

Queensland Ballet

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR LI CUNXIN AO

Trilogy

A Brief Nostalgia
Rooster
My Brilliant Career

16 - 25 JUNE 2023
PLAYHOUSE, QPAC

Every step a spirited bold
passionate
brilliant story
must see heart-felt
determined driven



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From the Artistic Director

The three unique works in *Trilogy* will transport you to eras and landscapes of beauty, joy, and mystery.

I am excited to share the Australian premiere of Jack Lister's *A Brief Nostalgia*. A co-production with Birmingham Royal Ballet, this cinematic work had its world premiere in Birmingham in 2019 and we have been looking forward to bringing it to Brisbane audiences ever since.

Christopher Bruce's *Rooster* is a true delight to present, with its vibrant 1960s soundtrack, colourful costumes, and brilliant choreography. We presented the work last year as part of our *Moonlight Ballet* season at the Gold Coast's HOTA (Home of the Arts) and I have no doubt it will bring as much joy and happiness to the Brisbane theatre as it did at HOTA.

Many of you may recognise *My Brilliant Career*, made famous by the much-loved Australian novel by Stella Maria Sarah 'Miles Franklin'. It was also turned into a classic Australian movie. We are thrilled to have internationally renowned choreographer Cathy Marston create this world premiere work for us, with stunning new set and costume designs by

David Fleischer, original music by Matthew Hindson, lighting by Paul Jackson and video design by Craig Wilkinson.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to the talented Creative teams who brought to life the magic of theatre, including Camerata – Queensland's Chamber Orchestra who plays live accompaniment to *A Brief Nostalgia* and *My Brilliant Career*.

I must thank our supporters who share our passion for dance and generously enabled these productions, in particular Ian and Cass George for their support of *My Brilliant Career*, as well as the Federal and State Governments, our Corporate Partners, and our treasured family of donors.

To our audience – prepare to be inspired, challenged, and thrilled by this exceptional *trilogy* of works.

Enjoy the performance!



Li Cunxin AO
Artistic Director



Credits

A Brief Nostalgia (Australian Première)

Choreographer

Jack Lister

Set and Costume Designer

Thomas Mika

Composer

Tom Harrold

Lighting Designer

Alexander Berlage

Rooster

Choreographer

Christopher Bruce

Costume Designer

Marian Bruce

Stagers

Steven Brett

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Lighting Designers

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Music

The Rolling Stones

Revival Lighting Designer

Cameron Goerg

My Brilliant Career (World Première)

Choreographer

Cathy Marston

Set and Costume Designer

David Fleischer

Co-scenario / Dramaturg

Edward Kemp

Lighting Designer

Paul Jackson

Music

Matthew Hindson

Video Designer

Craig Wilkinson

Duration: Approximately two hours and 25 minutes, including two 20-minute intervals.

Music performed by Camerata – Queensland's Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Nigel Gaynor (*A Brief Nostalgia* and *My Brilliant Career*). Guest conductor Alexander Rodrigues at selected performances. *Rooster* performed to recorded music.

A Brief Nostalgia is a co-production between Birmingham Royal Ballet and Queensland Ballet.

Rooster was created for Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève on 10 October 1991. *Rooster* costumes courtesy of The National Ballet of Canada.

My Brilliant Career is generously enabled by Ian and Cass George.

The music of *My Brilliant Career* is made by arrangement with Faber Music, London.

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.





A Brief Nostalgia

Even the most fleeting moments can cast great shadows

It's the scent that lingers on a collar

It's the rain tinted concrete, the aromatic petrichor

It's the rise and fall of a chest in a comfortable silence

It's losing yourself in their eyes

For the loss of a moment can be found

Carved into mirrored shelves of memory

Lost is a lovely place to find yourself

– Jack Lister



Jack Lister
Choreographer

About the Choreographer

Jack Lister is an Australian dancer, choreographer, and filmmaker. After graduating from The Australian Ballet School, Jack joined Queensland Ballet in 2014 and danced many featured roles within the vast classical and modern repertoire.

After creating his first work in 2015, Jack quickly established a name as a respected emerging maker, recognised by The Australian's national dance critic as "a young choreographer who is going places". He has gone on to create works for Queensland Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet, and Australasian Dance Collective, presented throughout Australia, United Kingdom, China and Germany to critical and audience acclaim. In collaboration with Director Ryan Renshaw, Jack's film works have been screened globally at multiple prestigious film festivals, garnering numerous awards.

In 2020, Jack joined the Australasian Dance Collective as a Company Artist and was appointed Associate Choreographer with Queensland Ballet, and in 2022, he was appointed the Creative Associate with Australasian Dance Collective.



Soloist Chiara Gonzalez and
First Company Artist Liam Geck.
Photography David Kelly

Rooster

Rooster is a celebration of the music and of the times these tracks were recorded, the '60s and '70s. In my teens and twenties, I lived with these songs. I have taken eight tracks and linked them with themes present in the lyrics. Taking *Little Red Rooster* as my starting point, I have created preening cockerels that symbolise the stylish but chauvinistic young men of my youth. Meanwhile, for the most part, the women look on with ironic amusement at the male posturing. The result is something of a battle of the sexes.

– Christopher Bruce

About the Choreographer

One of Britain's leading choreographers, with an international reputation, Christopher Bruce trained at the Ballet Rambert School. He joined Ballet Rambert in 1963 and was remembered particularly for his performances in Glen Tetley's *Pierrot Lunaire* and his own *Cruel Garden*. He is recognised as the last major choreographer to have been nurtured by Marie Rambert.

In addition to performing and choreographing, Bruce was Associate Director of Ballet Rambert from 1975-1979 and in 1980 became Associate Choreographer. In 1994 he returned to the Company as Artistic Director until 2002. Among his best-known works are *Cruel Garden*, *Ghost Dances*, *Requiem*, *Intimate Pages*, *Sergeant Early's Dream*, *The Dream is Over*, *Swansong*, *Rooster*, *Moonshine* and *Hush*.

Bruce has choreographed for many companies around the world and has enjoyed close associations with Australian Dance Theatre, Nederlands Dans Theater, Cullberg Ballet, the Gulbenkian Ballet, Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève, English National Ballet (Associate Choreographer: 1986-1991) and Houston Ballet (Resident Choreographer: 1989-1998 and Associate Choreographer: 1998-2021).

Awards include Evening Standard Award, 1974 and 1997; Prix Italia, 1982; International Theatre Institute Award for Excellence in International Dance, 1993; De Valois Award for Outstanding Contribution to Dance at Critics' Circle National Dance Awards, 2003; Rheinische Post Theater Oscar for *A Evening of Work* by Christopher Bruce at Theater Krefeld-Mönchengladbach 2004; Best Choreography, Critics' Circle Awards, 2009. Bruce was awarded a CBE in 1998.



Christopher Bruce
Choreographer



Principal Artist Yanela Piñera
Photography David Kelly
Headshot by Rick Guest & Olivia Pomp

My Brilliant Career

Sybylla Melvyn is in conflict – with herself and the world. She doesn't know whether she wants to fit in or go her own way, to conform or rebel. What she does know is that her future lies somewhere other than her family home in Possum Gully, where her life consists of looking after her many siblings and helping to run the family's small holding, with her demanding mother and feckless father. Sybylla Melvyn has dreams.

Her dreams are brought closer to fulfilment by her grandmother's invitation to come to live on her estate in Caddagat. Here, in the house of her grandmother and unmarried Aunt Helen, she encounters a new world of culture, civilisation and men. Men like affable Uncle Jay-Jay, Frank the cocky Jackaroo – and men like Harry Beecham, the prosperous local landowner.

Despite her Aunt's warnings, Sybylla allows herself to flirt with Harry and at a party on his estate of Five-Bob Downs all is going well between them until Harry asks her to marry him. All of Sybylla's conflicts and insecurities spill out and she flees back home to Possum Gully. Where Harry comes to find her...

– **Cathy Marston and Edward Kemp**

About the Choreographer

Cathy Marston is an award-winning choreographer and artistic director. She spent two years at the Royal Ballet Upper School, before launching a successful international dance career now spanning over 25 years. She will become Director of Ballett Zürich, Switzerland, from August 2023.

Cathy's gift is to join artistic dots, creating form for stories, emotions and ideas. Her passion for narrative dance is shared by her regular collaborators, particularly dramaturg, Edward Kemp, with whom she has created over twenty works over two decades. As Associate Artist of the Royal Opera House (2002-2007), she interpreted Ibsen and Shakespeare in *Ghosts* and *before the tempest...after the storm*, as well as many other short works. As Director of Bern Ballet Switzerland (2007-2013), she developed her unique approach to narrative in works such as *Juliet and Romeo* and *Ein Winternachtstraum*. Since 2013, receiving commissions from all around the world she interprets literature through dance, for example *Mrs Robinson*, *Snowblind* (inspired by Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome*), Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. Likewise, she offers unusual perspectives in her biographically-inspired works, *The Cellist*, *Victoria* and *Witch-hunt*. She won the South Bank Sky Arts Award for Best Dance Production, the UK National Dance Award twice and has been short-listed for the Olivier Awards. In 2020 the International Institute for Dance and Theatre awarded her their prize for Excellence in International Dance.

Marston's works have been commissioned and staged for companies such as The Royal Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Joffrey Ballet, Houston Ballet, Northern Ballet, English National Ballet, Cuban National Ballet, Danish Royal Ballet, Ballet Black, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens and many more. She has also founded two project-based companies: The Cathy Marston Project (UK) and Compagnie La Ronde (Switzerland).



Cathy Marston
Choreographer

About the Music

When I start to tell people about *My Brilliant Career*, my first instinct is to immediately qualify, "Not mine!" I have been lucky in my life as a classically-based composer because I have written many large-scale works for ballet companies, orchestras and chamber groups all over the world. But I have never written a piece like this one.

This is my second-ever narrative ballet, and my first with the brilliant choreographer, Cathy Marston. Commissioned by Queensland Ballet, it's my first ever piece in which I have set and evoked a 19th-century landscape: the sometimes harsh and forbidding country of rural New South Wales in which the ballet is set. My music is very much rooted in today, in contemporary 21st-century Australian life. I can't change this – it's who I am. So in this piece, I was faced with the conundrum of how to reflect the setting of the story, and especially the motives of the characters, in a musical way that would not seem out of place either in the late 19th century or today.

Apart from the fact that the story was written by a young woman, people's experiences must have been so substantially different from our lives over a century later. Many of the social norms and conventions have irrevocably changed. Sybylla (or Syb and Bylla, in our case) receiving two proposals at such a young age is one example – it's quite inconceivable for a young woman to be dealing with this as opposed to going to university and pursuing a career.

The fabulous opportunity arising from this ballet was that I used the traditional way of associating characters with musical ideas, but even more so, I based the music firmly in melody and musical forms from the past. For example, in the first flirtatious, romantic scene between the Sybyllas and Harry, I imagined a fictitious 1930s film track, with the characters swooning all over one another. Grandmother is represented by a musical figure that could be found in a French Baroque overture from the 1700s. There is a garden party that is very prim and proper (at the beginning at least) with a string quartet providing the background music. There's even a bush dance!

The other interesting approach to me in writing this piece was considering the characters in music. The Sybyllas are represented by an ascending line, representing an optimistic (if at times headstrong) future. Harry is more 'grounded', more forthright. Aunt Helen is caring yet a little fussy with the girls. Frank... well, you'll see and hear what sort of a person he is. At times, Cathy and I had very different viewpoints on one of the characters in particular. This is the thrill of collaborating on such a piece as this. We may come from different places, but the result is that we end up with a nuanced, multi-layered piece of art.

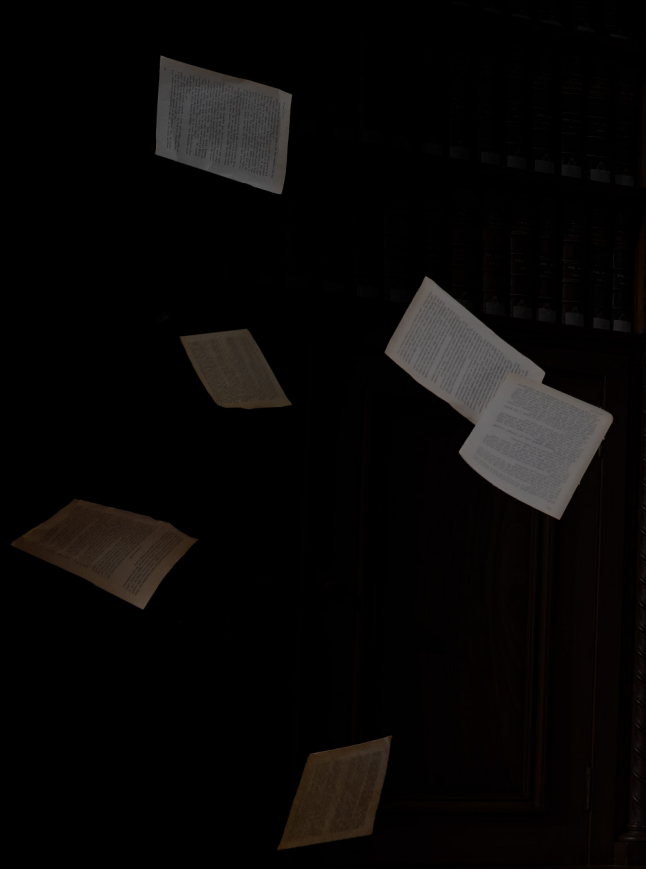
It has been a genuine thrill to work on *My Brilliant Career*, and I can't wait to see and hear the final product.

Matthew Hindson
Composer



Syb and Bylla

Sybylla Melvyn is a girl, on the brink of womanhood, who is determined there should be no limit to her horizon. But she's full of complexity and as she imagines her future, two sides of her personality (Syb and Bylla) often pull in different directions.





About the Sets and Costumes

Q&A with Set and Costume Designer, David Fleischer

What was your impression of the novel when you read it?

An extraordinary piece of writing, especially for when it was written. I think the characters are so vivid. That's what we've really landed on – how important the distinction is between the characters, and how individual they are. It's a wonderful gift to have a piece that has such beautifully rendered characters because it makes designing them and creating them, along with the dancers and the choreographer of course, really wonderful.

What is unique about creating for ballet compared to theatre or opera?

I think the difference is that ballet is such an abstraction. It's not even that they're not talking or saying the same words; it's actually that it's a different form of expression – one that is impressionistic and symbolic at times, and its relationship to the real world is already stylised. What does the audience need to know or what do we want them to feel? It's through a different lens. For set design, you've got to get out of the way, you've got to frame it in a way that allows the dancers to shine. In this piece, we're trying to find ways to tell a story with the dancers in an integrated way.

Tell us about the set and costume designs for *My Brilliant Career*.

Cathy and I had a good storyboard depicting how the space would evolve over the course of the 45 minutes... The costume design side of things is a more intricate process and a really beautiful part of this space. They render these characters with such great detail and offer interpretations of the period. It still feels relevant and it still feels expressive and contemporary, because the novel was so forward-thinking. With both, we're not trying to render a world of the past, nor are we setting it today. We can feel an immediacy and a contemporary vision.



Support New Works

Help support this new chapter for Miles Franklin's classic novel with a gift to Queensland Ballet.

Choose a *My Brilliant Career* costume to support and have your name acknowledged inside the costume for its life – a personal thread connecting you with the artists of Queensland Ballet for generations to come.

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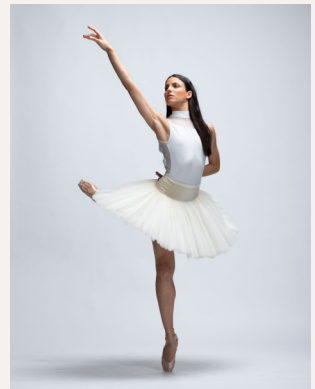
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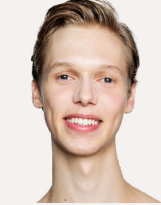
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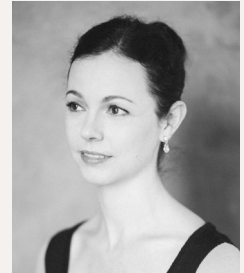
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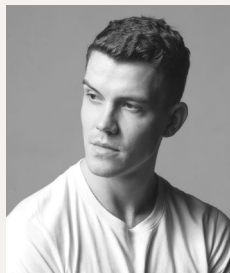
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Camerata – Queensland's Chamber Orchestra is a two-time Helpmann Award nominated ensemble and has established itself as a chamber orchestra of national significance. Known for and adventurous programming, Camerata thrives on collaborations with artists across a range of artforms.

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Zara Gomes

Director of Partnerships,

Experiences & Enterprise

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Craig Cathcart

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Company Manager

Daniel Dunlop

Head of Production

Don Mackenzie

Manager, Production Operations &

Stage Management

Heather O'Keeffe

Assistant Stage Manager

Sam Cujes

Technical Manager (Lighting)

Matthew Allan

Lighting Programmer

Tim Gawne

Technical Coordinator (Lighting)

Riley Silk

Technical Manager (Staging)

Dan Villiers

Technical Coordinator (Staging)

Ben Marcolin

Head of Costume

Lauryn Jackson

Costume Performance Manager /

Associate Designer

Zoe Griffiths

Costume Workroom Manager

Kathi Lionheart

Principal Cutters

Gayle MacGregor

Rebekah Ellis

Costumier / Cutter

Chiahui Tseng

Costumier / Milliner &

Administration Assistant

Vicki Martin

Costumiers

Ai Shaw

Ana Draca Hilan

Ella Lollback

Frances Pyper

Isabelle Lacombe

Jayne Warrington

Michelle Potts

Art Finisher / Costumier

Elsbeth Cameron

Wig, Hair, and Makeup Supervisor

Michael Green

Costume Theatre Supervisor

Sarah Parker

Theatre Dresser / Maintenance

Alloquois Callaway

Chiahui Tseng

Shoe Coordinator

Amanda Newman

Company Pianist

Dan Le

QUEENSLAND BALLET

PERFORMANCE HEALTH TEAM

Head of Performance Health

Michelle White

Company Physiotherapist

Renee Meffan

Melissa Tattam

Company Massage Therapist

Pedro Alcobio

Pilates Instructor

Catherine Neal

Strength Coach

Tony Lewis



PO Box 3567, South Bank,
QLD 4101
T 07 3840 7444 W qpac.com.au

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The Honourable Leeanne Enoch MP, Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts.

Director-General, Department of Communities and Housing and Digital 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 Queensland.

Patrons are advised that the Performing Arts Centre has EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES, a FIRE ALARM system and EXIT passageways. In case of an alert, patrons should remain calm, look for the closest EXIT sign in GREEN, listen to and comply with directions given by the inhouse trained attendants and move in an orderly fashion to the open spaces outside the Centre.

To view our full staff list, please visit
queenslandballet.com.au/discover/company/staff

Queensland Ballet is proudly supported by:

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



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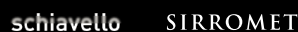
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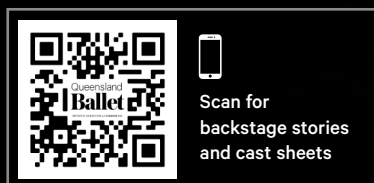
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A cultural club celebrating heritage and vibrancy of ballet.

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Queensland Ballet

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@qldballet

406 Montague Rd, West End QLD 4101. PO Box 3791, South Brisbane QLD 4101. **Phone** 07 3013 6666 **Email** mail@queenslandballet.com.au

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