

Queensland Ballet



Bespoke

2 – 17 October 2026

Talbot Theatre, Thomas Dixon Centre



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KEN TALBOT
FOUNDATION

From the Artistic Director

Welcome to *Bespoke*, Queensland Ballet's innovative platform for bold ideas, fresh perspectives and fearless artistic experimentation.

Since its inception, *Bespoke* has provided a space for artists to take creative risks, challenge convention and reimagine what ballet can be. In 2026, we are taking that vision even further.

This year, we have expanded the creative canvas, inviting choreographers, composers, designers and interdisciplinary artists to collaborate with our dancers in the creation of entirely new works. The result is a season of world premieres that celebrates the energy and unpredictability of the creative process itself — a place where movement, music, design and imagination collide in exciting and unexpected ways.

What makes *Bespoke* so compelling is that there are no predetermined formulas. Each work begins with a question, an idea, an impulse or a provocation. Through collaboration, those evolve into performances that surprise not only audiences, but often the artists themselves. The stage becomes an experimental space for innovation, and a place where creative boundaries are tested, stretched and sometimes completely erased.

For the dancers, *Bespoke* offers a unique opportunity to engage directly with creation, bringing versatility, curiosity and courage to every new work. For audiences, it is an invitation to experience dance at its most immediate and adventurous: art in motion, shaped by the distinctive voices of today's creative pioneers.

The future of dance depends on artists who are willing to explore new territory, and *Bespoke* celebrates exactly that spirit. Dynamic, daring and authentically original, this season shines a spotlight on the power of collaboration and the endless possibilities that emerge when artists are given the freedom to create.

Seasons like *Bespoke* are not possible without visionary support by our giving circles and partners. Our appreciation goes to the Ken Talbot Foundation, Principal Guardian of our 2026 Artistic Season. 2026 also saw the inaugural assembly of the Ballet Lab, an inspired group of people whose support has contributed to this year's *Bespoke* program.

Thank you for joining us as we step beyond the expected.



Ivan Gil-Ortega
Artistic Director



Scan for
cast sheets

Credits

Where the Water Once Was

Choreographer _____ Claire Voss
Composer _____ Connor D'Netto
Costume Designer _____ Michelle Potts
Lighting Designer _____ Anthony Lee
Music recorded by _____ Camille Barry (Violin 1)
Shaun Lee-Chen (Violin 2)
Mike Patterson (Viola)
Dan Curro (Cello)

Between the Line

Choreographer _____ Paul Knobloch
Composer _____ Matej Perunicic
Lighting Designer _____ Matthew Allan

What Remains

Choreographer _____ Victor Zarallo
Composer _____ Brady Watkins
Costume Designer _____ Bethany Cordwell
Lighting Designer _____ Anthony Lee

Duration: 2 hours, including one 20-minute interval and one 25-minute interval.

Every effort was made to ensure program details were correct at the time of printing, however details are subject to change where necessary and without notice. Please check queenslandballet.com.au for updates.

'Where the Water Once Was' *String Quartet No.4* was generously supported by Andrew Johnston.

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.

Where the Water Once Was

Water is the foundation of all life, yet it is becoming one of our planet's most fragile resources. *Where the Water Once Was* is a contemporary ballet that reflects on humanity's relationship with water and the consequences of taking it for granted. The work explores not only an environmental crisis but also the deeply human emotions of loss, resilience and hope.

Created in response to growing concerns about climate change and informed by reports from international environmental organisations, the piece seeks to transform complex global issues into an intimate emotional experience and offers a poetic meditation on one of the defining challenges of our time, reminding us that the future of water is inseparable from the future of humanity.

Since 2026, a new term has entered the global policy language: water bankruptcy, a state in which humanity draws more water than the Earth can regenerate. To this deficit has now been added an unlikely new competitor, the vast infrastructure quietly powering the AI revolution. At the heart of the piece lies a belief in our collective capacity to reconnect, adapt and care for one another and for the environment that sustains us. The ballet invites audiences to reflect on what is lost when water disappears, and what can still be preserved through shared responsibility.



From the Creatives



Claire Voss
Choreographer

The key idea behind *Where the Water Once Was* is to explore the growing global water crisis and our complex relationship with a resource we often take for granted. I wanted to communicate the urgency of water bankruptcy without creating a work that feels confrontational or overly literal. Importantly, the environmental message extends beyond the choreography into the production itself.

We aim to work as sustainably as possible, including using predominantly LED lighting and costume designer Michelle Potts also purchased no new fabric, instead creatively repurposing and transforming existing stock materials. These choices allow the production process itself to reflect a concept that is deeply important to me.



Connor D'Netto
Composer

I've composed my *String Quartet no. 4* to accompany *Where The Water Once Was*. Claire's narrative has so much depth, it's joyous yet heartbreaking, monumental yet intimately human.

While writing I found myself thinking about the waterways that have been present throughout my life — Maiwar, Thames, Merri, Bulimba — waters that marked its seasons, were there when I've needed a breath of fresh air, to stretch my legs, to ground myself, are home to wildlife and families with their pets alike, to nature reserves, bike paths, community gardens, that now flood catastrophically or are barely recognisable from my childhood memories of them.



Michelle Potts
Costume Designer

Sustainability was at the forefront of my mind when designing for Claire's piece. Claire and I are both passionate about limiting our impact on the environment. Claire's piece highlights water bankruptcy and the overuse of natural resources, so I have sourced all fabric for this piece from existing stock - leftover fabrics from previous shows created here at Queensland Ballet. As a designer in both fashion and costume, I choose to only use existing fabrics: end of roll, dead stock, vintage and leftover fabrics from other projects to reduce waste and limit my own impact on the environment.



Anthony Lee
Lighting Designer

The intention of my lighting design is to create a world that feels constantly in motion—shifting, breathing and changing with the dancers. Light became a way of exploring its movement, fragility and transformation, shifting between moments of abundance and scarcity. I wanted the dancers to exist within an evolving landscape—sometimes fluid and expansive, at other times fragmented, exposed and isolated. The lighting responds to the emotional journey of the work, moving from uncertainty and loss towards resilience and hope. Through changes in colour, intensity, shadow and movement, I sought to create an environment that feels both beautiful and fragile, inviting the audience to experience water not simply as a resource, but as something deeply connected to our existence.

Between the Line

Between the Line explores the delicate space between angst and ease, where pressure, perfection, and the desire for control take shape in the body.

Within the score, repetition becomes rhythm: a pulse that tightens, then gathers, until anxiety rises like sound, shaped by inner demands and the relentless conversation of the mind. As the music builds, the body begins to answer in kind: softening, centering, and moving slowly towards release.

The light appears like a pause in the score: a quiet axis of order and stillness, reminding us that even when the world feels fast and heavy, we can still conquer time if only for a moment.

Between the Line invites the audience to surrender to what cannot be controlled, find balance within uncertainty, and discover ease in the spaces between movement and music, mind and moment.



From the Creatives



Paul Knobloch
Choreographer

The key idea was to show how the mind's need for control turns into movement, and how the steps can lead from angst and fixation to freedom and release. The choreography uses simple, repeated patterns and phrases that begin tight and grow more intense, as if anxiety is building inside the body. As the work comes to an end, the pace slows and steadies. The dancers soften, return to centre, and find release and calm within the mind, the movement, and the moment.



Matej Perunicic
Composer

The score of *Behind the Line* consists of four movements, all circling the shared idea from different perspectives: the pursuit of perfection.

Repetition. Pressure. Obsession. Release.

What does the endless chase toward the unachievable do to a person emotionally?

How do you channel that force without letting it become destructive?

This is something every artist confronts in some form. *Behind the Line* and its accompanying composition do not offer definitive answers to these questions. Instead, they leave them open to interpretation, expressing them through abstraction and inviting self-reflection.



Matthew Allan
Lighting Designer

Lighting design for dance is about creating space for movement to be seen, felt and understood. Rather than directing the audience's attention, it works in partnership with the choreography, enhancing its themes and emotional resonance.

For *Between the Line*, discussions with Paul continually returned to the idea of "shining a light". From this emerged a design centered on a bold line of light cutting through the stage, defining the space and highlighting the dancers' forms. As the work evolved in the studio, the design grew with it, revealing new dimensions of the choreography and bringing its themes into sharper focus.

What Remains

A young woman enters the world guided by compassion, wisdom and trust. Seated alone, she is gently led by two figures whose nurturing presence shapes her first understanding of belonging. Their quiet intimacy creates a fragile sanctuary where identity begins with care rather than expectation.

Without warning, this sanctuary is shattered as a powerful collective floods the stage. The guiding figures disappear into the crowd, becoming part of a society governed by conformity, routine and the relentless pressure to belong. Surrounded by the overwhelming force of the group, the woman struggles to mould herself to their expectations. She imitates, adjusts and sacrifices pieces of herself, yet acceptance remains just beyond reach.

At the moment she is about to collapse beneath the weight of these expectations, one individual reaches out. Their encounter unfolds through an intimate duet that becomes the emotional centre of the work. Rather than encouraging her to change who she is, he teaches her that resilience lies in adaptation without surrender. It is possible to move with the world while remaining faithful to oneself.

When the collective returns, she faces it transformed. No longer driven by the need to imitate, she discovers her own place within the community. As mutual understanding grows, the ensemble gradually embraces her, revealing that belonging does not require the loss of individuality.

In the final moments, she is left alone, carrying the quiet strength gained through her journey. The world around her has changed, but so has she. She has learned to exist within society without abandoning the values that first shaped her. The work closes as a reflection on humanity's universal search for acceptance, resilience and the delicate balance between belonging and remaining true to oneself.



From the Creatives



Victor Zarallo
Choreographer

At the heart of this work is a deeply personal exploration of guidance, social pressure, trust and adaptation. Drawing from my own life experience, I wanted to create a journey that feels truthful and recognisable, allowing the dancers to connect to the movement from a place of genuine personal experience. Through shifting relationships between the individual and the collective, the choreography explores how we learn to navigate society without losing who we are. My hope is that each audience member can see something of their own journey within the work. The moments of being guided, challenged, supported and ultimately learning how to belong while remaining true to themselves.



Brady Watkins
Composer

The key idea I wanted to communicate was the universal experience of growing up: stepping beyond the safety of what we know, finding our place in a world that may challenge our values, and learning how to belong without losing ourselves. This shaped my creative exploring with Victor in both a musical and physical space. Across five movements, we juxtapose the lush timbres of romantic classical strings and piano with the brutal, percussive rhythms of contemporary dance — creating a tension between two worlds. As the work progresses, these contrasting languages gradually begin to merge, reflecting our protagonist's journey towards finding balance, acceptance, and a sense of self within an unfamiliar world.



Bethany Cordwell
Costume Designer

The key idea I wanted to communicate through my costume design was how social pressure and guidance shape identity, and how we can move through challenging experiences and adapt without losing our sense of self.

Collaborating with Victor Zarallo allowed me to translate his story into visual costume elements that evolve with the main character and supporting ensemble throughout the performance. I used approximately 900 individually cut organza strips to create a “pages” texture, representing the pages of Victor's story.

The ensemble's silhouette represents both tree trunks firmly rooted to the earth while also evoking skyscraper structures, with strong vertical lines created by the page-like texture and muted grey palette.

For the main character, golden yellow represents youth, naivety, and a bright personality. Through choreography, sections of the costume are gradually removed, symbolising shedding the past and growing into the future. The remaining gold represents the individuality that stays within us as we grow and change.



Anthony Lee
Lighting Designer

My approach to lighting was shaped by the tension between individuality and belonging. I wanted to create a visual world that reflected the dancers' journey, both individually and collectively, while responding emotionally to the musical score.

The lighting evolves with the choreography, at times isolating dancers within pools of light to emphasise individuality, before becoming more structured and collective as relationships develop. Gradually, the light softens and expands, creating a sense of connection, trust and acceptance. I was interested in the idea that belonging doesn't require us to lose our individuality.

Ultimately, the lighting supports the emotional journey, allowing each dancer to remain present within a shared world.

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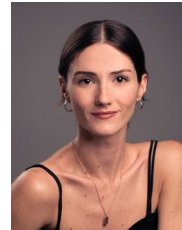
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Jun Masuda



Neneka Yoshida



Chiara Gonzalez

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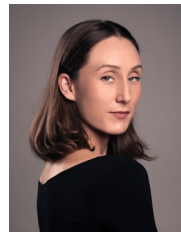
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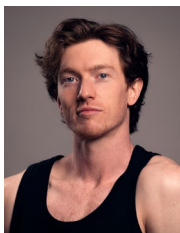
Georgia Swan



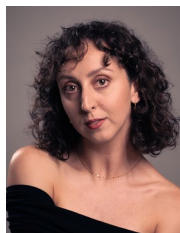
Jake Mangakahia

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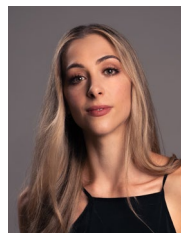
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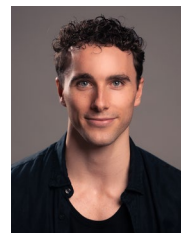
D'Arcy Brazier



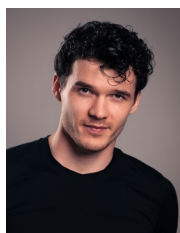
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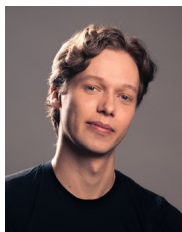


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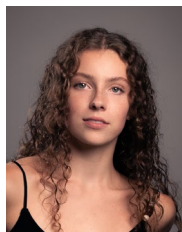
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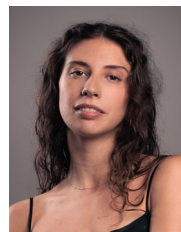
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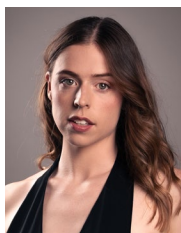
Sophie Kerr



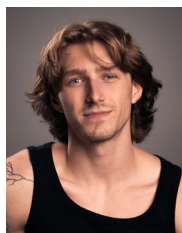
Moeki Kojima



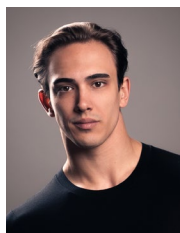
Callum Mackie



Briana McAllen



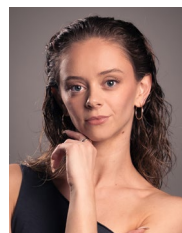
Frederick Montgomery



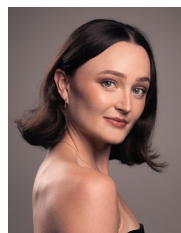
Joseph Moss



Alisa Pukkinen



Brooke Ray



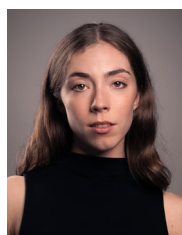
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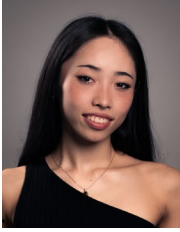


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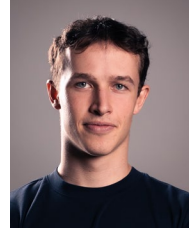
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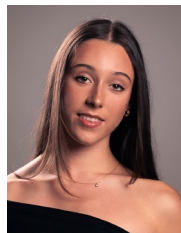
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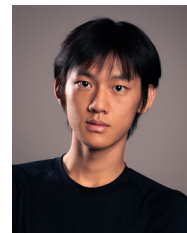
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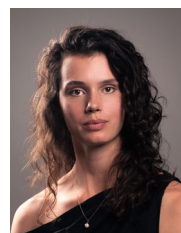
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Yuko Yoshioka
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2027

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In addition to the many generous individuals, trusts and foundations, our grateful thanks go to every supporter who has donated to Queensland Ballet. Your support helps us to achieve our ambitious vision to enrich lives.

Queensland Ballet thrives

thanks to the passion of our audiences and the generosity of our supporters. Your support helps nurture emerging talent, create new works, and keep ballet accessible to all. Whether through a donation, membership, Giving Circle, Giving Day contribution, scholarship sponsorship, or bequest, every gift makes a meaningful impact.

Help shape the future of ballet.

Donate today at:

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Queensland Ballet

QUEENSLAND BALLET WAS FOUNDED IN 1960
BY CHARLES LISNER OBE.

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Governor of Queensland

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Director of Production Services

Shaun O'Rourke

Executive Producer

Craig Cathcart

Rehearsal Director

Lisa-Maree Cullum

ARTISTIC OPERATIONS

Company Manager

David Power

Artistic and Business Liaison

Elise Azar

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Head of Production

Don Mackenzie

Production Stage Manager

Heather O'Keeffe

Assistant Stage Manager

Ben Mills

Technical Manager (Staging)

Ben Marcolin

Head Mechanist

Sam Packer

Deputy Head Mechanist

Declan Bell

Technical Manager (Lighting)

Matthew Allan

Head Electrician/ Lighting Programmer and Operator

Tim Gawne

Head of Costume

Laurn Jackson

Costume Performance Manager

Barb Kerr

Costume Workroom Manager

Kathi Lionheart

Principal Cutter

Sharon Clarke

Cutter / Costumier

Bethany Cordwell

Michelle Potts

Costumier / Milliner &

Costume Administration

Vicki Martin

Costumiers

Joel Dunkley

Rebecca Farag

Isabelle Lacombe

Chiahui Tseng

Holly Watson

Art Finisher

Elsbeth Cameron

Volunteers

Jack Kay

Rayne McGann

Daniel Rodriguez

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Michelle White

Physiotherapist

Kate Martyn

Massage Therapist

Pedro Alcobio

Pilates Instructor

Catherine Neal

Strength Coach

Tony Lewis

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

Cover Jette Parker Young Artists.

Photography David Kelly.

4 Soloist Lina Kim, First Company Artist

Rian Thompson and Company Artist

Shaun Curtis.

Photography Jakob Perrett.

6 Soloist Vito Bernasconi and Company Artist

Ruby Day and Guest Artist Jake Mangakahia.

Photography Jakob Perrett.

8 Choreographer Paul Knobloch and

Jette Parker Young Artist Emily Sprout.

Photography Jakob Perrett.

13 Principal Artist Neneka Yoshida and First

Company Artist Joshua Ostermann.

Photography David Kelly.

To view our full staff list, please visit

[queenslandballet.com.au/discover/company/
staff](https://queenslandballet.com.au/discover/company/staff)

THOMAS DIXON CENTRE

HOME OF Queensland Ballet

On Yuggera and Turrbal Country

From its beginnings in 1908 as a boot factory, the heritage-listed Thomas Dixon Centre has been transformed into a world-class performing arts destination, cultural precinct, and home of Queensland Ballet. It features a state-of-the-art theatre, stunning public art, dance studios, and two new dining destinations, Layla and Tom's Kitchen. With health and wellbeing at its heart, the Thomas Dixon Centre has become the first arts precinct in the world to achieve the International WELL Building Certificate.

The revitalisation of the Thomas Dixon Centre is an incredible story of passion, tenacity, and altruism. Queensland Ballet, a not-for-profit arts company, refurbished its heritage home, not only to house its own artists and arts workers for years to come, but to create a vibrant space for its neighbours, sector and wider community.

The Thomas Dixon Centre is an extraordinary space, where stories are shared, creativity flourishes, and connections between artists and audiences are forged.

Discover more about the Thomas Dixon Centre at thomasdixoncentre.com.au and see stories unfold.

 @thomasdixoncentre

 Thomas Dixon Centre

We are welcoming and accepting of people from diverse backgrounds and identities, and strive to create an accessible and inclusive environment for all.

Queensland Ballet is proudly supported by:

GOVERNMENT



Queensland Ballet receives financial assistance from the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland.



Queensland Ballet is assisted by the Commonwealth Government through Creative Australia, its arts funding advisory body.



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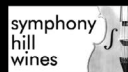
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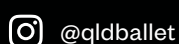
Academy of Queensland Ballet Partners



Club REVOLUTION Members

A cultural club celebrating heritage and vibrancy of ballet.

Dr Marosh & Lily Vrtik



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Queensland Ballet



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Queensland Ballet

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