

Queensland **Ballet**

# Meet Ivan Gil-Ortega: Queensland Ballet's Artistic Director

Education Resource - Secondary Years



*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.*

## About

Queensland Ballet is proud to welcome our seventh Artistic Director, Ivan Gil-Ortega. His appointment in February 2025 marks a significant moment for the Company, as it enters a new era of artistic innovation and growth. **Gil-Ortega's vision for Queensland Ballet** is rooted in artistic excellence, collaboration, and innovation.

*"I am committed to fostering a collaborative and inclusive atmosphere that honours the legacy of ballet while pushing creative boundaries. Queensland Ballet has always dared to dream big, and I am excited to bring my energy and passion to this inspiring company."*

*Cover: Queensland Ballet Artistic Director Ivan Gil-Ortega.*

# Table of Contents

About .....	1
Meet Ivan Gil-Ortega: Queensland Ballet's New Artistic Director.....	3
Learning Activities .....	6
Discover Ivan Gil-Ortega's Dance Journey .....	6
CREATIVE TASK: VISUAL REPRESENTATION.....	11

# Meet Ivan Gil-Ortega: Queensland Ballet's New Artistic Director

Ivan is a celebrated ballet professional with over 25 years of experience, having held prominent roles such as Principal Dancer, Assistant Director, Artistic Consultant, Freelance Rehearsal Director, Stager, and Coach. His career is distinguished by artistic excellence, technical proficiency, and captivating character interpretations, all of which highlight his elegance and exceptional partnering skills. Since 2007, Ivan has represented multiple international ballet companies, directing and staging major productions worldwide. His linguistic skills further enhance his contributions in the global ballet community. Born in Spain, Ivan is fluent in Spanish, English, German, Italian, and Portuguese.

From 1997 to 2007, Ivan was a principal artist at Stuttgart Ballet, Germany, before continuing his work as a principal dancer with Dutch National Ballet (2007-2008), where he performed in numerous acclaimed productions. Recognised internationally, Ivan has also made significant contributions as a guest artist with prestigious companies, including the Ballet of Santiago de Chile, Bayerisches Staatsballet Munich, Finnish National Ballet, Croatian National Ballet, West Australian Ballet, Ballet del Teatro Massimo de Palermo, Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Teatro dell'Arena di Verona, Teatro San Carlo di Napoli, Nuremberg Staatsballet, Universal Ballet of Korea, National Ballet of Korea, and Slovenian National Ballet.



*Image: Ivan Gil-Ortega as Armand Duval's Father, Lady of the Camellias 2024.*



Notably, Ivan has performed in principal roles specifically created for him by renowned choreographers such as Hans van Manen, William Forsythe, and Goyo Montero. As a ballet assistant and stager, he has worked alongside luminary choreographers like Carlos Acosta, Christian Spuck, Goyo Montero, and Derek Deane, contributing to critically acclaimed productions such as *Swan Lake* and *Romeo & Juliet* with the English National Ballet; *Nutcracker*, *Cinderella*, and *The Sleeping Beauty* at Staatstheater Nürnberg; *Chacona* for Birmingham Royal Ballet; *The Sleeping Beauty* for Maggio Musicale Fiorentino; *The Lady of the Camellias* at Teatro San Carlo in Naples and the National Ballet of Croatia; and *Nutcracker*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *Swan Lake*, *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra*, and *The Lady of the Camellias* for the Shanghai Ballet.

In 2016 and 2023, Ivan contributed to Queensland Ballet's sell-out production *Strictly Gershwin*, serving as the right-hand man to Choreographer and Director Derek Deane. Between 2020 and 2021, he worked as Rehearsal Director and Stager for the Bolshoi Ballet's world premiere of *Orlando*, choreographed by Christian Spuck (now the Artistic Director of Berlin Ballet). Ivan also played a key role in launching Carlos Acosta's world premiere of *Carmen* at the Royal Opera House with the Royal Ballet.

In addition to his artistic roles, Ivan holds prestigious advisory positions. He served as Vice President of Le Prix de Lausanne in 2019, has been a Jury Member for the Youth America Grand Prix since 2019, and was President of the Jury for the Certamen Coreográfico Burgos New York in the 2014/2015 edition. In 2009, Ivan was honoured with the *Premio Positano de Danza – Léonide Massine* for his substantial contributions to the art of ballet.

To read Ivan Gil-Ortega's **biography**, visit:

<https://www.queenslandballet.com.au/company/team/staff/ivan-gil-ortega>


# Learning Activities

## Discover Ivan Gil-Ortega's **Dance Journey**

Explore the **Career of Queensland Ballet's Seventh Artistic Director**

Ivan's diverse skill set as a performer, choreographer, educator, and artistic leader makes him a valuable addition to the Company. This worksheet introduces you to Queensland Ballet's new Artistic Director and invites you to explore his career. It will also encourage you to reflect on how his experiences might shape the future of the Company.

### 01. **Ivan Today: Queensland Ballet's** Artistic Director

 *Read Ivan's biography and complete some wider research to respond to the following questions.*

1. What is Ivan Gil-Ortega's current role at Queensland Ballet? What are the duties and responsibilities of this role?

 Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What are his early goals or initiatives as the Artistic Director?

 Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_


\_\_\_\_\_

3. Has he spoken about his vision for Queensland Ballet? Summarise any key points from interviews or articles you find in your research.


 Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_


\_\_\_\_\_

 **Research tip:** Visit the Queensland Ballet website and search for news articles or interviews with Ivan Gil-Ortega.

02. From Dancer to Director: A Career Across Ballet Companies


 *Trace Ivan's career path by filling in the table below:*

Career Stage	Company/Role	Key Achievements
Early Dance Career		
Professional Dancer		
Transition to Teaching and Leadership		
Recent Roles Before Queensland Ballet		

 **Research Tip:** Re-read his biography on Queensland Ballet's website and seek other sources.



### 03. Early Training and Influences

 Investigate Ivan's training and early career influences below.

1. Where did Ivan train as a young dancer?

 Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Who were his key teachers or mentors?

 Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

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What styles or techniques shaped his early career?

 Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

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 Research tip: Look for Ivan's background in professional bios or interviews.

#### 4. Dance Influencers and Artistic Style

👉 Choose one artist (choreographer, teacher, or dancer) who has **influenced Ivan's career**, and research their impact.

QUESTIONS	RESPONSE
01 What is the name of the Artist?	
02 What is their role in the dance industry?	
03 How did they influence Ivan's career?	
04 What is their signature artistic style?	

## 5. Reflect and Predict

 *Based on your research, answer the following questions.*

1. **How do you think Ivan's background in performance, choreography, and education will influence his leadership at Queensland Ballet?**

 Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. **If you were an Artistic Director, what experiences would you draw on to shape a company's future?**

 Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## CREATIVE TASK: VISUAL REPRESENTATION

 Choose one of the following creative ways to present your findings below.

- **Timeline:** Create a timeline of Ivan's career, highlighting key moments.
- **Mind Map:** Show the connections between his experiences, influences, and artistic direction.
- **Poster:** Design a digital or hand-drawn poster showcasing Ivan's journey in dance.