# Queensland Ballet

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR LI CUNXIN AO

**GENEROUSLY ENABLED BY** 

**Ken Talbot Foundation** 

PRESENTING PARTNER

Margot McKinney.

Derek Deane's

## Strictly Gershwir

28 SEPTEMBER -7 OCTOBER 2023 LYRIC THEATRE OPAC

Every step a stunning

# Slamorous story musical dynamic vibrant

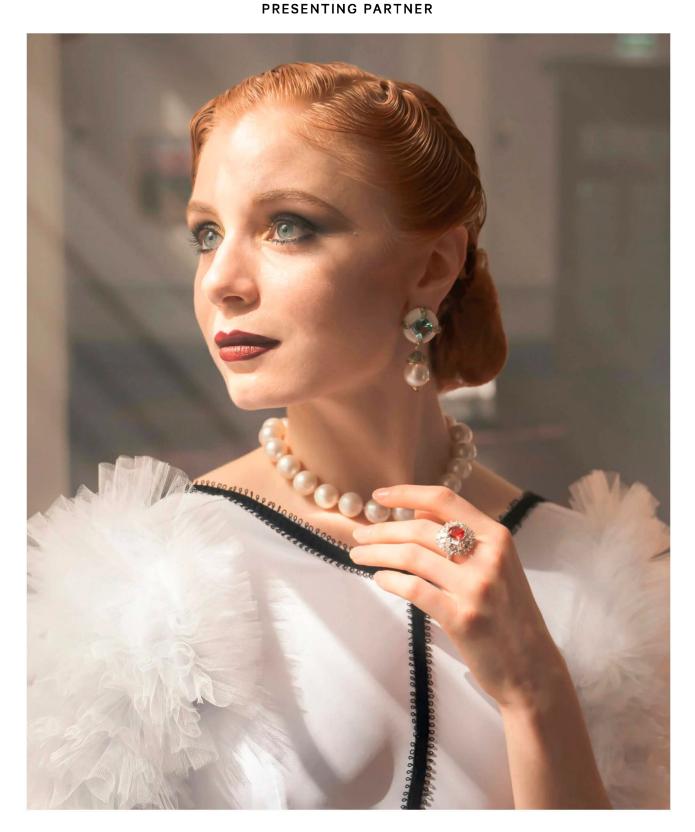






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Queensland Ballet Principal Artist Mia Heathcote

## From the Artistic Director

"Dance at its most joyous" is how we described *Strictly Gershwin* when we first presented it in 2016, and it has been an absolute delight to see our studios brimming with that joy during rehearsals again this year.

Created in 2008 for the English National Ballet, Derek Deane's production is a spectacular tribute to George and Ira Gershwin and the big band era of the thirties, evoking the silver screen magic of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, and the glamour of the golden age. The challenging choreography demands impeccable technique and versatility from our dancers, with the much-loved music paired with tap, ballroom, musical theatre, jazz dance, and classical ballet. It has been wonderful watching the dancers enjoy the challenge of this production – some of them for the second time, having performed in our sold-out 2016 season. I am thrilled to give audiences the chance to witness the wonder of it once again.

Under the music direction of Gareth Valentine and the experienced batons of Nigel Gaynor and guest conductor Michael England, Queensland Symphony Orchestra takes to the stage in the style of a 1930s big band. Also joining us on stage are the guest vocalists Ben Mingay, Luke Kennedy, Naomi Price, Nina Korbe, as well as internationally-renowned pianist Daniel Le. These guest artists are as much a part of the action as the dancers.

Through Derek's exceptional choreography and energetic direction, the magic of the silver screen of old Hollywood is alive once more. I acknowledge the creative vision of costume designer Roberta Guidi di Bagno and lighting designer Howard Harrison in realising this direction and bringing glamour and finesse to this production. Bill Simpson choreographed the electrifying tap sequences and will join us on stage once again as a guest artist alongside the talented Kris Kerr and our very own Rachael Walsh in encore performances. Audiences will be in awe of the truly jaw-dropping, Busby Berkeley-inspired routines.

This unforgettable production would not be possible without the support from many organisations and individuals. My heartfelt thanks to our generous enabler, the Ken Talbot Foundation; our Presenting Partner for this production, Margot McKinney; as well as the State and Federal Governments. My gratitude also goes to our Corporate Partners, and our family of valued supporters for enabling all that we do – thank you.

With over 45 musicians plus more than 60 dancers and singers on stage, Strictly Gershwin is one of those truly unforgettable experiences.

Enjoy this dazzling performance!



## Credits

Choreographer and Director Derek Deane OBE

Assistant to the Choreographer Ivan Gil-Ortega

Stager Amy Hollingsworth

Words and Music George Gershwin and Ira Gershwin

Music Adaptation
Gareth Valentine

Orchestrator Don Sebesky

Tap Choreographer and Guest Artist Bill Simpson

Costume Designer Roberta Guidi di Bagno

Lighting Designer Howard Harrison

Revival Lighting Designers Cameron Goerg and Ben Hughes

Conductor Michael England Nigel Gaynor (5 - 6 October 7.30pm, 7 October 1.30pm & 7.30pm)

Music Performed by Queensland Symphony Orchestra

Guest Pianist Daniel Le

Duration: Approximately two hours and 30 minutes, including a 20-minute interval.

Costumes and props are co-owned by Queensland Ballet and Tulsa Ballet.

"STRICTLY GERSHWIN" (George Gershwin, Ira Gershwin. DuBose Heyward) All Right Reserved. Used By Permission.

The Worldwide Copyrights in the Music of George and Ira Gershwin for this Presentation are Licensed by the Gershwin® Family.

Derek Deane's Strictly Gershwin is generously enabled by the Ken Talbot Foundation.

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.



## From the Choreographer

Strictly Gershwin was a joy to create from beginning to end. I was free from the restrictions of the purely classical ballets and was able to experiment more choreographically with all of the different dance styles in the production. Of course, George and Ira Gershwin drove me along with their extraordinary musical talents and how wonderful it was to do to two complete small ballets with Rhapsody in Blue and An American in Paris, both so totally different to each other. Who could go wrong with hits such as The Man I Love, Summertime, Someone to Watch Over Me, Shall We Dance and many more brilliant gems. It was also exciting to delve into the world of ballroom dancing, modern jazz and tap dancing. Combined with all of the different dance styles, the production has something for every dance lover. It was very important for me to give a true sense of the 'golden period' choreographically and I hope that I have managed to take the audience back to a more romantic and glorious era!

## About the Choreographer

Derek Deane OBE was trained at The Royal Ballet School 1970-1972 and joined the Royal Ballet Company in 1972. In 1976 he was promoted to Soloist, in 1980 to Principal dancer and in 1982 to Senior Principal dancer. He danced many of the major roles in The Royal Ballet repertoire including ballets by MacMillan, Ashton, Balanchine, Tetley, Robbins, Cranko and others.

He left The Royal Ballet in 1989 to pursue a freelance choreographic and dance career. He became Assistant Artistic Director of the Teatro dell Opera Rome 1990-1992 and then became Artistic Director of English National Ballet 1993-2002. From 2018 Derek has been Artistic Director of the Shanghai Ballet.

Derek's choreographic creations include *The Picture of Dorian Grey, Chanson, Impromptu, Simply Simon, Anything Goes, Paquita, The Lady of the Camellias, Hamlet, The Nutcracker, Giselle, Swan Lake, The Sleeping Beauty, Romeo and Juliet, Alice in Wonderland, Cinderella, Coppélia, Le Fantome de L'Opera and Strictly Gershwin.* 

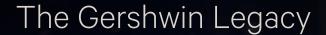
His ballets have been performed by The Royal Ballet, Sadlers Wells Royal Ballet, English National Ballet, Croatian National Ballet, Rome Opera Ballet, Teatro San Carlo Naples, Kobyashi Ballet Tokyo, Queensland Ballet, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Tulsa Ballet, Teatro La Scala Milan, Shanghai Ballet and Toulouse ballet du Capitol.

Derek created in-the-round ballets, Swan Lake, Romeo and Juliet, The Sleeping Beauty for the Royal Albert Hall, London. Swan Lake and Romeo and Juliet were also performed in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.

He has been nominated for two Laurence Olivier awards and in 2002 was honoured by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for services to dance, and became an Officer of the British Empire OBE.



Derek Deane OBE Choreographer



The Gershwin brothers have long been celebrated for their ability to create popular music that transcends time and captivates generations.

Loved by performers and audiences alike, their compositions are renowned for their sheer brilliance and musicality. Renowned American composers Irving Berlin and Cole Porter regarded George and Ira Gershwin as the foremost popular music writers of the 1920s and '30s. But what makes their music so timeless? The answer lies in the quality of their tunes: they can be adapted for many different styles whilst still maintaining the melody along with the warmth and heart of the song.

Younger brother George Gershwin's musical artistry was a remarkable fusion of traditional orchestral composition and the vibrant spirit of American jazz. He had spent time working at Tin Pan Alley (New York City's music publishing district) as a song plugger, recording and arranging thousands of other people's songs, learning intuitively the elements that made a song successful. His talents grew as he undertook commissions for concert music, balancing his work with musical comedies, culminating in his most iconic piece, *Rhapsody in Blue*. This heralded a new era in American music.

Beyond George's instrumental genius, a significant part of the Gershwin legacy lies in Ira's poetic lyrics, which breathed life into the melodies. From the infectious energy of Shall We Dance to the irresistible cadence of Fascinatin' Rhythm, Ira's words fit the music seamlessly. George would compose the music, and Ira would weave in lyrics that harmonised flawlessly with the melodies in a rare synergy of genius. This creative process would play a vital role in their enduring success.

After George's early and untimely passing, Ira became custodian of the Gershwin legacy, diligently preserving his brother's work and generously donating manuscripts to the Library of Congress, ensuring their music became an integral part of America's cultural heritage.

The Gershwins remain forever synonymous with the vibrant sounds and style of the 1920s and '30s America yet, even today, their music continues to take centre stage.

We are delighted to celebrate their legacy through *Strictly Gershwin* – paying homage to their music which so beautifully captures the glitz and dynamism of the Jazz Age.



## Program Act I: Gershwin on Broadway Someone to Watch Over Me Fascinatin' Rhythm Shall We Dance? The Man I Love 'S Wonderful Embraceable You An American in Paris Interval Act II: Gershwin in Hollywood Rhapsody in Blue Gershwin Interlude Oh, Lady Be Good But Not For Me It Ain't Necessarily So Strike Up the Band Who Cares? A Foggy Day Summertime I Got Rhythm Fascinatin' Rhythm Finale

## 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



Vito Bernasconi



Chiara Gonzalez



Lina Kim



Georgia Swan



Laura Tosar

## First Company Artists



D'Arcy Brazier



Liam Geck



Vanessa Morelli



Libby-Rose Niederer



David Power



Rian Thompson



Sophie Zoricic

## Company Artists



Luca Armstrong



Mali Comlekci



Shaun Curtis



Luke DiMattina



Lewis Formby



Clayton Forsyth



Heidi Freeman



Renee Freeman



Ines Hargreaves



Kaho Kato



Bronte Kielly-Coleman



Dylan Lackey



Callum Mackie



Edison Manuel



Briana McAllen



Amber Mitchell-Knight



Frederick Montgomery



Joshua Ostermann



Brooke Ray



Paige Rochester



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, Marietjie & Keith Brown, Brett Clark AM & Maria Clark, Dr Ben Duke & Ms Cate Heyworth-Smith KC, FA & MA Pidgeon, Frazer Family Foundation, Goldburg 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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Mary Li Ballet Mistress & Principal Répétiteur



Zenia Tàtcheva Ballet Mistress



Matthew Lawrence Ballet Master



Jillian Vanstone Ballet Mistress



Christian Tàtchev Director of Queensland Ballet Academy



Natalie Weir Resident Choreographer



Jack Lister Associate Choreographer



Nigel Gaynor Music Director & Principal Conductor

## **Guest Artists**



Michael England Conductor



Bill Simpson Tap Choreographer and Tap Artist



Kris Kerr Tap Artist



Rachael Walsh Tap Artist



Luke Kennedy Singer (Tenor)



Naomi Price Singer (Mezzo)



Nina Korbe Singer (Soprano)



Ben Mingay Singer (Tenor)



Camilo Ramos Principal Artist



Daniel Le Pianist

## Live Music Partner

Here at Queensland Symphony Orchestra, we're for great music. We are the leading orchestra in the State, performing a wide variety of concerts all year round in Brisbane and beyond. From classical music masterpieces, blockbuster film scores and exciting family concerts to intimate chamber music performances in our Studio, Queensland Symphony Orchestra aims to be an orchestra for everyone. Each year, we collaborate with Opera Australia, Opera Queensland, and Queensland Ballet to present exceptional experiences.



#### Concertmaster

Alan Smith

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Lynn Cole

Ann Holtzapffel

Runa Murase

Rebecca Seymour

Steven Tooke

Brynley White

#### Violin 2

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Gail Aitken ~

Jane Burroughs

Faina Dobrenko

Simon Dobrenko

Delia Kinmont

Natalie Low

Helen Travers

Harold Wilson

#### Viola

Charlotte Burbrook de Vere =

Martin Alexander +

Ella Beard

Gregory Daniel

Kirsten Hulin-Bobart

Li-Ping Kuo

#### Cello

Matthew Kinmont ~

Daniel Chiou

Andre Duthoit

Matthew Jones

Kaja Skorka

Craig Young

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Justin Bliss ^

#### Flute

Alison Mitchel ~

Hayle Radke >>

Stephanie Vici

#### Piccolo

Kate Lawson \*

#### Oboe / Cor Anglais

Vivienne Brooke \*

#### Clarinet

Brian Catchlove =

Karen Corkeron

Diana Tolmie

Kate Travers

#### **Bass Clarinet**

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We gratefully acknowledge all who have supported Queensland Ballet so far. Our family of supporters all play a vital part in helping Queensland Ballet enrich lives through the beauty and magic of ballet. Philanthropy is what enables us to share the magic of ballet with communities in Queensland and beyond, to make the greatest impact, and to create a legacy for future generations to access and enjoy ballet.

The Ian Potter Foundation Oak Foundation Anonymous (1) Kay Van Norton Poche AO Mr Roy Thompson AC & Mrs Nola Thompson Mr Trevor St Baker AO & Mrs Judith St Baker Amanda Talbot

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Your support helps us to achieve our ambitious vision to enrich lives.

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Economy: Ms Clare O'Connor. We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestors of this land, their spirits and their legacy. The foundations laid by these ancestors - our First Nations Peoples - gives strength, inspiration and courage to current and future generations, both Indigenous and

non-Indigenous, towards creating a better

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To view our full staff list, please visit

queenslandballet.com.au/discover/company/staff

the open spaces outside the Centre.

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