seeking the expertise of its world-renowned medical team, and finally as its Resident Guest Artist. During this time I have fallen in love with Australia, its people and this wonderful ballet company. I am thrilled for the future of this Company, a Company that inspires me with its level of excellence and global standard. I look forward to using the experience I've garnered over my 20-year career around the world and funnelling it into the culture of The Australian Ballet. The future looks very bright for this world class Company."

From New York, Kevin McKenzie, Artistic Director of American Ballet Theatre said: "David Hallberg has proven himself to be a leader among his peers, as well as an innovator. David's leadership of ABT's choreography workshop, *ABT Incubator*, successfully provides a platform for new choreographic voices and creativity. I am proud to have witnessed his growth, skill and intelligence as an artist and look forward to seeing his next chapter unfold."

Born in South Dakota, David Hallberg trained at the Paris Opera Ballet School and joined American Ballet Theatre in 2001 where he was appointed as Principal Dancer in 2006. He made history in 2011 when he became the first American to join The Bolshoi Ballet under the title Premier Dancer. David is currently performing as Principal Artist with the world's leading dance companies – American Ballet Theatre, The Royal Ballet, The Bolshoi Ballet and La Scala. He created The David Hallberg Scholarship at ABT, a mentorship for young aspiring male dancers. David created

and directs ABT Incubator, a workshop for emerging choreographic talent. He is the author of a critically acclaimed memoir, *A Body of Work: Dancing to the Edge and Back*.

Current Artistic Director David McAllister welcomed the appointment commenting: "David Hallberg is the ideal choice as the next Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet and will be welcomed by both the company and our audiences around Australia and the world. David knows us well, understands our culture and our style of dance. David also brings a wealth of artistic experience which will take The Australian Ballet successfully forward and secure our continuing success in the world of ballet. Having lived with us and worked with the company over many years, David has great affection for our dance community and Australia. I wish him every success and look forward to The Australian Ballet's success under his inspiring leadership."

Craig Dunn concluded: "Under the leadership of David McAllister, The Australian Ballet has enjoyed an unprecedented era of stability, growth and success – both artistically and through audience growth. We have consolidated our reputation internationally through diverse repertoire, have an extraordinary depth of talent to draw from

and are ideally positioned for the next artistic chapter in our history."

While David Hallberg will not take up the role of our Artistic Director until next year, he will work with David McAllister and Executive Director Libby Christie this year as the Company plans for the future. Preparation for the 2021 season is already well advanced to ensure a seamless transition to The Australian Ballet's first season under David Hallberg's artistic leadership.

For all media enquiries, including interviews and images, please contact:

**Catherine Harris, Strategic Communications Manager**

M: + 61 410 634 633

E: [catherineh@australianballet.com.au](mailto:catherineh@australianballet.com.au)

**Anthea Waller, Public Relations Manager**

M: 0438 554 992 E: [antheaw@australianballet.com.au](mailto:antheaw@australianballet.com.au)