# Queensland Ballet



Annual Report

# Table of Contents

Derek Deane's The Lady of The Camellias

18

03	Executive Director and Board Chair Report	19	Queensland Ballet Academy Director Report	30	Publicity
05	Acting Artistic Director Report	21	2024 Academy Highlights	31	Thomas Dixon Centre Highlights
06	2024 Company Highlights	22	Tchaikovsky Suite	32	Queensland Ballet Partners
08	Season 2024	23	Aspire '24	35	Queensland Ballet Donors
09	Queensland Ballet on Tour	24	Soirée	37	Our People
10	Queensland Ballet at Home	25	Community, Education and Health	39	Photography Credits
11	A Midsummer Night's Dream	20	Highlights		
12	Coppélia	26	Community Health Institute		
13	Cinderella – My First Ballet	27	Accessibility		
14	Bespoke	28	Audience Insights		
15	Queensland Ballet Academy Gala	29	Digital Marketing Engagement		
16	Coco Chanel: the Life of a Fashion Icon				
17	The Nutcracker				
11	THO PROGRAMMO				



# Executive Director and Board Chair Report

In 2024, Queensland Ballet continued to rise—through change, challenge, and significant achievement. It was a year that tested our resilience but ultimately underscored the strength of our people, our programs, and our purpose.

Our commitment to artistic excellence and community impact remained steadfast, with more than 60,000 people engaging across performances, classes, education programs, and Dance Health initiatives. Importantly, we achieved a 13% increase in box office revenue, a powerful testament to the strength of our programming and the loyalty of our audiences.

This growth was mirrored in our regional expansion. In a significant step forward, we employed our first Regional Teaching Artists, extending our reach into Cairns and laying the groundwork for a broader state-wide footprint in years to come.

We also celebrated a major milestone with the launch of the Ballet Boys Project, addressing the urgent national decline in male participation in ballet. With free boys-only classes and widereaching media coverage, the program is helping reshape perceptions and support the next generation of male dancers.

Our work in community health advanced meaningfully with the support of new multi-year funding from Queensland Health. This enabled the appointment of our first dedicated Dance Health Teaching Artist, as well as the rollout of impactful new initiatives such as Dance Rehab at STARS Hospital, Ballet Serenade in aged care, and Dance for Veterans in partnership with RSL Queensland. These programs, alongside our ongoing Dance for Arthritis classes, are helping to position Queensland Ballet as a leader in dance-based health innovation.

At the heart of our operations, the Thomas Dixon Centre reached new heights. We became the first performing arts organisation in the world to achieve WELL Certification at the Platinum level, recognising our deep commitment to wellbeing. Further activating the site, we announced a new partnership with VenuesLive and celebrated chef Shane Delia, who will open a flagship restaurant in 2025—ushering in a bold new chapter for our home as a cultural and culinary destination.

This was also a year of leadership transition. We welcomed internationally acclaimed ballerina Leanne Benjamin OBE AM as our sixth Artistic Director. While her tenure concluded earlier than planned, we thank her for her time with us, and we will feel her

programming legacy in 2025 as we honour commitments made to creatives and choreographers. Leanne left us in August 2024.

Greg Horsman then stepped into the role of Acting Artistic Director, and under his steady guidance the Company remained artistically strong, our audiences engaged, and our vision intact.

We have continued our advocacy for arts funding parity and ongoing sustainability, and as we move into 2025, with Ivan Gil-Ortega as our Artistic Director, with renewed energy and a continued commitment to nurturing the next generation of artists, we remain conscious of the need for relevance and engagement.

With this in mind, we remain grateful to the Queensland and Australian Governments of their support of our notfor-profit arts organisation. We continue to take immense pride in aiming to leverage their support to inspire 81% of our income from our audiences, student and participation fees, commercial operations, corporate partnerships, philanthropy and increasingly, venue collaborations.

However, in 2024, we experienced a softening in our philanthropic giving, reflecting both the shift in leadership and the loss of some deeply cherished philanthropic champions, contributing to a statutory loss of \$9.45m compared to a loss of \$1.5m in the previous year. Despite these challenges, future pledges from our supporter family combined with a revisioning of our operations aligned with a refreshed vision in 2025, already paint a bright future ahead.

In 2024, we are most proud of staying true to our artists, arts workers and wider arts sector. We prioritised job security and artistic output, maintaining an ensemble of 60 dancers and honouring wage commitments. Over \$19 million was invested in artists and arts workers, including \$4m directed towards independent creatives and ensembles through our Academy and Artistic programs.

Through all of this, our focus on relevance has never been more important. If we are relevant to our audiences, they will fill our theatres. If we are relevant to artists, they will choose to create and perform with us. And if we are relevant to our communities, they will support, participate, and belong.

As we look to 2025 and welcome incoming Artistic Director Ivan Gil-Ortega, we do so with renewed momentum and purpose. Our gratitude goes, once again, to the Queensland and Australian Governments, and to the donors, partners, and patrons who believe in our vision. Most of all, we thank the artists and arts workers whose passion powers everything we do, everyday, and who sit at the heart of our every decision.

Together, we continue to build a legacy—for our artform, for our state, and for future generations.

Dilshani Weerasinghe Executive Director Brett Clark AM Board Chair



# Acting Artistic Director Report

In a year of change and growth, Queensland Ballet's commitment to producing a full complement of artistically vibrant productions and engaging brilliant creatives remained steadfast.

I would like to acknowledge Leanne Benjamin OBE AM for her impactful months at the company. Leanne introduced dynamic new creatives and talent to QB's artistic endeavours and it was important that we honour these commitments made to creatives during her leadership, which will be realised during the 2025 season.

Since joining the company in 2013 I have served as Assistant Artistic Director commencing 2023 and graciously accepted the role of Acting Artistic Director after Leanne's departure. It is my privilege to step into this position and I bring my years of knowledge and experience in working with our gifted dancers, artistic and business teams and of course continue my passion for choreography.

Our 2024 season saw the premiere of gundirgan, wise woman, choreographed by Wakka Wakka and Kombumerri artist Katina Olsen, featuring Queensland Ballet dancers and guest artist Tara Robertson.

The music was a significant highlight, performed and commissioned by Southern Cross Soloists (SXS) and the SXS Didgeridoo Commissioning Project, composed by Seán O'Boyle AM and featuring Chris Williams, Wakka Wakka didgeridoo soloist and SXS Artist in Residence.

As part of the creative process, our dancers visited Ban Ban Springs on Wakka Wakka Country to deepen their connection to First Nations culture and Country, reinforcing our commitment to artistic collaboration and cultural awareness. Our Education Team also developed two new First Nations In-School Workshops in collaboration with teachers and Elders, creating free resources for educators and professional development opportunities that empower teachers to inspire students' connections to place and cultural identity.

Another highlight in the 2024 artistic season was the sellout season Coco Chanel: the Life of a Fashion Icon, which surpassed target by \$285,000 and was touted as the 'must-see' show of the year. We were thrilled to present the Australian premiere of Annabelle Lopez Ochoa's co-production with Hong Kong Ballet and Atlanta Ballet. Brisbane audiences were captivated with the production's rich storytelling and evocative choreography.

We believe new works are essential to a vibrant and sustainable cultural landscape – they enable us to explore new ideas, share historical stories, engage emerging talent, and push the boundaries of dance as a vehicle for storytelling.

Coco Chanel was a controversial character, filled with ambition, creativity and complexity, and I must extend my gratitude once again to Annabelle for sharing this story with us.

Another outstanding result was family favourite, The Nutcracker, which broke box office records, exceeding the target by \$405,000.

We are proud of the role we continue to play in Queensland's creative economy and are deeply grateful to our audiences, donor, government and corporate partners who continue to advocate and support their state ballet company as we continue to forge ahead with creative purpose and optimism in 2025.

frey Horsman.

Greg Horsman
Acting Artistic Director
August 2024 – February 2025
Chief Ballet Master and Head of Artistic
Operations

# 2024 Company Highlights

Our 2024 season was a vibrant year of artistic collaborations, sell-out productions, and community outreach across Queensland.

60 dancers \$19m invested in artists and arts workers

134 performances

13% +box office revenue (year on year)

184 staff



82,828

total box office

total attendance





### Queensland Ballet on Tour

### Regional Tour

28 FEBRUARY - 27 MARCH 2024

GOONDIWINDI WAGGAMBA COMMUNITY CULTURAL CENTRE, 28 FEBRUARY THE EMPIRE THEATRE, TOOWOOMBA, 1 MARCH BROLGA THEATRE AND CONVENTION CENTRE, MARYBOROUGH, 6 MARCH MONCRIEFF ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE, BUNDABERG, 8 MARCH THE EVENTS CENTRE, CALOUNDRA, 15 MARCH THE WORLD THEATRE, CHARTERS TOWERS, 20 MARCH CAIRNS PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE, 22-23 MARCH PILBEAM THEATRE, ROCKHAMPTON, 27 MARCH

#### Three Preludes

Choreographer Ben Stevenson OBE

Music Sergei Rachmaninoff Op.32 No.10, Op.23 No.1, Op.32 No.9

Lighting Designer Cameron Goerg

Music recording by Pianist – Vladimir Ashkenazy

### Tchaikovsky Mash

Choreographer Matthew Lawrence Music Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky Lighting Designer Cameron Goerg

Music recording by L'Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal, conducted by Charles Dutoit, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Nicolae Moldoveanu, and New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Patrick Flynn

### A Rhapsody in Motion

Choreographer Greg Horsman

Music Sergei Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op.43

Costume Designer Zoe Griffiths

Lighting Designer Cameron Goerg

Music recording by Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Pianist – Daniil Trifinov

Bringing ballet to the regions is a beloved tradition of Queensland Ballet that goes back to 1960s, and in 2024 we were thrilled to tour across Queensland with our Queensland Ballet on Tour program – a replica of the Queensland Ballet at Home season. Audiences in towns including Maryborough, Rockhampton, and Cairns enjoyed the mixed bill featuring Ben Stevenson OBE's Three Preludes, Matthew Lawrence's Tchaikovsky Mash, Marius Petipa's Le Corsaire Pas de Deux, and Greg Horsman's A Rhapsody in Motion – 2nd and 3rd Movements, that, according to the Cairns

Post, gave audiences a "taste of high quality ballet and left them wanting more."

### Queensland Ballet at Home

21 - 24 FEBRUARY 2024 11 - 13 MARCH 2024 TALBOT THEATRE, THOMAS DIXON CENTRE

Four glittering works from the vault were presented in our first production of 2024, Queensland Ballet at Home, at the Talbot Theatre, Thomas Dixon Centre. Ben Stevenson OBE's sweeping Three Preludes took audiences on a journey of falling in love, told through graceful, synchronised movement with sublime music by Sergei Rachmaninoff. Tchaikovsky Mash by Matthew Lawrence evoked the classical era of dance with its compilation of works featuring music from Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake and The Sleeping Beauty. Marius Petipa's Le Corsaire pas de deux, one of the most famed excerpts in ballet history, transported audiences to exotic landscapes while showcasing technical brilliance and precise partnering. And after premiering in 2022 to audience and critical acclaim, Greg Horsman's beautiful A Rhapsody in Motion – 2nd and 3rd Movement once again explored the fascinating relationship between the dancer and the music of Rachmaninoff.

### Three Preludes

Choreographer Ben Stevenson OBE

Music Sergei Rachmaninoff Op.32 No.10, Op.23 No.1, Op.32 No.9

Lighting Designer Cameron Goerg

Music recording by Pianist – Vladimir Ashkenazy

### Tchaikovsky Mash

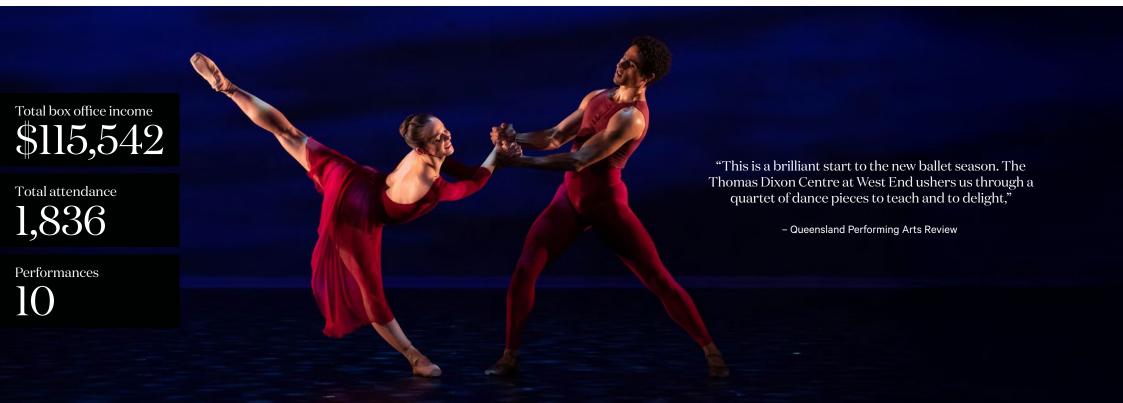
Choreographer Matthew Lawrence
Music Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky Lighting Designer Cameron
Goerg Music recording by L'Orchestre Symphonique de
Montreal, conducted by Charles Dutoit, Royal Philharmonic
Orchestra, conducted by Nicolae Moldoveanu, and New Zealand
Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Patrick Flynn

### Le Corsaire

Choreographer Marius Petipa
Music Riccardo Drigo 1846 – 1930 (arr. John Lanchbery) Pas de deux
and Variations
Costume Designer Zoe Griffiths
Lighting Designer Cameron Goerg
Music recording by Orchestra of the London Festival Ballet,
conducted by Terence Kern

### A Rhapsody in Motion

Choreographer Greg Horsman
Music Sergei Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op.43
Costume Designer Zoe Griffiths
Lighting Designer Cameron Goerg
Music recording by Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Yannick
Nézet-Séguin, Pianist – Daniil Trifinov





## A Midsummer Night's Dream

12 - 27 APRIL 2024 PLAYHOUSE, QPAC

Choreographer Liam Scarlett
Stager Laura Morera
Music Felix Mendelssohn
Music Arranger and Conductor Nigel Gaynor
Costume and Set Designer Tracy Grant Lord
Lighting Designer Kendall Smith
Music Performed by Camerata – Queensland's Chamber Orchestra

Performed over 12 nights to audience and critical acclaim, Liam Scarlett's much-loved rendition of this Shakespearian classic brought joy, laughter, and a touch of magic to many. Beautifully enhanced by Tracy Grant Lord's costumes and sets and Kendall Smith's lighting, which transformed the stage into a moonlit forest, the production captured the whimsical mayhem of the story. Dancers moved gracefully and expressively to Felix Mendelssohn's score, played live by Camerata – Queensland's Chamber Orchestra. A co-production with the Royal New Zealand Ballet, Scarlett's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* last charmed Australian audiences in our 2023 regional Queensland tour.

Total box office income

\$1,289,839

Total attendance

12,148

Performances

17

# Coppélia

7 - 22 JUNE 2024 PLAYHOUSE, QPAC

Edited by Ryan Smith

Choreographer Greg Horsman, after Arthur Saint-Léon & Marius Petipa
Music Léo Delibes
Music Arranger and Conductor Nigel Gaynor
Costume Designer Noelene Hill
Set Designer Hugh Colman
Lighting Designer Jon Buswell
Music Performed by Queensland Symphony Orchestra
Animation Produced by PixelFrame:
Illustrated by S.M. Olive
Directed by Lucas Thyer

It was the 10-year anniversary of the premiere of Greg Horsman's Australian-infused rendition of *Coppélia*, and by all accounts, time had not affected its charm. Set in the German settlement town of Hahndorf in South Australia, Horsman's comic family ballet was loved by audiences and critics alike; favourable reviews spoke of a 'well-crafted' and 'enchanting' ballet, a 'distinctly Australian flavour', and 'magnificent dancing'. Media attention was high during the rehearsal period, with the Brisbane Lions attending class to teach the dancers how to throw and catch an AFL football. A co-production with West Australian Ballet, Horsman's *Coppélia* was first performed in Brisbane in 2014.

 $\$826,\!160$ 

Total attendance 8,589

Performances

15



### Cinderella

### My First Ballet

20 - 29 JUNE 2024 TALBOT THEATRE, THOMAS DIXON CENTRE

Choreographer Ben Stevenson OBE
Adapted for My First Ballet Matthew Lawrence
Music Sergei Prokofiev
Costume Designer Tracy Grant Lord
Set Designer Thomas Boyd
Lighting Designer Cameron Goerg
Video Designer Craig Wilkinson
Sound Designer Wil Hughes
Narration Sarah McIntosh

Part of our *My First Ballet* series aimed at our youngest audience members, this shortened version of *Cinderella* was adapted by choreographer Matthew Lawrence, with permission from Ben Stevenson OBE. At a family-friendly one-hour run time, it was a perfect fit for audiences of all ages and offered a delightful blend of love, magic, and breathtaking choreography. Sparkling costumes were by Tracy Grant Lord, with set designs by Thomas Boyd. Prokofiev's majestic score enhanced the production. Additional experiences to complement the outing were available for purchase at the Thomas Dixon Centre, including a Fairy Tea Party as a special pre-show treat for children and carers. Due to popular demand, we also added an extra show to the season, which was scheduled during the school holidays for optimum engagement.

Total box office income \$291,157

Total attendance 6,169

Performances 19

"It would be a mistake to think that Cinderella is just for the very young. This tasteful and gorgeous adaptation truly captures the magic and power of storytelling. With something for everyone, Cinderella is a must-see inclusion in the 2024 Queensland Ballet season."

- Sarah Skubala, The Blurb

### Bespoke

gundirgan, wise woman Birds of Paradise Papillon

25 JULY - 3 AUGUST 2024
TALBOT THEATRE, THOMAS DIXON CENTRE

### gundirgan, wise woman

Choreographer Katina Olsen

Music performed and commissioned by Southern Cross Soloists (SXS) and the SXS Didgeridoo Commissioning Project, composed by Seán O'Boyle AM and Chris Williams, featuring Wakka Wakka didgeridoo soloist and SXS Artist in Residence, Chris Williams

Cultural Consultants Uncle Prof. Kevin Williams, Aunty Sue-Ann Williams, Aunty Patricia Lieschke and Chris Williams

Costume Designer Noelene Hill Lighting Designer Ben Hughes

#### **Birds of Paradise**

Choreographer Milena Sidorova

Music Lagrene Bireli, Schwandt W/Andre F/Kahn G, Dom la Nena, Le bars Hugues Yves, Presley E/Matson V, Schubert F/Mueller W, Django Reinhardt, Yorgui Loeffler

**Costume Design collaboration by** Milena Sidorova and Timothy Corne **Lighting Designer** Ben Hughes

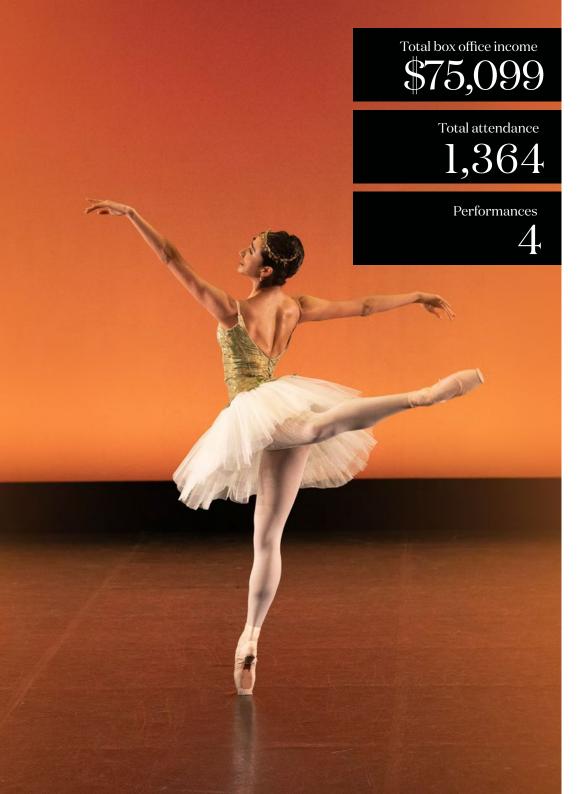
### Papillon

Choreographer Jack Lister
Music Louis Frere-Harvey
Costume Design collaboration by Jack Lister and Zoe Griffiths
Lighting Designer Ben Hughes

Bespoke returned for its seventh year in 2024, pushing the boundaries of dance with three daring and creative contemporary works by a mix of international and local talent. Making her Queensland Ballet debut, Wakka Wakka and Kombumerri choreographer, Katina Olsen collaborated with Southern Cross Soloists (SXS) commissioned composers Sean O'Boyle AM and Wakka Wakka composer and didgeridoo soloist Chris Williams along with SXS musicians to tell the powerful Queensland story of Aunty Maureen Williams in *gundirgan*, wise woman. Milena Sidorova, an awardwinning Ukrainian-Dutch choreographer, and Young Creative Associate at the Dutch National Ballet, adds her own unique international flair to the line-up contributed the stunning Birds of Paradise, a comedic exploration of bird-like courtship. And Australian choreographer and Associate Artistic Director of Australasian Dance Collective Jack Lister collaborated with composer Louis Frere-Harvey to create Papillon, a new work featuring Queensland Ballet's Jette Parker Young Artists, which Fjord Review reviewer described as "quite simply, one of the best things (she had seen) in the last four years".



- Fjord Review, Madelyn Coup



# Queensland Ballet Academy Gala

9 - 11 AUGUST 2024 TALBOT THEATRE, THOMAS DIXON CENTRE

#### **Donizetti Variations**

Choreographer Paul Boyd Composer Gaetano Donizetti Costume Stylist Kathryn Lee Dancers Level 1 and 3

### Kin

Choreographer Louise Deleur
Composer Peter John and Miguel Marin Pavon
Dancers Contemporary Course

### Dance of the Rose Maidens

Excerpt from the ballet Gayane
Choreographer Arranged by Veronika Sheremetieva
after Nina Anisimova
Composer Aram Khachaturian
Dancers Level 2

#### Release

Choreographer Louise Deleur Composer Adrian Berenguer and Frederico Albanese Dancers Level 1

#### Antics

Choreographer Louise Deleur Composer John Adams Dancers Level 3

### **Intimate Dialogues**

Choreographer Contemporary Course's Self Creation Composer Khosh Ensambles Dancers Contemporary Course

### Above and Beyond

Choreographer Grant Aris Composer Pustopestski Ilan Costume Stylist Kathryn Lee Dancers Level 2

#### Le Corsaire

Choreography Arranged by Claire Phipps-Males and Camilo Ramos after Marius Petipa Composer Adolphe Adam Dancers Pre-Professional Program

### **Student Works**

### **Cheating Death**

Choreographer Matthew Erlandson Composer Alexander Ewald Dancer Matthew Erlandson - Level 1

#### Strum

Choreographer Erin Theone King Composer Paul George and Carey O'Sullivan Dancer Erin Theone King - Level 2

#### La Silla

Choreographer Emanuel O'Kane Composer Milos Kardagalic Dancer Emanuel O'Kane - Level 1

### Mechanical Mechanism

Choreographer Mathilda Guerin Composer Travis Lake Dancer Mathilda Guerin - Level 2

### Academy Défilé

Choreographer Paul Boyd Composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky Dancers Level 6 - Pre-Professional Program

Lighting Design by Glenn Hughes.

### Coco Chanel:

### The Life of a Fashion Icon

4 - 19 OCTOBER 2024 PLAYHOUSE, QPAC

Choreographer Annabelle Lopez Ochoa
Artistic Collaborator Nancy Meckler
Stager Luis Torres
Composer Peter Salem
Costume and Set Designer Jérôme Kaplan
Costume Assistant to the Designer Mark A. Zappone
Revival Lighting Designer Jon Buswell, after Billy Chan
Sound Designer Roy Cheung
Conductor Nigel Gaynor
Music performed by Camerata – Queensland's Chamber Orchestra

With all 17 performances sold out before the season had begun, Coco Chanel: the Life of a Fashion Icon was a ballet Brisbane had been waiting eagerly for. Created by Belgian-Columbian choreographer Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, the full-length narrative work unravelled the captivating and controversial life of the iconic French designer Gabrielle 'Coco' Chanel. Audiences were treated to elegant Chanel-inspired costumes and sets by Jérôme Kaplan, and a sublime score by Peter Salem – resulting in the biggest orchestra ever fitted into QPAC's Playhouse. A celebration of high fashion and dynamic dance, this co-production with Hong Kong Ballet and Atlanta Ballet was rightfully declared by The Australian as a 'never-ending feast for the eyes'.

A co-production of Queensland Ballet, Hong Kong Ballet and Atlanta Ballet, first performed in Hong Kong, China, on 24 March 2023.

"The movement, reflecting Chanel's vision for simplicity of design, is minimalist but eclectic, drawing from the classical and contemporary canons, with the odd nod to the expressive jazz dynamic. Featuring a plethora of arabesques of all heights, especially penchés, spinning chainés, needle-sharp pointe work and angled arms, it is crisp, coherent and eloquent."

- Dance Australia Denise Richardson





### The Nutcracker

13 - 21 DECEMBER 2024 LYRIC THEATRE, QPAC

Choreographer Ben Stevenson OBE
Composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Music Arranger and Conductor Nigel Gaynor
Costume Designer Desmond Heeley
Associate Costume Designer Noelene Hill
Set Designer Thomas Boyd
Lighting Designer David Walters
Revival Lighting Designer Cameron Goerg
Music performed by Queensland Symphony Orchestra

The twelfth season of our much-adored festive season delighted audiences once again with its enchanting mix of storytelling, whimsical characters, expressive choreography, and a familiar, delightful score. Audiences of all ages were captivated over the 12-performance season and story of Clara and the Nutcracker Prince with the box office result the highest in the history of Queensland Ballet, surpassing the previous record held by *The Sleeping Beauty* in 2021. 2024 statistics show that more than 185,000 people had seen it since we began performing it annually in 2013.

Total box office income \$2,482,660

Total attendance 22,297

Performances

12

Queensland Ballet presents

Derek Deane's

# The Lady of the Camellias

Performed by Shanghai Ballet

4 - 8 DECEMBER 2024 LYRIC THEATRE, QPAC

Choreographer Derek Deane OBE
Composer Carl Davis
Scenery and Costume Designer Adam Nee
Lighting Designer Friðþjófur Þorsteinsson
Assistant to the Choreographer Ivan Gil-Ortega

In December, we presented Derek Deane OBE's *The Lady of the Camellias* by Shanghai Ballet, in a season exclusive to Brisbane. A sister company to Queensland Ballet, the performances were in response to a signed Memorandum of Understanding, and an incredible four-city China tour that we completed in 2018. It was our pleasure to welcome Shanghai Ballet and reiterate our appreciation and commitment to cultural diplomacy, and experience some Shanghai magic in 2024. Based on the landmark 1848 novel by French author Alexandre Dumas fils, Deane's *The Lady of the Camellias* featured sumptuous choreography, exquisite set designs and elegant costumes. Also joining us for the stunning season was international star Ivan Gil-Ortega in his first return to the stage since retiring 16 years prior.





# Academy Director Report

It was another busy year for Queensland Ballet Academy, with classwork and academic work, six performance seasons, and multiple performance opportunities with Queensland Ballet and across southeast Queensland.

I had the pleasure of attending the prestigious Prix de Lausanne competition in Switzerland in February, where two Academy Pre-Professional Program (PPP) dancers were the only finalists and prize winners from Australia. Jenson Blight was honoured with the Bourse Astarte Scholarship Award, and Ruby Day received the Rudolph Nureyev Foundation's Best Young Talent Award. Another student, Sienna Baensch. participated in the 2024 Partner School choreographic project. After this success, Jenson accepted a position with the Dutch National Ballet's Junior Company, while Ruby accepted a Company position with Queensland Ballet, which commenced in November 2024. I couldn't be prouder of their success, and their achievements marked their dedication and passion for the art form under the mentorship of our Academy team, underscoring our Academy's commitment to nurturing world-class talent.

In March, we presented *Tchaikovsky Suite* with Queensland Youth Orchestra. Following successful collaborations in the past, it was wonderful to join forces together at the Talbot Theatre, Thomas Dixon Centre for two performances, and the two art forms of music and dance were enjoyed by many.

The PPP dancers performed in Aspire '24 in May, a program of contemporary and classical works including, for the first time, excerpts of Ben Stevenson OBE's The Nutcracker. The purpose of this annual season is to celebrate our graduating students and provide them with a platform for professional performance; this opportunity is vital to their development and their preparations for future careers in the dance industry.

Aspire '24 was followed by a successful Lower School Mid-Year Demonstration in June, as well as our Upper School Open Assessments, which were open to the public for the very first time in our Academy theatre at Kelvin Grove.

The following day was the opening night of our annual Academy Gala, part of the Queensland Ballet season, which was performed to a sold-out theatre for all four performances, with ticket sales extended to our Final Dress Rehearsal. due to the high popularity of the season. From beloved pieces in the Classical Ballet canon including the famous Le Corsaire Pas de Trois, to works that pushed the boundaries of neo-classical and contemporary dance, the program featured a diverse range of repertoire and showcased all levels of our Academy. Highlighting our commitment to fostering new creative voices, a selection of vibrant studentchoreographed works were a standout feature of the program.

Following a successful End of Year Demonstration, we presented our fourth season of Soirée at the Talbot Theatre, in collaboration with Philip Bacon Galleries, and accompanied by sublime live music by Camerata – Queensland's Chamber Orchestra. This year we had the privilege of working with the artworks of William Robinson AO, considered one of Australia's greatest living artists.

Our gratitude goes to Philip Bacon AO for his support of this unique artistic collaboration, to William Robinson AO for sharing his wonderful works with us, and to Camerata for the joy of live music.

In addition to our 2024 season performances, Academy dancers took part in various events across Brisbane, including the World Science Festival, and a standout performance opportunity was Stephanie Lake's Colossus at the Brisbane Powerhouse.

Offstage, one of the year's biggest events was the launch of the Ballet Boys Project - an initiative to address the shortage in boys and men in dance. Since 2020, the Academy has seen a 36 per cent decline in male enrolments, a trend I've observed across the professional training industry globally. From July, the Company began offering free weekly classes to boys aged 11 to 14. The initiative, providing fully subsidising classes, with no uniform or audition requirements, saw boys attend from as far as Coffs Harbour, the Gold and Sunshine Coasts, and even Yeppoon. We look forward to continuing this initiative throughout 2025.

# The Ballet Boys Project

By the end of 2024, I was pleased to see five PPP dancers become Queensland Ballet Jette Parker Young Artists, and others securing industry employment across the globe. It is always a true joy to watch the dancers grow, not only into skilled and assured artists but also into confident young people. The year undoubtedly brought its challenges, yet the young dancers met each one with resilience, dedication, and hard work.

I would like to warmly thank the entire Academy faculty, as each single member of the team played a key role in the dancers' development and successes.

My gratitude goes to the wider teams across the Academy and Company from each department – artistic, health, production, costume, facilities and the teams in business, who ensure each season we do runs smoothly and professionally.

I would also like to acknowledge our Academic partner, Kelvin Grove State College, and the Department of Education for their continuous support. Thank you of course to our donors and supporters who enable the dreams and ambitions of the next generation of artists, and for supporting all that we do.

Christian Tàtchev
Director of Queensland Ballet
Academy



# 2024 Queensland Ballet Academy Highlights

2 performance works 270 students enrolled in Academy programs 50% alumni part of Queensland Ballet ensemble





# Tchaikovsky Suite

16 MARCH 2024
TALBOT THEATRE, THOMAS DIXON CENTRE

#### Act I

Queensland Youth Orchestra 2

Gabrieli

Sonata Pian e Forte CH. 175

Beethoven

**Egmont Overture** 

Bruch

Violin Concerto No. 1, Movt. 1, soloist Liam Beak

#### Act II

Queensland Ballet Academy's Pre-Professional Program Dancers and Queensland Youth Orchestra 2

#### Tchaikovsky

The Seasons, Op.37b, February, Carnival
The Seasons, Op.37b, November, Troika The
Seasons, Op.37b, July, Song of the Reaper
Valse-Scherzo in C Major, Op.34
The Seasons, Op.37b, June, Barcarolle
The Seasons, Op.37b, December, Christmas
6 Morceaux, Op.19, Nocturne in C-Sharp Minor
The Seasons, Op.37b, September, The Hunt

### **Queensland Ballet Academy**

Choreographer Paul Boyd Costume Designer Kathryn Lee

#### **Pre-Professional Program Dancers**

Asher Flynn-Kann Jorja Signitzer Brooke Tarry Mia Pakse Eli Southurst Moeki Kojima Grace Ye Rubi Hawkins James Willis Ruby Day Jazmin Townsend Saya Hibino Jeannie Mok Taya Barnard Jenson Blight Telia Townsend Jessica McAll Yasmin Ibrahim Lucia Minju-Song Zara Ibrahim

Following successful collaborations with Queensland Youth Orchestras at the Old Museum Concert Hall in previous years, we were thrilled to present *Tchaikovsky Suite* together in 2024. Performed by our Pre-Professional Program dancers, it was such a pleasure to see the talent from both our Academy and QYO come together for this stunning season, enjoyed by lovers of dance and live music at the Talbot Theatre. Thomas Dixon Centre.

# Aspire '24

24 - 25 MAY 2024 TALBOT THEATRE, THOMAS DIXON CENTRE

### The Nutcracker\*

Choreographer Ben Stevenson OBE Music Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky Music Arranger Nigel Gaynor Costume Designer Noelene Hill Lighting Designer Cameron Goerg \*Excerpts

Waltz of the Flowers
Pas de trois - Mirlitons
Arabian Pas de deux
Spanish Pas de deux
Russian - Gopak solo
Grand Pas de deux
Finale

### For my Friend

Choreographer Louise Deleur

Music MK & Dom Dolla and Zbigniew Preisner
Lighting Designer Cameron Goerg

Costume Designer Kathryn Lee

### Bolero...912 seconds

Choreographer Paul Boyd
Music Maurice Ravel
Lighting Designer Cameron Goerg
Costume Designer Kathryn Lee
Visual Specialist Angharad Gladding

### Student Works

Each performance featured two works by the following dancers, alternating per performance:

Jenson Blight, Jazmin and Telia Townsend, Rubi Hawkins and James Willis, Maeve Rooney and Jorja Signitzer

Aspire '24 showcased the technical and artistic talent of our Pre-Professional Program dancers in a program encompassing contemporary and classical works and, for the first time, excerpts from Ben Stevenson OBE's *The Nutcracker*. Presented over two days at the Talbot Theatre, Thomas Dixon Centre, the purpose of *Aspire* '24 is to celebrate the graduating students and provide them with a platform for professional performance.





### Soirée

24 - 25 MAY 2024 TALBOT THEATRE, THOMAS DIXON CENTRE

### Drift

Choreographer Louise Deleur
Composers Ezio Bosso and Brendan
Joyce Performed by Contemporary Course
Costume Designer collaboration by Kathryn Lee
and Louise Deleur

Artwork by William Robinson AO
Creation Landscape - Earth and Sea
Dark tide Boganar
Starry night
Study for Creation Landscape, Darkness and Light

### Aventures d'une sieste l'après-midi (Adventures of an Afternoon Nap)

Choreographer Paul Boyd
Composers Maurice Ravel
Assistant to the Choreographer Claire Phipps-Males
Costume Stylist Kathryn Lee
Performed by Level 1 Ballet Course\*

Artwork by William Robinson AO Feeding the birds Unanimous self portrait Bastille Pont des Arts Le Louvre

### The Dome of Space and Time

Choreographer Natalie Weir
Composers Franz Schubert, Johann Sebastian
Bach, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Ludwig van Beethoven,
Alexander Scriabin and Nigel Gaynor
Costume Designer Kathryn Lee
Performed by Pre-Professional Program\* (\*Also
featuring Level 1 and Level 3)

### Artwork by William Robinson AO

Creation Landscape - Dome of Space and Time
Farmyard 21 (Heading off)
Out of the dawn
Veranda after Piero
Shaded garden & morning coffee
Self portrait with goosefeathers
Creation Landscape - The Ancient Trees
Self Portrait with panama and Shells

### Catharsis

Choreographed and performed by Jeannie Mok (Pre-Professional Program) Composers Johann Sebastian Bach

### Artwork by William Robinson AO

Passing Storm late afternoon Beechmont ('mountain' series)

### 水鏡 (suikyo)

Choreographed and performed by Saya Hibino and Moeki Kojima (Pre-Professional Program) Composers Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Artwork by William Robinson AO Creation Night

Beechmont (study)

Lighting Design by Glenn Hughes.

# Community, Education and Health Highlights

52,322 7,985 dance health participants

97% satisfaction rating

regional locations



# Community Health Institute

### Community, Education, Dance and Performance Health

- In late 2023, Queensland Ballet was granted \$750,000 in funding from Queensland Health to sustain the delivery of a range of Dance Health programs over three years, including:
  - Dance for Parkinsons
  - Ballet for Brain Injury
  - Dance for Arthritis
  - Dance Rehab (modified in hospital classes)
  - Ballet Serene (modified classes in aged care)
- Community, Education and Dance Health Regional Touring programs reached 6,615 participants across 40 regional and remote communities.
- In 2024, we had the pleasure of working and collaborating with elite sports organisations, including Diving Australia and Queensland Academy of Sport, to tailor ballet programs that assist their athletes' training and performance.



 Our Performance Health team enabled peak performance of our 60 Company dancers and Academy Upper Level and Pre-Professional Program students, on stage and off, as well as treating and managing injuries to rehab dancers back to the stage.



- Our highly successful online Dance for Arthritis class program (in partnership with Arthritis
  Queensland) continued, with approximately 180 participants joining weekly classes online from
  their own homes around Queensland. A new research project in partnership with the University
  of Queensland commenced in late 2024, which will examine participants outcome measures
  across mobility and function, pain levels, confidence and wellbeing, during and after the Dance
  for Arthritis program.
- Our Education Team developed two new First Nations In-School Workshops in collaboration
  with incredible Teachers and Elders. This work enabled the development of free resources
  available to teachers, as well as professional development offering that empowers teachers
  with accessible and engaging strategies to spark students' connections to place and cultural
  identity.



# Accessibility

Across all Queensland Ballet productions at QPAC and the Thomas Dixon Centre in 2024, a total of 285 Companion Card seats were booked. This provision is for Companion Card holders to receive a complimentary ticket at no cost, where attending patrons have a need for attendant care support.

In 2024, Queensland Ballet offered audio-described performances for our seasons of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Coppélia*, and *The Nutcracker*, are we were pleased to welcome vision-impaired audiences to these special performances. Whilst awareness of this offering is low, the impact this inclusive offering has with patrons is profound.

"Last Saturday, I had the wonderful experience of going to a Ballet at QPAC. It was the first time since my vision deteriorated badly.

Arranging QPACs audio description availability by phone beforehand, a QPAC member fitted me out and showed me how to operate the system. I spoke with one of the audio describers, I was seen to my seat, and they made sure it was working well.

I have some vision still and could see shapes of blue moving on the stage. The audio description brought these shapes to life and informatively spoke of the story. I was blown away by the excitement in the describers voice; the scenery, props, gestures and costumes were described in detail. I was caught up in the performance.

The two audio describers - Jane and Joanne were volunteers from Vision
Australia and I thank them so much for making the ballet so enjoyable. I
will definitely go again."

These insights continue to shape Queensland Ballet's audience engagement strategies, ensuring a dynamic and inclusive approach to growing and sustaining its community of ballet lovers.



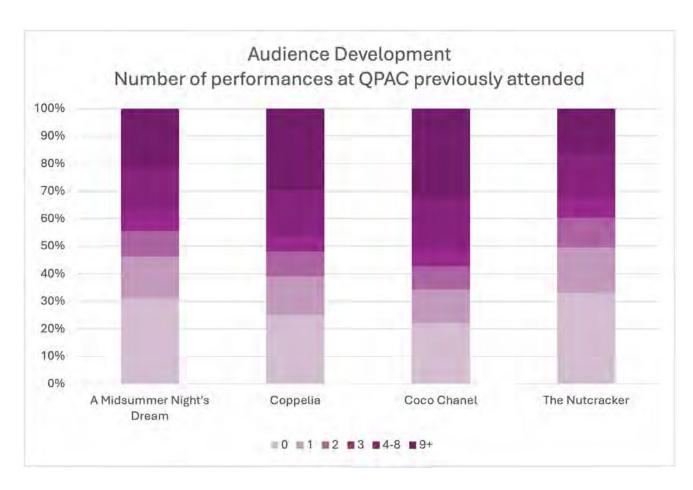
# Audience Insights

### **Audience Development**

Queensland Ballet's 2024 Season presented a diverse program that resonated with both new and returning audiences. Across all QPAC-venued productions, the company successfully attracted first-time attendees while deepening engagement with loyal patrons.

The season opened with A Midsummer Night's Dream, a production that proved highly popular, drawing a 31% new audience. The Nutcracker remained a festive favourite, welcoming 33% new attendees, reinforcing its role as an entry point for new audiences.

Queensland Ballet audiences are typically culturally active, with a strong representation from the Expression culture segment (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre). Expressions are enthusiastic 'yes' people, drawn to a wide range of cultural experiences that reflect their interests in learning, community, and nature. They value inclusivity and see culture as a means to connect with others and broaden their horizons.



From a socio-demographic perspective, audiences for each production shared common traits, with strong representation from four key Mosaic profiles:

A First-Class Life – Affluent, experience-driven individuals with a passion for arts and culture.

Family Fringes – Suburban families balancing cultural engagement with family life.

**Traditional Pursuits** – Older audiences who appreciate heritage, tradition, and high-quality cultural experiences.

Mature Freedom – Active retirees who enjoy travel, leisure, and lifelong learning.

# Digital Marketing Engagement

### **QUEENSLAND BALLET**

	Facebook	Instagram	LinkedIn	YouTube
2023	93,394	55,704	5,635	7,523
2024	94,181	63,341	6,767	8,273
+/-%	+0.84%	+13.71%	+20.09%	+9.97%

### QUEENSLAND BALLET ACADEMY

	Facebook	Instagram
2023	5,955	8,827
2024	6,627	9,993
+/-%	+11.28%	+13.21%

### THOMAS DIXON CENTRE

	Facebook	Instagram	LinkedIn
2023	743	1,555	851
2024	985	2,441	1,144
+/-%	+32.57%	+56.98%	+34.43%

# Publicity

In 2024, Queensland Ballet continued to strengthen its media presence and public profile, achieving steady growth across key communications metrics. Between 1 January and 17 December, Queensland Ballet was mentioned in 4,280 media stories, representing a 5% increase from the previous year. The total potential news reach expanded to 1.4 billion, a 25% increase, reflecting strong national and international visibility for the Company's activities and initiatives.

Media sentiment remained largely positive, with 84% of coverage classified as positive in tone, underscoring continued audience and media support. Queensland Ballet's strongest media coverage aligned with key productions and announcements, with June and October emerging as high engagement periods.

Coverage spanned a wide range of platforms, including broadcast, print, online, and social media. Toptier media outlets such as ABC Brisbane, The Courier-Mail, Nine Brisbane, and Dance Australia featured Queensland Ballet throughout the year. In terms of reach, significant amplification came from ABC Online, MSN.com, The Sydney Morning Herald, and Daily Mail, contributing to strong national and global editorial exposure.

Queensland Ballet Academy also featured prominently in earned media coverage across all formats, reinforcing the Academy's strategic role in nurturing the next generation of dance talent and its growing profile within the education and cultural sectors.

The Company was frequently mentioned alongside major national organisations such as the Brisbane Lions, Qantas, and Cricket Australia, positioning Queensland Ballet within broader cultural and social conversations.

The estimated advertising value equivalent (AVE) of Queensland Ballet's earned media was USD \$13.2 million, with online and print media comprising the majority of this value. This outcome reflects the costeffective impact of the Company's media strategy in delivering high-quality exposure.

Platform-level analysis showed that traditional media and social channels continued to serve as effective communication tools, with news media, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and broadcast media accounting for the largest share of coverage.

Queensland Ballet's media and communications activity in 2024 supported broader organisational goals, including audience development, community engagement, and brand leadership. Through strategic storytelling and targeted media engagement, the Company reinforced its position as a leading cultural institution in Queensland and a respected voice within the Australian arts landscape.





# Thomas Dixon Centre Highlights

- In 2024 we saw 18% growth in unique external hirers, compared to 2023.
- Thanks to the TDC Access Program, generously supported by Arts Queensland, we have enabled 14 Queensland based arts companies subsidised venue hire.
- Queensland Ballet has become the first arts company in the world to achieve the highest,
   Platinum level certification awarded by the International WELL Building Institute for the
   Thomas Dixon Centre.
- We continued supporting the local community group, Kurilpa Futures, in their finalisation of the Montague Road Project. The project is a community- led vision for the Montague Road, informing the BCC Montague Transport study and supporting the development of the suburb in collaboration with the community.
- We installed a kids' corner in the public foyer of the Thomas Dixon Centre, providing a safe and engaging play space for our youngest visitors.
- We launched regular Auslan guided tours.
- Thomas Dixon Centre has become a southside hub for the Brisbane Open House Festival, during which we collaborated with a local artist group, Brisbane Urban Sketchers (enabling a public exhibition of their works) and John Paul College (enabling their ensembles performances).

2024 Snapshot

Ticketed guests

36,477

Dance class participants

40,442

Children's workshop participants

492

Dance sector venue bookers

38

71,694

### Queensland Ballet is proudly supported by:

### GOVERNMENT



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





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

### MAJOR AND PRESENTING PARTNERS







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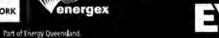


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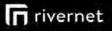
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A cultural club celebrating heritage and vibrancy of ballet.

Dr Marosh & Lily Vrtik

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artists and arts workers

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Grant Aris

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John Sandurski

Jung-sun Na

Kali Harris

Kvm Stokes

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Lonii Garnons-Williams

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Luke Edmiston (since July)

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Marv Li

Matthew Lawrence

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Bronte Kielly-Coleman

Brooke Ray

Callum Mackie

Chiara Gonzalez

Clavton Forsyth

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Lucy Green

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Paige Rochester

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Renee Freeman

Rian Thompson

Ruby Day (since November)

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Shaun Curtis

Sophie Scicluna

Tara Robertson (April to August)

Vanessa Morelli

Vito Bernasconi

Yanela Piñera

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Alvssa Park Annabelle McCov

Asher Flynn-Kann (June)

Ashlee Basford

Corina Poh

Ethan Mrmacovski

Gina Lee

Jack Jones

James Willis (June)

Jenson Blight (June to August)

Joseph Moss

Joshua Douglas

Milana Gould

Seth Marshall

Taron Geyl

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Ai Shaw

Amanda Newman

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Paula Perkins (since October)

Joanne Eager (to May)

Marijke Linda Van Klinken (since

September)

Matthew Jeffrey (since November)

Shwe McManus (March to July)

Valentina Romero Silva (since July)

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Michelle White

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Ashley Dunn

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Timothy Gawne

Ting Yan Hau

Tobias Trstenjak

Wilson Hodges

Winter Chapman

Yasmin Rich

### VISITOR EXPERIENCE **CASUALS**

Amy Schultz

Courtney Adams

Darcy Jackson

David O'Neill

Ella Gamble

Emma Summerton

Imogen Millhouse Jane Ristuccia-Mason

Jennifer Williams

Jenny Stanton

Jordan Lennon

Leonie Simpson

Liam Johnson

Luke Grenfell

Meghan Shannon

Molly Waters

Sabrina Kucfir

Samantha Turk Samuel Piper

Tallulah Bennetton

Tess Passmore Virginia Gray

# Photography Credits

- 01 Senior Soloist Chiara Gonzalez. Photo by David Kelly.
- 03 Executive Director Dilshani Weerasinghe and Board Chair Brett Clark. Photos by Jakob Perrett.
- 05 Acting Artistic Director Greg Hormsan backstage at Queensland Ballet on Tour. Photo by David Kelly.
- 06 Backstage at Coco Chanel: the Life of a Fashion Icon. Photo by David Kelly.
- 07 Principal Artist Alexander Idaszak. Photo by David Kelly.
- 08 Principal Artist Patricio Revé and Soloist Laura Tosar performing in Rhapsody in Motion. Photo by David Kelly.
- 09 Principal Artist Patricio Revé and Soloist Laura Tosar performing in Rhapsody in Motion. Photo by David Kelly.
- 10 Former Principal Artists Joel Woellner and Mia Heathcote. Photo by David Kelly.
- 11 Principal Artist Patricio Revé and Senior Soloist Chiara Gonzalez performing Coppélia. Photo by David Kelly.
- 12 First Company Artist Libby-Rose Niederer. Photo by David Kelly.
- 13 Principal Artist Patricio Revé, Soloist Laura Tosar, and Company Artist Edison Manuel. Photo by David Kelly.
- 14 Queensland Ballet Academy Gala. Photo by David Kelly.
- 15 Principal Artist Yanela Piñera. Photo by David Kelly.
- 16 Company Artist Ines Hargreaves. Photo by David Kelly.
- 17 Shanghai Ballet dancers performing Derek Deane's The Lady of the Camellias.
- 18 Queensland Ballet Academy Artistic Director Christian Tatchev. Photo by Jakob Perrett.
- 19 Ballet Boys Project class. Photo by Angharad Gladding.
- 20 Queensland Ballet Academy Gala. Photo by David Kelly.
- 21 Tchaikovsky Suite. Photo by David Kelly.
- 22 Aspire '23. Photo by David Kelly.
- 23 The Dome of Space and Time in Soirée. Photo by David Kelly.
- 24 Jazz for Seniors class. Photo by Jakob Perrett.
- 25 Dance for Parkinsons class. Photo by Jakob Perrett.
- 25 Dance for Rehab class. Regional Tour. Kombumerri Dreaming Workshop. Photos by Angharad Gladding.
- 25 Community Workshop. Photo by Angharad Gladding.
- 26 Panel discussion following A Midsummer Night's Dream. Photo by David Kelly.
- 30 Thomas Dixon Centre promenade. Photo by Jakob Perrett.