

NEWS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

For immediate release: Monday 14 August 2017



Misty Copeland. Photo Gene Schiavone

US ballet superstar Misty Copeland joins The Australian Ballet in *The Sleeping Beauty*

The Australian Ballet is thrilled to announce that American Ballet Theatre (ABT) Principal Dancer **Misty Copeland** will join the company as guest artist during the Sydney season of *The Sleeping Beauty*, opening at the Capitol Theatre from 11 November to 25 November 2017. Ms Copeland will perform the role of Aurora on 22 and 24 November, dancing for the first time in The Australian Ballet's critically acclaimed production, which has been spectacularly reimagined by Artistic Director David McAllister.

"It's an honour for me at this juncture in my career to have the opportunity to be a guest artist with premiere companies like The Australian Ballet. The warmth and openness that I received from the Australian people while on tour with ABT in 2014 was overwhelming. I can't wait to join this company of talented dancers on the stage in my debut as Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*." Ms Copeland said.

Born in Kansas City, Missouri and raised in San Pedro California, Ms Copeland began her ballet studies at age 13. She became a member of the American Ballet Theatre corps de ballet in 2001 and rose through the ranks to make history in 2015, when she became the first African American woman to be promoted to principal dancer in ABT's 75-year history.

Ms Copeland boasts an impressive repertoire, including the roles of Odette/Odile in *Swan Lake*, Kitri in *Don Quixote*, the lead role in *Giselle*, Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, Gamzatti in *La Bayadère*, the Fairy Autumn in *Cinderella*, Swanilda in *Coppélia*, the Firebird in Alexei Ratmansky's *Firebird*, and Clara the Princess in Alexei Ratmansky's

The Nutcracker, to name a few. She also created His Loss in Marcelo Gomes' *AfterEffect*, the Spanish Dance in Ratmansky's *The Nutcracker*, the Fairy Fleur de farine (Wheat Flower) in Ratmansky's *The Sleeping Beauty* and leading roles in *C. to C. (Close to Chuck)*, *Dumbarton*, *Glow – Stop, One of Three* and *With a Chance of Rain*.

In addition to her remarkable dance career, Ms Copeland is an inspiring public speaker, celebrity spokesperson and stage performer. She is also the author of the best-selling books *Life in Motion* and *Ballerina Body*, as well as the award-winning children's book *Firebird*. In 2014, President Obama appointed Ms Copeland to the President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition, and in 2015, she was named one of the 100 most influential people in the world by *Time Magazine*, appearing on its cover.

Commenting on the exciting announcement, David said: "Misty Copeland is a phenomenal talent, both on and off the stage. Her incredible gift as a dancer is matched only by her passion for the art form, which she champions tirelessly. We are absolutely delighted to welcome Misty to the company for the first time as a guest artist in the role of Aurora and I am especially excited to work with Misty in a production that's very special to me."

The Sleeping Beauty is the first full-length production created by McAllister, and the 2015 premiere season marked a crowning moment in his career. In 2017 McAllister enters his 16th year as artistic director of The Australian Ballet, following an 18-year career as a dancer in the company.

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NEWS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

The Sleeping Beauty is the most ambitious production ever staged by The Australian Ballet. More than 2,000 people contributed upwards of 70% of the total production costs during a landmark fundraising campaign, without which the new production would not have been possible.

The Sleeping Beauty has already been enjoyed by over 65,000 people, with sell-out seasons in Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney and Perth following the world premiere in 2015.

The Sleeping Beauty

Doomed from infancy to fatally prick her finger on her 16th birthday, Princess Aurora is saved from the curse of spiteful Carabosse by her champion the Lilac Fairy, who lulls the kingdom into a deep slumber. When the lonely Prince Désiré learns of Aurora's fate, he comes to her rescue with a redemptive kiss of true love. The couple celebrate their wedding and coronation in the light and bustle of the revived palace, with a masked ball attended by guests dressed as fairies, bluebirds and familiar friends from the pages of Grimm's fairy tales.

SYDNEY 11 – 25 NOVEMBER

Capitol Theatre

BOOKINGS: australianballet.com.au

Choreography Marius Petipa

Production and additional choreography David McAllister

Music Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Costume and set design Gabriela Tylesova

Design Associate Kat Chan

Dramaturge Lucas Jervies

Lighting design Jon Buswell

With Opera Australia Orchestra

STEP INSIDE the Ballet

The Australian Ballet's much-loved Step Inside program gives a rare look behind the curtain.

Post performance Q&A

The Sleeping Beauty's audience is invited to stay behind after the show for a special Q&A with Artistic Director David McAllister and a panel of artistic staff and dancers.

Capitol Theatre

Monday 20 November, Free

Music Talk

Music Director and Chief Conductor Nicolette Fraillon gives a fascinating insight into the Tchaikovsky score you're about to hear in this free pre-performance talk. Learn about the composer's life, the historical context of the music and what it's like to conduct and play music for the ballet.

Capitol Theatre

Wednesday 22 November, 12pm – 1pm, Free

McAllister in Conversation

Artistic Director David McAllister hosts an intimate talk with a luminary from the ballet world.

Capitol Theatre

Saturday 18 November, 5pm – 5.45pm, \$25

Meet the Musicians

In this free conversation series, Music Director and Chief Conductor Nicolette Fraillon interviews musicians from the orchestra. Hear outstanding artists talk about their passion and the dedication that drives them, in these fascinating talks.

Capitol Theatre

Saturday 25 November, 6pm – 7pm, Free

Once Upon a Time: The Sleeping Beauty

Once Upon a Time: The Sleeping Beauty is a magical experience that will make you gasp, dream and laugh! This special one-hour version of the mainstage ballet is performed live on stage and narrated by one of the central characters. Perfect for children, it's fun, interactive and will have everyone out of their seats, twirling for joy. Come dressed in your favourite ballet-inspired or fairytale outfits. This performance will be fully orchestrated by the Opera Australian Orchestra.

Capitol Theatre

Wednesday 15 November, 12:30pm (60 minutes)

All special events and talks presented with the ballet can be booked through australianballet.com.au/step-inside

For all media enquiries, including interviews and images, please contact: Elise Tobin, Publicist P: 03 9669 2771
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