

NEWS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

For immediate release: Monday 7 August 2017



David Hallberg. Photo Kate Longley; Gillian Murphy. Photo NYC Dance Project

International ballet icons David Hallberg and Gillian Murphy join The Australian Ballet as guest artists in *Symphony in C*

The Australian Ballet is excited to announce that internationally acclaimed dancers **David Hallberg** and **Gillian Murphy** will return to Melbourne as guest artists in the highly anticipated Melbourne premiere of *Symphony in C*, playing exclusively at **Arts Centre Melbourne, State Theatre** from **24 August to 2 September 2017**.

US-born David Hallberg is a Principal Dancer with American Ballet Theatre and Bolshoi Ballet. He made history in 2011 when he became the first American to join the Russian company's highest rank. He sustained an ankle injury in 2014, resulting in a two-and-a-half year break from the stage, a year of which was spent in Australia working closely with The Australian Ballet's medical team. He credits the team for his much-anticipated return to the stage as part of the company's 2016 season of *Coppélia* in Sydney.

In February 2017, Hallberg became the first dancer to join The Australian Ballet as a resident guest artist, debuting in this new capacity during this year's Brisbane season of *The Sleeping Beauty*.

Commenting on the dancer's return to Australia for *Symphony in C*, **The Australian Ballet's Artistic Director, David McAllister** said: "We're thrilled that this paragon of classical style is returning to Australia to perform in a ballet that pays tribute to the golden era of classical dance."

"David Hallberg is one of the great dancers of the world and our ongoing relationship with him is testament to the wealth of experience and expertise he brings to our dancers, both on and off the stage."

Ballet superstar, Gillian Murphy is a Principal Dancer with American Ballet Theatre and was Principal Guest Artist with Royal New Zealand Ballet for three seasons. She is an in-demand guest artist, appearing throughout the United States and worldwide with preeminent companies including Mariinsky Ballet and Royal Swedish Ballet. In 2009, The Princess Grace Foundation awarded her its highest honour, the esteemed Statute Award.

Murphy will return to Australia for the first time since 2014 after delivering her scintillating performance as Nikiya in the company's production of *La Bayadère*.

McAllister is delighted to be working with the dancer again: "Gillian Murphy has an electrifying presence on stage. She is the perfect fit for a ballet such as *Symphony in C*, which showcases dance at its most powerful and poetic."

The ballet that gives this season its name, *Symphony in C*, is a tutu spectacular by pioneering choreographer **George Balanchine**, running the gamut of balletic expression, from explosive leaps and quick footwork to a swooning pas de deux with captivating bends and balances. Although *Symphony in C* is grounded in **Balanchine's** classical training in Imperial Russia, shades of his years on Broadway emerge in a culminating display of pure white

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tutus. The work is set to **George Bizet's** eponymous score, written in 1855 when the composer was just 17 years old and living as a student in Paris.

The elaborate group work of Balanchine is perfectly complemented by five shorter debut works, each with their own unique modern energy. Making their Melbourne mainstage debuts are two new works by dancers **Richard House** and **Alice Topp**. After making their names as choreographers in The Australian Ballet's new work series *Bodytorque*, House and Topp debuted their first mainstage shows in the Sydney season of *Symphony in C* in 2016, garnering popular and critical acclaim.

MELBOURNE

24 AUGUST – 2 SEPTEMBER

Arts Centre Melbourne, State Theatre

BOOKINGS

australianballet.com.au

PERFORMANCES

David Hallberg

Friday 25 August, 7:30pm

Saturday 26 August, 7:30pm

Tuesday 29 August, 7:30pm

Wednesday 30 August, 7:30pm

Friday 1 September, 6:30pm

Saturday 2 September, 7:30pm

Gillian Murphy

Saturday 26 August, 1:30pm & 7:30pm

Monday 28 August, 6:30pm

Wednesday 30 August, 1:30pm & 7:30pm

Thursday 31 August, 7:30pm

Saturday 2 September, 1:30pm & 7:30pm

SYMPHONY IN C

Choreography George Balanchine ©School of American Ballet

Repetiteur Eve Lawson

Music George Bizet *Symphony in C*

Costume and set design Tom Lingwood

Lighting design William Akers

reproduced by Graham Silver

FROM SILENCE

Choreography Richard House

LITTLE ATLAS

Choreography Alice Topp

With Orchestra Victoria

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