

Ballerina Lisa-Maree Cullum joins Queensland Ballet as Principal Rehearsal Director

A Pivotal New Role signalling an exciting chapter for Queensland Ballet



Lisa-Maree Cullum, La Bayadere, Bavarian State Ballet



Lisa-Maree Cullum, Lady of the Camellias, Bavarian State Ballet

Brisbane, 17 November, 2025: Queensland Ballet Artistic Director, Ivan Gil-Ortega, today announced the appointment of New Zealand born, Australian trained ballerina, Lisa-Maree Cullum as Principal Rehearsal Director for Queensland Ballet.

A former principal dancer and acclaimed principal guest artist with leading ballet companies across the world, Cullum couples her stage pedigree with extensive coaching experience across prestigious international schools and companies. Most recently, Artistic Director of her alma mater, the Tanya Pearson Academy, and an invited juror for the Prix de Lausanne, Cullum brings a wealth of international insight to the role.

Guided by Gil-Ortega's vision, the new role of Principal Rehearsal Director, commencing in January 2026, becomes the Artistic team's second-in-command, strengthening leadership and artistic cohesion.

Gil-Ortega said he has known and worked with Cullum for over two decades.

"As an artist committed to excellence, Lisa-Maree has enjoyed a distinguished career as principal dancer with Deutsche Oper, Berlin, the Bavarian State Ballet in Munich and as a principal guest artist with leading ballet companies around the world including the Mariinsky Theatre St Petersburg, Teatro alla Scala Milano, Royal Swedish Ballet, Royal Danish Ballet and here at Queensland Ballet," Gil-Ortega said.

"We performed together in numerous ballets by Maurice Bejart and William Forsythe. Her extensive experience, deep understanding of the classical and contemporary repertoire, and commitment to excellence makes her an invaluable addition to the artistic team. I have no doubt that Lisa-Maree will inspire and mentor our dancers, helping to elevate the company to even greater heights. I am thrilled to welcome Lisa-Maree to the artistic team at Queensland Ballet," Gil-Ortega added.

"Having had the wonderful opportunity to perform with Queensland Ballet as a guest artist and leading ballerina, I'm truly thrilled to be returning to the company in a new and exciting role. I look forward to contributing to this next chapter and supporting the ongoing artistic excellence Queensland Ballet is known for," Cullum said.

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Cullum will commence with Queensland Ballet on the 19th January coinciding with the start of Gil-Ortega's inaugural season. The 2026 Season opens with *Messa da Requiem* at the new Glasshouse Theatre, Queensland Performing Arts Centre, on 27th March, 2026.

About Lisa-Maree Cullum

Lisa-Maree Cullum was born in New Zealand and began her training with her mother from the age of four before moving to Sydney at 14 to begin full-time training with Tanya Pearson OAM at the Tanya Pearson Academy.

After just six months at the Academy, she won the Adeline Genée Gold Medal and the Prix de Lausanne, which enabled her to continue her studies overseas at the prestigious Académie de Danse Princesse Grace in Monaco under the guidance of Madame Marika Besobrasova.

Lisa-Maree's professional ballet career started at the English National Ballet in 1990. The following year, she accepted Peter Schaufuss' invitation to join the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Germany. Only two months later, Schaufuss entrusted her with the lead role in the world premiere of his *Giselle*. Shortly after she was promoted to principal dancer.

Artistic Director, Ivan Liška offered Lisa-Maree a principal contract with the Bavarian State Ballet in Munich, Germany, where she danced until 2015.

In 1998, Lisa-Maree was acclaimed Dancer of the Year by a leading Munich newspaper. She was nominated for the Prix Benois de la danse in Moskau 2002 and she was acclaimed Dancer of the Year 2002 for her outstanding interpretation of the lead role in *Sleeping Beauty* with the Ballet of the Opera of Rome. She has appeared as a guest dancer on stages worldwide, like the Mariinsky Theatre St Petersburg, Imperial Ballet Moscow, Teatro alla Scala Milano, Teatro dell 'Opera di Roma, National Theatre Prag, Royal Swedish Ballet, Royal Danish Ballet, Queensland Ballet and Royal New Zealand Ballet to name a few.

In 2008 Lisa-Maree was awarded the highest honorary title 'Kammertänzerin' by the German government for her contribution as a world class artist.

Since retiring from the stage Lisa-Maree has taken on the role as a teacher and mentor, passing on her knowledge and experience to present and future generations.

In 2015 she was invited to be a Jury Member of the prestigious Prix de Lausanne.

Lisa-Maree has been the Associate Artistic Director and teacher at the Bavaria Ballet Academy (BBA) and worked frequently as guest for prestigious international schools and companies throughout the world. In 2025, Lisa-Maree Cullum concludes her time as Artistic Director of the Tanya Pearson Academy.

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Photos of Lisa-Maree Cullum [here](#)

About Queensland Ballet

Queensland Ballet's mission is to contribute to Australia's cultural landscape by being an integral part of the national and international ballet ecology - striving for artistic excellence, pathways for emerging artists, and impact through our community outreach, education, and dance health programs. We aim to enrich lives and contribute to wellness across society through the magic of ballet.

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