

Queensland Ballet

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR LI CUNXIN AO

Bespoke

Miroirs

Tartan

Four Last Songs

27 JULY - 5 AUGUST 2023

TALBOT THEATRE

THOMAS DIXON CENTRE

Every step a

iconic

modern

dynamic

story

creative

unexpected



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From the Artistic Director

Three renowned Australian choreographers, three new contemporary works. Always challenging expectations, *Bespoke* returns for its sixth year with new works to inspire our dancers, creatives, and audiences alike. Each year I look forward to this contemporary season. It is always fascinating to watch the dancers being challenged to move in different ways.

In 2023, we are thrilled to work with Remi Wörtmeyer, Paul Boyd and Natalie Weir, who have each shared their distinct choreographic talents with Queensland Ballet, collaborating with artists, dancers, costume and lighting designers, and drawing inspiration from memories, art, music and emotion.

Remi Wörtmeyer is an international award-winning choreographer and former Principal Dancer with the Dutch National Ballet, whose acclaimed choreographic works have been performed in ballet companies and international galas across the world. Paul Boyd is an inventive and creative choreographer with a performance career spanning more than 25 years across Europe and Australia. His recent works for Queensland Ballet include the enchanting *The Little Mermaid* and *Penned* in this year's *Academy Aspire* season. And award-winning choreographer, Natalie Weir, is a name many of you will be familiar with, known internationally for her highly emotive

works and organic movement style. Natalie's most recent repertoire appeared in our *2022 Li's Choice* and *Summer Soirée* seasons.

My gratitude goes to Remi, Paul and Natalie for sharing their talent, imagination, and creativity this season, as well as the wider team of incredible collaborators for bringing these works to life through the magic of costumes, lighting, music and design.

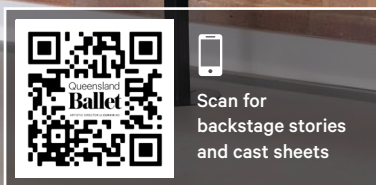
Thank you to our State and Federal Governments, and our extended family of corporate partners and donors, for your support in enabling us to present bold, daring and insightful contemporary works.

Finally, thank you to you – our audience, for being open and intrigued by new concepts, movement, and ideas about dance and where it can take us.

Enjoy the performance!



Artistic Director



Credits

Miroirs (World Première)

Choreographer
Remi Wörtmeyer

Music
Maurice Ravel *Miroirs 1, 3 and 4*

Set and Costume Designer
Remi Wörtmeyer

Lighting Designer
Paul Jackson

Pianist
Daniel Le

Tartan

Choreographer
Paul Boyd

Music
Selected excerpts by –
Aine Ni Dhubhghaill,
Royal Scots Dragoon Guards,
Isaac Shepard and Stephen Hoganson,
The Auld Town Pipes, Andy Stewart,
Stephen Baker, Greg Moore,
Paul Leonard-Morgan and
Dougie Wilkinson

Costume Stylist
Zoe Griffiths

Lighting Designer
Paul Jackson

Four Last Songs (World Première)

Choreographer
Natalie Weir

Music
Richard Strauss *Four Last Songs*

Costume Designer
Noelene Hill

Lighting Designer
Paul Jackson

Duration: Approximately two hours and 10 minutes, including two 20-minute intervals.

Tartan and *Four Last Songs* are performed to recorded music.

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.

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.



Miroirs

Miroirs is a non-narrative piece that hovers between neoclassical and contemporary dance.

The inspiration for the movement comes directly from the poetic music of Ravel. Ravel wrote the piece in five movements, each dedicated to a fellow member of the French avant-garde artist group Les Apaches.

As a visual artist myself who works between fine art, theatre and fashion, Ravel's inspiration to interpret the diverse disciplines within the Les Apaches artistic movement into musical form caught my imagination.

While *Miroirs*, (French for mirrors) is a non-narrative piece, there are inspirations of reflection, reflecting both literally in the metallic of the costumes and chain set and in the idea of seeing our world, our narcissism and relationships in reflection.

– Remi Wörtmeyer

Tartan

I have always been emotionally stirred by the heartfelt sound of the bagpipes as in my youth, I learned the traditional Highland dancing of Scotland so I was compelled to create a work where I could combine the technique of the traditional steps and further advance the movement into a contemporary mix.

With a loose narrative, this work tells of an elderly Scottish gentleman who relives his past and the ghosts of his youth return one more time to enjoy a night of friendship in his humble dwelling.

I was thrilled to be able to invite Queensland Ballet alumni, Graeme Collins, whose global career in dance has spanned six decades and his presence has given this work a depth that only maturity and artistic experience can offer. The juxtaposition of combining the mature artist with the youth of Queensland Ballet was a very interesting project to create and I thank Graeme for his wonderful support and generous contribution to *Tartan*.

My gratitude is also extended to the very talented dancers of the Jette Parker Young Artist Program who gave their artistic commitment during the creation of *Tartan* and allowed me to find a choreographic language that showcased their versatility and skills. And to Li who entrusted my artistic judgement to create once again for Queensland Ballet, I thank you for your belief.

– Paul Boyd

Four Last Songs

Towards the end of 1946, Richard Strauss read a poem by Eichendorff, *Im Abendrot*, in which an ageing couple at the end of their lives together look at the setting sun and ask, "Could this perhaps be death?". Strauss had also recently been given a copy of the complete poems of Hermann Hesse and was strongly inspired by them.

This is the inspiration of his musical composition of four songs, beginning with *Spring*, followed by *September*, *Going to Sleep* and *At Sunset*. The words are all warm, wise and reflective with no hint of religious consolation as death approaches, but rather a deeply felt appreciation of the world before leaving. The music has been described, rightly, as transcendental. It aches with love for a life that is quietly fading, tinged with a sense of a life lived to its full.

My interpretation of this glorious music is the notion of the common thread that connects us all. The women dressed in red is this thread. The four other women represent the four seasons of life, whilst the men are all connected as one man, a thread of humanity, all washed up on a beach, like grains of sand. A quote from a novel, *The River Wife* by Heather Rose has also inspired my thoughts: "There is a wonder in this world that has no words. It is the wonder of things visible and invisible, human and other. I am not one or the other, the world is not one or the other, we are both."

My gratitude goes to costume designer Noeline Hill for her glorious costumes and inspiration, to lighting designer Paul Jackson for his sensitive, heavenly design, and a big thanks to all of the production team.

Special thanks to my rehearsal assistant, Zenia Tatcheva for her support and generosity to the dancers and I, and the creative process.

A huge thanks to the dancers of Queensland Ballet for their wonderful sense of collaboration, devotion and fearlessness in the creation of the work. They are all outstanding artists.

– Natalie Weir

Im Abendrot (At Sunset)

Through sorrow and joy
we have gone hand in hand;
we are both at rest from
our wanderings
high above the quiet land.

Around us, the valleys bow,
the skies have begun to darken.
Only two larks, recalling a dream
soar up into the haze.

Come close, and leave them to fly
soon it will be time to sleep
so that we don't get lost
in this solitude.

O vast, tranquil peace,
so deep in sunset glow
How weary we are of wandering –
Could this perhaps be death?

– Joseph von Eichendorff

About the Choreographers



Remi Wörtmeyer
Choreographer

Remi Wörtmeyer is a multidisciplinary artist whose work for stage, film and exposition has been shown and sold around the world. His experiments at combining the visual and performing arts make him a unique talent with a distinctive voice.

Born in Adelaide, Australia, Remi started his dance career with The Australian Ballet (Melbourne) before joining American Ballet Theatre (New York). He was invited to join Dutch National Ballet (Amsterdam) in 2010 and has since appeared as a guest artist across Europe, Russia, North America and Asia. Remi has been ranked among the world's top 100 dancers by Dance Europe, which has also awarded him the Critics' Choice for best performance on two occasions. He's been the recipient of Australia's Walter Bourke Award, multiple prizes at Dance Open St Petersburg (including Excellence in Artistry and the People's Choice Award), and the Alexandra Radius Prize – the highest honour for classical dancers in the Netherlands.

Remi's choreographic creations for the Dutch National Ballet, The Australian Ballet, Atlanta Ballet, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Dance Open and Moscow's Benois de la Danse were widely acclaimed. His ballets *Concerto Mondrian* and *Picasso's Ballerina* (about the artist's first wife and muse Olga Khokhlova) were both performed in Barcelona.

In addition to his well-regarded ballet choreography, Remi has also choreographed for opera, musical theatre and fashion (Paris Couture Fashion Week Show for RVDK). More recently he also became the creator of short films (for *Holland Festival*, *G-Star RAW*, *Paco Rabanne*) and a painter-sculptor. His sculptures and art installations have featured in galleries across Europe including solo exhibitions in the Netherlands.



Paul Boyd
Choreographer

Paul's performing career spanned 25 years in companies in Germany, Switzerland, and at Queensland Ballet. He danced the major classics as well as works by Jiří Kylián, William Forsythe, Mats Ek, Nils Christie, George Balanchine, John Neumeier, Roland Petit, Natalie Weir and François Klaus, among others, and received the German Critics Award for Best Up and Coming Artist and Best Established Artist in Europe.

Paul's choreographic works have been performed by Queensland Ballet, The Australian Ballet (*Bodytorque* season), Bundesjugendballett (Hamburg), Suzhou Ballet Theatre (China), Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts, Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, Queensland University of Technology, Sydney City Youth Ballet, and Hong Kong Ballet Group. *Uneven Ground* was performed by The Royal Ballet School (London), as well as touring to New York and Japan.

Paul has been Guest Teacher for The Royal Ballet School, Hong Kong Ballet, Semperoper Dresden and Deutsche Oper am Rhein (Germany), West Australian Ballet and Perth's Graduate College, and Architanz (Tokyo).

Paul is Queensland Ballets Academy's Ballet Master and Resident Choreographer.



Natalie Weir
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.

Our Dancers

Principal Artists



Victor Estévez



Lucy Green



Mia Heathcote



Yanela Piñera



Patricio Revé



Joel Woellner



Neneka Yoshida

Senior Soloists



Alexander Idaszak



Kohei Iwamoto

Soloists



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Lewis Formby



Clayton Forsyth



Heidi Freeman



Renee Freeman



Ines Hargreaves



Kaho Kato



Bronte Kielly-Coleman



Dylan Lackey



John Paul Lowe



Callum Mackie



Edison Manuel



Briana McAllen



Amber Mitchell-Knight



Frederick Montgomery



Joshua Ostermann



Brooke Ray



Paige Rochester



Lou Spichtig



Leisel Rose



Jessica Stratton-Smith



Isabella Swietlicki



Ari Thompson



Kayla Van Den Bogert

Jette Parker Young Artists



Shanti Barlow



Indi Drew



Josh Fagan



Sean Ferenczi



Taron Geyl



James McDonell



Joseph Moss



Hana Nonaka Aillon



Alisa Pukkinen



Tom Umseher



Eliza Wenham



Mia Zanardo

The Jette Parker Young Artist Program is generously supported by Oak Foundation, Barbara Bedwell, Marietje & Keith Brown, Brett Clark AM & Maria Clark, Dr Ben Duke & Ms Cate Heyworth-Smith KC, FA & MA Pidgeon, Frazer Family Foundation, Goldberg Family Foundation, Patricia Macdonald Memorial Foundation, CP Morris Fund at the APS Foundation, Ms Jane Murphy and Dr Anthony Cooper and Liz & Graeme Wikman.

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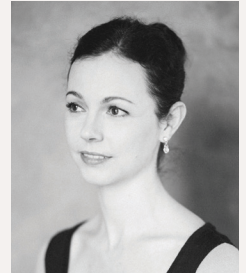
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Zenia Tatcheva
Ballet Mistress



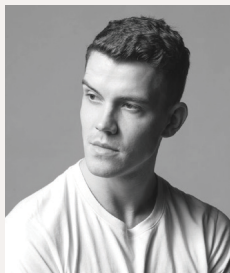
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Director of Queensland Ballet Academy



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Associate Choreographer



Natalie Weir
Resident Choreographer



Nigel Gaynor
Music Director & Principal Conductor



Graeme Collins
Guest Artist – Tartan

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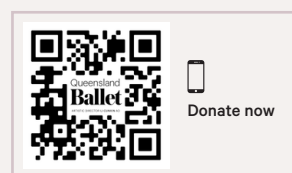
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The Talbot Theatre at the Thomas Dixon Centre is an extraordinary new performance space, where stories are shared, creativity flourishes, and connections between artists and audiences are forged.

The recent revitalisation of the Thomas Dixon Centre is an extraordinary story of passion, tenacity and altruism. Queensland Ballet, a not-for-profit arts company, chose to refurbish 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.

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

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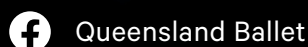
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