

Queensland Ballet

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR LI CUNXIN AO

BESPOKE
8 – 17 OCTOBER
QUT GARDENS
THEATRE

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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

There's always a sense of excitement in the air around *Bespoke* time.

The distinct music filtering out of the rehearsal studios, the costumes, and the innovative choreography are just a few things I love about our annual contemporary season. We are given the opportunity to watch the dancers move in different, enthralling ways, often with minimal props and sets, and the experience is intimate and thrilling. Always collaborative, always challenging, the season offers a unique space for artists to create and to break down barriers.

Bespoke 2021's four choreographers in our fourth season are local, yet renowned internationally for their talents. Natalie Weir, Jack Lister, Rani Luther, and Paul Boyd collaborated with composers and costume and lighting designers to realise their unique visions and produce this transportive experience you are about to see at QUT Gardens Theatre. You may recognise themes of travel, migration, ancient history, and the beauty of other artforms, as these pieces break through traditional barriers to reveal new perspectives on movement and storytelling.

We thank these acclaimed choreographers wholeheartedly for these world premieres, and for providing new challenges for our dancers; we are beyond delighted to have joined forces with them all once again.

As always, we continue to be grateful for the ongoing support of the State and Federal Governments, Principal Partner Suncorp, and our entire family of corporate partners and donors. Thank you for enabling Queensland Ballet to challenge assumptions about what dance is and what it can do. My heartfelt gratitude also goes to you – our audience, for choosing to experience these ground-breaking contemporary works. They are compelling, thought-provoking pieces that I am sure will generate conversation, inspire, and create wonder in us all.



Li Cunxin AO
Artistic Director

FROM THE CREATIVE ASSOCIATE

We feel extremely grateful to present our fourth *Bespoke* season to you. This year is a time for us to reflect on how lucky we are to have the opportunity to create and perform during the ongoing challenges and uncertainty the world faces currently. While many of our counterparts in other States and Territories are severely impacted by lockdowns and restrictions, we are acutely aware of how fortunate we are to present world-class contemporary ballet works to such an enthusiastic and supportive audience.

Our unwavering commitment to producing and giving the opportunity to create inspiring contemporary-based works is at the forefront of our yearly contemporary season and this year is no exception. Under Li Cunxin's bold vision to push boundaries and challenge our Company in the limitless possibilities that contemporary dance can offer, we embark on a journey of exploration and beauty. With powerful athleticism and emotional depth at the core of our program, the four works this year endeavour to take you on a journey of visual and musical richness.

I am very proud of our home-grown talent and this year in particular highlights some of our exceptional and world-acclaimed Queensland Ballet creative team, including Resident Choreographer Natalie Weir, Associate Choreographer Jack Lister, and Queensland Ballet Academy Resident Choreographer Paul Boyd. I am also extremely excited to be presenting my first *Bespoke* commission which I choreographed on the passionately committed and talented QB dancers. I feel blessed to have had an original musical score composed for my work by the wonderfully talented Robert Davidson. All *Bespoke 2021* choreographers have poured heart and soul into their works and have captured the skills of our classically trained ballet dancers while extending the language in a contemporary form.

I would like to thank the entire Queensland Ballet team who have enabled such a program to take flight and admire the dedication and passion with which they make magic happen. Settle in and allow yourself to be taken on a *Bespoke* journey. Enjoy!



Rani Luther
Creative Associate

Queensland Ballet acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we train and perform. Long before we arrived on this land, it played host to the dance expression of our First Nations Peoples. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging, and acknowledge the valuable contribution they have made and continue to make to the cultural landscape of this country.

Caravanserai

Act I
(24 minutes)

Along the famous Silk Road, a Caravanserai was a roadside inn, a crossroads of culture, religion and commerce where merchants and travellers would rest, exchange and compare ideas and enjoy the safe haven of its walls.

Music has always been a source of inspiration for me, and my fascination with the history of the Silk Road stemmed from evocative recordings by Cellist, Yo Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble. I have worked closely with Queensland Ballet Academy's Pre-Professional Program dancers, their talent and artistic expression have allowed me to hopefully bring the spices and perfumes of the Silk Road to life and I feel privileged, along with the dancers, to bring this piece to the stage with the invaluable assistance and support of Zenia Tátcheva and Wim Broeckx and heartfelt

thanks to Costume Designer Noelene Hill and Lighting Designer Cameron Goerg for their innovative and evocative design contributions.

Choreographer	Paul Boyd
Music	Osvaldo Golijov Alan Pierson James Tawadros Uzeyir Hajibeyov Traditional (from the album 'Silk Road Journeys, Beyond the Horizon')
Costumes	Originally designed by Noelene Hill for François Klaus's <i>Shi-chi Karak – Rhythms of Taiko</i>
Lighting Designer	Cameron Goerg

Caravanserai is in seven movements and the connections are:

<u>1</u> Arrival	<u>2</u> Ceremony	<u>3</u> Bartering	<u>4</u> Perfumes	<u>5</u> Celebration	<u>6</u> Mystery	<u>7</u> Unity
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Paul Boyd
Head of Academy
Program
(Upper Levels)
and Resident
Choreographer for
Queensland Ballet
Academy, and
Character Artist.

Paul's performing career spanned 25 years, 20 of those years as Principal Artist in companies in Germany, Switzerland and Queensland Ballet.

He danced the major classics as well as works by Kylián, Forsythe, Ek, Christie, Neumeier, van Mannen, Petit and Vámos, amongst others. Paul received the German Critics Award for Best Up and Coming Artist and Best Established Artist in Europe and danced the role of Spartacus at the Arena de Verona in Italy during the Summer Festival in 1993.

Paul's choreographic works have been performed by Basel Ballet/Switzerland, Queensland Ballet, The Australian Ballet (*Bodytorque*), John Neumeier's Bundesjugendballett/Hamburg, The Royal Ballet School/London, Suzhou Ballet Theatre/China, Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts and WAAPA.

Paul has been Guest Teacher with Hong Kong Ballet, Royal Ballet School, Semper Oper Dresden, Deutsche Oper am Rhein Dusseldorf, West Australian Ballet, and Tokyo's Architanz.

Paul now holds the position of Head of Academy Program (Upper Levels) and Resident Choreographer for Queensland Ballet Academy, and Character Artist for Queensland Ballet.

Fallen

Act I
(24 minutes)

Fallen is seen through the eyes of a man trapped in a small space, alone. The man's mind floats outside of the physical space with images and memories washing over him. The corps de ballet is like a Greek chorus, weeping and wailing over the man's predicament. The man has an alter ego – another dancer representing his emotions, his shadow.

I have taken inspiration from the text of Schubert's 'Winterreise'.

The lyrics are poems by Wilhelm Müller and tell the story of a lonely traveller who ventures out into the snow on a journey to rid himself of his lost love. Along the way he experiences the turmoil of different emotions, mostly ranging from despair to greater despair.

Thank you to Cameron Goerg, for a sensitive and evocative lighting design. My thanks to the beautiful dancers, who have been totally inspiring and wonderful to work with. Also a huge thanks to my rehearsal directors, Rani Luther and Matthew Lawrence, who helped bring this work to life.

This work is performed by Queensland Ballet's Jette Parker Young Artists.

Choreographer

Natalie Weir

Music

Franz Schubert

Lighting Designer

Cameron Goerg

Costumes

Originally designed by
Noelene Hill for Natalie
Weir's *Wuthering Heights*

For my journey
I cannot choose
my own time;
I must pick the way
myself through
this darkness.
My mooncast
shadow acts
as my companion

Drops of ice are
falling from off
my cheeks:
did I not notice,
then, that I have
been crying?

O tears, my tears,
are you so
tepid then
that you turn
to ice like cold
morning dew?

Yet you spring
from your source
in my breast
so burning hot
that you
should melt
a whole
winter's ice!



Natalie Weir
Resident
Choreographer

Australian choreographer Natalie Weir is known internationally for her highly physical partner work, her organic movement style and her touching insight into humanity. Natalie completed an Associate Diploma of Performing Arts at the Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane. She was a founding member of Expressions Dance Company (EDC) and was offered her first choreographic commission by Expressions Artistic Director Maggi Sietsma at the age of 18.

In her 30-plus year career, she has created major new works for world-class companies such as Queensland Ballet, The Australian Ballet, West Australian Ballet, Expressions Dance Company, Dance North, Australian Dance Theatre, Houston Ballet, Singapore Dance Theatre, Hong Kong Ballet and American Ballet Theatre. Natalie was Resident Choreographer for The Australian Ballet and Queensland Ballet and was appointed Artistic Director of Expressions Dance Company in 2009, where she held that position until the end of 2018.

Natalie received the Choo San Goh Award for *Steppenwolfe*, created for the Houston Ballet in America, and was also the recipient of an Australia Council Fellowship. Her works as Artistic Director of EDC received multiple Helpmann and Australian Dance nominations and awards. Natalie was appointed resident choreographer of Queensland Ballet by Artistic Director Li Cunxin AO in 2020.

Mind Your Head

Act II
(15 minutes)

A century-old artform.

Feats of physical virtuosity performed by highly skilled technicians.

Drama, comedy, romance and violence.

Complex choreography, fantastical storylines and outlandish outfits.

Entertainers, masochists and divas.

**No, I'm not talking about Classical Ballet.
Yes, I am talking about Pro Wrestling.**

The closer you look, you'll see the intersection between these seemingly opposing worlds, which are in fact built on the same foundation.

Is it dangerous? Is it effortless?

It's entertainment.

Mind your head.

Choreographer	Jack Lister
Music	The Flamingos Benny Goodman Sandy Nelson
Costume Designer	Zoe Griffiths
Lighting Designer	Cameron Goerg
Sound Designer	Wil Hughes



Jack Lister
Associate
Choreographer

Following his training at The Australian Ballet School, Jack Lister joined Queensland Ballet (QB) in 2014 and danced many featured roles in works choreographed by Christopher Bruce, Nils Christie, Jiří Kylián, Trey McIntyre and Natalie Weir.

After creating his first work for QB in 2015, Lister quickly established a name as a respected emerging maker, recognised in The Australian as “a young choreographer who is going places”. He has gone on to create and present works throughout Australia, United Kingdom, China and Germany.

Fonder Heart (2016) was long listed for an Australian Dance Award, while Lister's mainstage works *Rational/Animal* (2017) and *B-SIDES* (2018) were both met with critical and audience acclaim.

In 2019, Lister created *A Brief Nostalgia*, a co-commission with The Birmingham Royal Ballet and QB. Premiering in Birmingham and later performed at Sadler's Wells Theatre, London, it was heralded as “entirely original” and “of exceptional maturity and depth”.

In January 2020, Lister was appointed Associate Choreographer with QB and joined Australasian Dance Collective (ADC) as a company artist.

2021 has seen Lister premiere his first full-length undertaking for ADC. The critically acclaimed *Aftermath*, a co-creation with Amy Hollingsworth and The Kite String Tangle's Danny Harley, played to sold out audiences. His most recent mainstage creation for the collective, *Still Life*, was hailed as “exquisite, absorbing and poignant”.

From. To. Here.

Act II
(22 minutes)

We all have stories of where we come from. Stories of hope and drive that take us to something new and most importantly the stories of journeying through fire to arrive in the present moment. The here and now.

Inspired by the brave journey of people moving to a new country, either by choice or through fleeing their country in mass migration, *From. To. Here.* explores the geographical and emotional passage of this endeavour. Where have the invaluable people who make up our community come from and what are the stories that have led them on the path to arrive in this exact moment? Over four movements *From. To. Here.* highlights stories of despair, hope, belonging and peace.

I absolutely love choreographing as I see life in movement. I feel fortunate to have been given the opportunity to create on our QB dancers and

to have had an original score composed for this work. My heartfelt thanks go to the creative team, the dancers, and composer Robert Davidson, who helped bring my vision to life. Special appreciation goes to Matthew Lawrence, Ballet Master for this work, who lent his continued support and keen eye throughout the entire process.

Choreographer	Rani Luther
Composer	Robert Davidson
Orchestra	Recorded by Camerata - Queensland's Chamber Orchestra
Conductor	Nigel Gaynor
Costume Stylist	Zoe Griffiths
Lighting Designer	Cameron Goerg

Creative development of this work was assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

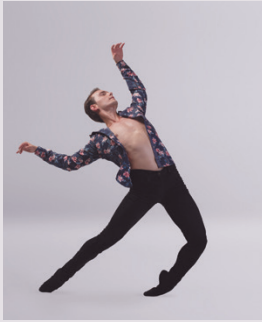


Rani Luther
Ballet Mistress &
Creative Associate

Rani Luther was born in Melbourne and attended the National Theatre Ballet School before completing her education at the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School. Rani's professional career began with the Kiel Ballet Company Germany in 1995 before moving to The Netherlands where she danced with world-renowned Netherlands Dance Theatre 2 and Netherlands Dance Theatre 1. In 2003 Rani returned home to dance with The Australian Ballet, joined Sydney Dance Company in 2007 and was a Principal Dancer with Melbourne Ballet Company until 2011.

Rani has worked with choreographers such as Jiří Kylián, Hans Van Manen, Paul Lightfoot, Mats Ek, Ohad Naharin, William Forsythe, Graeme Murphy and Rafael Bonachela. She won a gold medal at the Sanlam International Ballet Competition, South Africa 1993; was winner of the outstanding performance award in the City of Sydney Ballet Scholarship 1994 and received a nomination for best female dancer in the Green Room Award 2006 for her roles in *Relic and Jiri* with The Australian Ballet. Rani's choreographic creations include two works for NDT Workshop performances 2001/2002, *Face the Music* for Carriageworks Theatre Sydney 2012, *Illuminate* for MBC Empyrean season 2016 and *Outside In* for Sydney Dance Company's Pre-Professional season 2017. Rani created the work *Lunar* for Queensland Ballet's inaugural *Synergy* season in 2018, and in 2019 created *Heartstrings* for The Australian Ballet's *Bodytorque* season. Also in 2019, Rani was appointed Ballet Mistress and Creative Associate for Queensland Ballet.

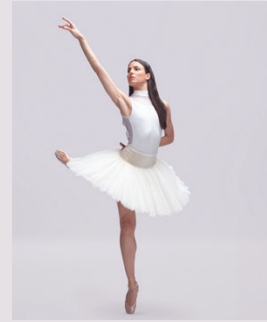
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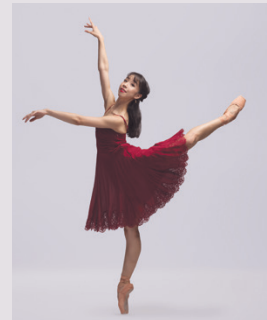
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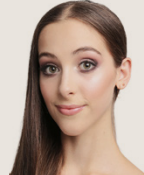
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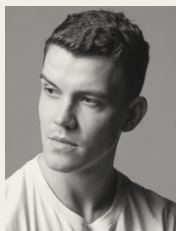
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Queensland Ballet



@qldballet



Queensland Ballet



@qldballet

34 Beesley Street, West End QLD 4101. PO Box 3791, South Brisbane QLD 4101.

P 07 3013 6666 E mail@queenslandballet.com.au