

Queensland Ballet

QB25



The Nutcracker

5 – 13 December 2025

Lyric Theatre, QPAC



Queensland
Government



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Presenting Partner of *The Nutcracker*
Queensland Ballet Soloist Georgia Swan
Photography David Kelly

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From the Artistic Director

This season holds special significance. Over a decade on our stage, we bid farewell to Ben Stevenson's *The Nutcracker*. It has been part of Queensland Ballet's festive tradition, bringing joy to families and marking the holiday season for many in our community.

I acknowledge the Artistic Directors before me, who believed in the enduring magic of *The Nutcracker*. François Klaus, who first introduced it to our audiences, and Li Cunxin AO, under whose tenure Ben Stevenson's version truly became a cornerstone of our festive season. Their stewardship helped shape a shared cultural moment for Brisbane each year.

Ben Stevenson's *The Nutcracker* wouldn't be possible without the support of Amanda Talbot and Valmai Pidgeon AM, whose generosity helped us first bring this production to the stage to become a beloved holiday tradition.

My thanks also go to Sealy of Australia as Presenting Partner of *The Nutcracker*, our Partners and Donors, State and Federal Governments, all who make this production possible.

As we perform it for the final time, we do so with appreciation, for the dancers who have brought these characters to life, for the audiences who have embraced it, and for the memories created across generations.

We now look to the future. Queensland Ballet is preparing a new production of *The Nutcracker*, to premiere in 2026. This will be an entirely new *Nutcracker*, created just for Queensland Ballet by Derek Deane OBE with designs by Lez Brotherston OBE. It's going to be spectacular: epic in vision, breathtaking in detail, and certain to draw audiences not only from Queensland, but from right across Australia.

Thank you for joining us as we say goodbye to one tradition and prepare to welcome another.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Ivan Gil-Ortega.

Ivan Gil-Ortega
Artistic Director



Scan for
cast sheets

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.

Credits

Choreographer ————— Ben Stevenson OBE
Composer ————— Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Music Arranger and Conductor ————— Nigel Gaynor
Guest Conductor ————— Alexander Rodrigues
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,
Voices of Birralelee,
St Peters Lutheran College Choir

Duration: Approximately two hours, including one 20-minute interval.

The matinee performance on Sunday 7 December is performed to recorded music. Recording by Queensland Symphony Orchestra and Voices of Birralelee, conducted by Nigel Gaynor.

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.

Thank You, Brisbane — For 13 Magical Years

For 13 wonderful years, Ben Stevenson's *The Nutcracker* has become a cherished part of Brisbane's Christmas tradition. As we take our final bow for this beloved production, we want to say a heartfelt thank you for making it such a special part of your festive season.

To celebrate, we're giving away **3x double passes to our premiere season of Derek Deane's *The Nutcracker* in 2026**. To enter, share your favourite moment from this year's production on Instagram and tag us @qldballet for your chance to win!

Thank you for sharing the magic of dance with us. Here's to new stories, new dreams, and the next chapter of *The Nutcracker*.



The Choreographer

Ben Stevenson OBE served as Artistic Director of Houston Ballet from 1976-2003, raising the company from a regional troupe of 28 dancers to an internationally acclaimed ensemble of over 50 artists.

For his contributions to international dance, Mr Stevenson was named an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) by Queen Elizabeth II in the New Year's Honors List in December 1999. In April 2000, he was presented with the Dance Magazine Award.

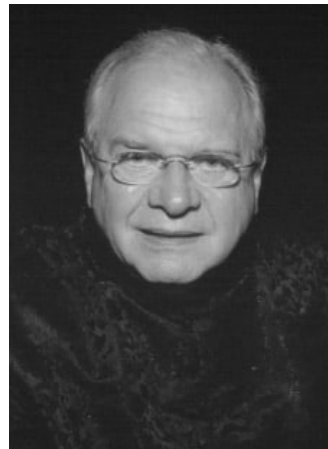
In July 2003, he was appointed Artistic Director Emeritus of Houston Ballet, and the company's affiliated school was renamed Houston Ballet's Ben Stevenson Academy.

Mr Stevenson, a native of Portsmouth, England, received his dance training at the Arts Educational School in London. He appeared with the Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet and English National Ballet where, as a principal dancer, he performed leading roles in all the classics.

In 1967, English National Ballet asked him to stage his first, and highly successful, production of *The Sleeping Beauty* which starred Margot Fonteyn. In 1968, Rebekah Harkness invited him to New York to direct the newly formed Harkness Youth Dancers. After choreographing *Cinderella* in 1970 for the National Ballet in Washington, D.C., he joined the company in 1971 as Co-Director with Frederic Franklin.

Mr Stevenson has received numerous awards for his choreography, including three gold medals at the International Ballet Competitions of 1972, 1982, and 1986. In 2018, Mr Stevenson was acknowledged by the Chinese government as one of the most influential Foreign Experts in the past 40 years since China initiated its policy on Reform and Opening Up.

In July 2003, Mr Stevenson assumed the artistic directorship of Texas Ballet Theatre in Fort Worth, Texas.



Ben Stevenson OBE
Choreographer



"I've loved The Nutcracker since I danced in Houston Ballet's 1979 production. The ballet is a magical fantasy which brings families together for a special time of shared enjoyment. The Nutcracker is our Christmas gift to Queenslanders, and I am excited that this season has become an annual festive tradition in Brisbane."

LI CUNXIN AO
FORMER ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

The Story

Act I

Herr Stahlbaum and his wife are hosting a Christmas party. Clara and Fritz, their children, greet the guests.

All the children are given toys by their parents. Suddenly, the mysterious Dr Drosselmeyer arrives and entertains the children with his magical tricks and wind-up dolls.

Dr Drosselmeyer brings a special gift for Clara – a wooden Nutcracker. In a jealous fit, Fritz breaks it, but Dr Drosselmeyer quickly repairs the Nutcracker. The party ends, the guests leave and the Stahlbaums retire for the night. Clara awakens, the clock strikes midnight, and the room fills with giant mice which attack her! Life-sized toy soldiers, led by the valiant Nutcracker, come to her rescue. The King Rat attacks the Nutcracker, but Clara hits him with her shoe, and the Nutcracker wins the battle. After the battle, the Nutcracker turns into a handsome prince. The Nutcracker Prince transforms the Stahlbaum's house into the Land of Snow. The Snow Queen and the Snow Prince dance with the Snowflakes. Clara and the Nutcracker Prince depart for the Kingdom of Sweets in a beautiful, enchanted sleigh.

Act II

Clara and the Nutcracker Prince continue their journey across the Lemonade Sea. When they arrive in the Kingdom of Sweets, the cooks are preparing delectable treats for their enjoyment, and they are greeted by the Sugar Plum Fairy. In Clara's honour, the Sugar Plum Fairy arranges for the inhabitants of her kingdom to entertain them while they eat by performing a Spanish dance, an Arabian dance, and a Chinese dance. Clara is also entertained by the Dance of the Mirlitons, a dance with Mother Ginger and her children, a Russian dance and the Waltz of the Flowers. Then, the Sugar Plum Fairy and the Nutcracker Prince dance a grand pas de deux. As the celebration draws to a close, Clara drifts off to sleep. She awakens from her dreams as the Nutcracker salutes his Princess Clara.

For Younger Audiences

Act I

Clara and Fritz are playing with gifts at their parents' Christmas party. In a jealous fit, Fritz breaks Clara's Nutcracker doll, but the mysterious Dr Drosselmeyer repairs it. When the clock strikes midnight, the room fills with giant mice which attack Clara. Life-sized toy soldiers led by the valiant Nutcracker come to her rescue against the King Rat. The Nutcracker turns into a handsome prince and transforms the house into the Land of Snow. Clara and the Nutcracker Prince depart for the Kingdom of Sweets in an enchanted sleigh.

Act II

When they arrive, the Sugar Plum Fairy and all the kingdom's inhabitants entertain them with beautiful dances. As the celebration closes, Clara drifts off to sleep. She awakens from her dreams as the Nutcracker salutes his Princess Clara.

Our Dancers

PRINCIPAL ARTISTS



Lucy Green



Yanela Piñera



Neneka Yoshida

SENIOR SOLOISTS



Chiara Gonzalez

SOLOISTS



Vito Bernasconi



Lina Kim



Edison Manuel



Georgia Swan

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D'Arcy Brazier



Vanessa Morelli



Libby-Rose Niederer



Ivan Surodeev



Rian Thompson



Sophie Zoricic

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Heidi Freeman



Renee Freeman



Taron Geyl



Ines Hargreaves



Kaho Kato



Sophie Kerr



Dylan Lackey



Callum Mackie



Briana McAllen



Frederick Montgomery



Joseph Moss



Joshua Ostermann



Alisa Pukkinen



Brooke Ray



Paige Rochester



Leisel Rose



Alfie Shacklock



Jessica Stratton-Smith

JETTE PARKER YOUNG ARTISTS



Annie Chen



Declan Daines



Jai Fauchon



Moeki Kojima



Georgia Lorange



Seth Marshall



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Mia Paske



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Eli Southurst



Brooke Tarry



Telia Townsend

The Jette Parker Young Artist Program is generously supported by Oak Foundation, Barbara Bedwell, Darren & Carmel Brown, Marietjie & Keith Brown, Brett Clark AM & Maria Clark, Dr Ben Duke & Ms Cate Heyworth-Smith KC, Frazer Family Foundation, Goldburg Family Foundation, Patricia Macdonald Memorial Foundation, CP Morris Fund at the APS Foundation, and Liz & Graeme Wikman.

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Alexandar Maric
Alexander Seymour
Arabella Lloyd
Audrey Mead
Charlie Small
Charlize Fung
Chelsea Fox
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Glenn Christensen

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Johnny van Gend *
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Gregory Lee
Haneulle Lovell °
Lynn Cole
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Ryoko Arai °
Sonia Wilson
Stephen Tooke
Warwick Adeney °

VIOLIN 2

Katie Betts
Natalie Low
Nicholas Penfold
Ceriwen Jones °
Clare Cooney °
Delia Kinmont
Faina Dobrenko
Harold Wilson
Helen Travers
Jane Burroughs
Jordan Hall
Runa Murase °

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Cover Queensland Ballet dancers.

Photography David Kelly.

02 Soloist Georgia Swan.

Photography David Kelly.

05 Ben Stevenson OBE and Li Cunxin AO in

studio during *Cinderella* rehearsals.

Photography Christian Tiger.

11 Photo courtesy of Queensland Symphony

Orchestra.

13 Principal Artist Yanela Piñera and

Former Principal Artist Camilo Ramos

performing in Derek Deane's *Strictly Gershwin*.

Photography David Kelly.

To view our full staff list, please visit

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QPAC rests on the lands of the Yuggera
and Turrbal peoples. We acknowledge the
Traditional Custodians of this country and
recognise their rich cultural heritage and
enduring connection to the land, waters and
skies. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
peoples are this country's original storytellers,
and it is our privilege to continue to share
stories and be a place of gathering on this
land that has been a meeting place for
millennia.

QPAC warmly thanks our key donors who
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Queensland Ballet Adventures

CELEBRATE BALLET. DISCOVER CUBA.

31 October – 7 November 2026

In 2026, Queensland Ballet invites you on an unforgettable journey to the heart of Cuban culture, coinciding with the 29th International Ballet Festival of Havana. This exclusive tour is designed for those who cherish the art of ballet and seek extraordinary experiences.

Itinerary Highlights

- Be welcomed as special guests at the Opening Night Fiesta of the festival.
- Explore Havana, Cienfuegos, and Trinidad, guided by local hosts and experienced luxury tour operators.
- Indulge in luxury accommodation curated by our experienced travel partner.
- Sip daiquiris a la Hemingway and traditional margaritas in Old Havana.
- Enjoy private culinary experiences curated by our hosts and local experts.
- Gain insider access to Cuba's vibrant dance scene:
 - The National Ballet School
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Why Join Us?

Queensland Ballet Adventures are just one way in which we invite you to come in a little closer, to connect with us and with each other through unique experiences.

This cultural adventure is more than a tour—it's a philanthropic endeavour. Your participation supports Queensland Ballet's endeavour across Artistic, Academy, Community and the Thomas Dixon Centre. You will also be accompanied by Dilshani Weerasinghe, Executive Director, who will be unveiling exciting new avenues for Queensland Ballet by early November 2026. Be a part of the inner circle hearing the news first!

We are proud to be partnering with Nicole Beasley Luxury Travel, we promise unparalleled access to Cuba's history, architecture, and thriving arts scene. Join us for a journey that celebrates ballet, embraces culture, and champions wellness.

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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 joy of ballet. Philanthropy is what enables us to share the gift 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.

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Mr Tim Fairfax AC & Mrs Gina Fairfax

In addition to the many generous individuals, trusts and foundations, our grateful thanks go to every supporter who has donated to Queensland Ballet. Your support helps us to achieve our ambitious vision to enrich lives.

Queensland Ballet thrives thanks to the passion of our audiences and the generosity of our supporters. There are many ways you can help us continue bringing world-class ballet to life, from making a donation, joining our Giving Circle, becoming a member, or sponsoring a dancer scholarship, to donating on Giving Day or leaving a legacy through a bequest.

Your support nurtures emerging talent, enables the creation of new works, and helps keep ballet accessible to all. Whether you're a lifelong lover of the arts or newly inspired, every contribution makes a meaningful impact.

Join us in shaping the future of ballet. To learn more, visit our website.

Donate today at
queenslandballet.com.au/give

A Legacy of Inspiration

DENISE WADLEY OAM AND THE FUTURE OF YOUNG ARTISTS

Queensland Ballet celebrates the extraordinary legacy of Denise Wadley OAM, a passionate advocate for the arts whose generosity continues to shape a vibrant future for young performers in Queensland.

Denise's vision lives on through her remarkable gift, which strengthens Queensland Ballet's commitment to nurturing the next generation of dancers and musicians. Her support creates opportunities for young artists to collaborate, learn, and perform together, enriching the cultural life of our state and inspiring audiences of all ages.

This season, we saw Denise's impact in action. Productions such as *Peter and the Wolf*, presented by Queensland Ballet Academy and featuring talented musicians from Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith

University, showcased the power of collaboration. These performances offer invaluable experience for emerging artists while elevating the live experience for audiences. Partnerships with the Queensland Youth Orchestra and Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University, further deepen these connections, ensuring music and dance grow hand in hand for young artists in Queensland.

"Music is not simply accompaniment to dance; it is part of the very fabric of the art form"

IVAN GIL-ORTEGA
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

"Denise Wadley's remarkable contribution helps us elevate music as an integral part of our artistic product. Her vision ensures young musicians and dancers can grow and create together, inspiring audiences and enriching the cultural landscape of Queensland."

ROGER CUI
HEAD OF MUSIC

Philanthropy plays a vital role in sustaining and advancing the arts. For Queensland Ballet, it is not only a catalyst for artistic excellence, but also a lifeline for the future. Our Academy, which receives no Federal Government funding, relies on the generosity of donors to deliver world-class training and performance programs. Gifts like Denise's ensure young Queenslanders can pursue their dreams without leaving the state.

Denise Wadley OAM (née Lawton), who passed away in 2024, leaves behind a profound impact on Queensland's cultural and educational landscape. A trailblazing journalist, educator, and arts advocate, she dedicated her life to championing opportunities for young people and the creative sector. From her early work with Queensland Youth Orchestras to leadership roles with the Queensland Conservatorium, QIT, and Metro Arts, Denise helped shape the institutions that continue to support artists today.

Her unwavering belief in community, education, and the arts was rooted in her formative years at St Margaret's Anglican Girls School, where strong female mentors inspired her lifelong service. Today, her legacy lives on in the joy sparked each time young performers take the stage - a reminder of the transformative power of the arts.

If you'd like to learn more about how gifts like Denise's help nurture the next generation of artists, visit queenslandballet.com.au/support

Queensland Ballet is proudly supported by:

GOVERNMENT



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



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



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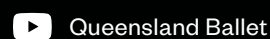
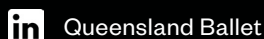
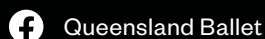
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Club REVOLUTION Members

A cultural club celebrating heritage and vibrancy of ballet.

Dr Marosh & Lily Vrtik



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