

# NEWS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

For immediate release: Monday 25 September 2017, 3:00pm



*The Australian Ballet's Dimity Azoury. Photograph Georges Antoni*

## The Australian Ballet celebrates creativity and imagination with works created for the company

The Australian Ballet today announced its 2018 program, a celebration of the powerhouse of creativity provided by the choreographers, dancers, musicians and artisans who bring each of the company's productions to life.

The season features nine works created uniquely for The Australian Ballet by resident and guest choreographers from across the company's 55-year history. The centrepiece of the season is Lucas Jervies' reimagining of *Spartacus*, a favourite with Australian audiences, which is given modern meaning in the hands of this award-winning director and choreographer. The Australian Ballet's 2018 season also includes *Murphy*, a career-spanning tribute to Australia's greatest living choreographer, the return of the glamorous crowd favourite *The Merry Widow*, the bold contemporary program *Verve*, the Adelaide debut of David McAllister's acclaimed *The Sleeping Beauty*, an exclusive Melbourne season of Maina Gielgud's signature work *Giselle* and a festive Sydney season of the ultimate fairytale, Alexei Ratmansky's *Cinderella*.

Artistic Director David McAllister said, "We are very proud to be presenting a year dedicated to works created on The Australian Ballet. Our 2018 season is a tribute to the incredible talent that we have here in Australia and demonstrates The Australian Ballet's capacity to tap into leading creatives in the world of ballet. This is a moment I'm really honoured to be a part of. To be able to share these works with our audiences brings this celebration of Australian creativity full circle."

Executive Director Libby Christie said, "Our 2018 season will celebrate a prolific 55 years of creativity as Australia's national ballet company, while also reaffirming how our company looks to the future by nurturing talent and creativity. In addition to our exciting mainstage season, we will highlight our commitment to bringing our art form into cities, towns and communities across Australia with a regional tour next year that includes Far North Queensland and the Northern Territory, and our nation-wide education program. For the third year, we will present a free outdoor performance for the people of Western Sydney, and engage in other community-focused initiatives. We are also looking forward to returning to our newly renovated Sydney home, the Joan Sutherland Theatre at Sydney Opera House."

The 2018 season opens with an homage to master choreographer and storyteller Graeme Murphy, who began his trailblazing dance career with The Australian Ballet 50 years ago as a member of the corps de ballet. *Murphy* brings together Graeme Murphy's spectacular interpretation of the story ballet *Firebird* and a curated selection of highlighted works from his career, which has made him one of Australia's most celebrated choreographers. *Murphy* plays in Melbourne in March before a Sydney season in April.

Glamorous and hilarious in equal parts, *The Merry Widow* tells the tale of a high-society marriage plot gone farcically awry. The first full-length ballet to be commissioned by The Australian Ballet in 1975, *The Merry Widow* has become a modern classic and has

Government  
Partners



Lead  
Partners

Principal  
Partner



# NEWS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

entered the repertoire of ballet companies around the world. With its romantic entanglements and sumptuous Belle Époque setting, this production will delight audiences when it opens in Sydney in April before touring to Canberra in May and playing in Melbourne in June.

The contemporary program *Verve* will bring together two landmark works by resident choreographers and former dancers with The Australian Ballet, plus a world premiere. Tim Harbour's electrifying *Filigree and Shadow* debuted to great acclaim in 2015, and *Constant Variants* is Stephen Baynes' award-winning neoclassical work from 2007. This season will also include a world premiere by Alice Topp, a coryphée of The Australian Ballet, who made her mainstage choreographic debut in 2016 with *Little Atlas*. *Verve* shows exclusively in Melbourne in June.

Adelaide audiences will be spellbound as David McAllister's *The Sleeping Beauty* makes its South Australian debut in 2018, following sell-out seasons in Melbourne, Sydney, Perth and Brisbane. Opulent sets and costumes by award-winning designer Gabriela Tylesova and the iconic Tchaikovsky score bring to life the magical world of Princess Aurora, the glittering royal court, and a cast of delightful storybook characters. *The Sleeping Beauty* will cast its spell over Adelaide in July.

A heartbreaking tragedy of madness, ghostly terrors and transcendent love, *Giselle* is Maina Gielgud's internationally acclaimed 1986 work, created when she was artistic director of The Australian Ballet. Gielgud's production employs flawless classical technique to tell the story of the peasant girl driven to madness and death by her lover's deceit. Following rave reviews and a sell-out season in 2015, *Giselle* returns exclusively to Melbourne in August.

The men of The Australian Ballet will showcase their extraordinary power, skill and strength in a timely new production of *Spartacus*. The story of the gladiator who led a slave uprising against the Roman Empire will grip the audience with high-impact physicality, while capturing their hearts with a passionate love story. This new production will be created by choreographer, director and former dancer of The Australian Ballet Lucas Jervies, to the dramatic score by Aram Khachaturian, with masterful combat scenes by Fight Director Nigel Poulton, and period costume and set designs by Jérôme Kaplan. *Spartacus* has its world

premiere in Melbourne in September before playing in Sydney in November.

The Australian Ballet's award-winning *Cinderella* was created on the company in 2013 by the world's most in-demand choreographer, Alexei Ratmansky. With its magical love story, delightful ensemble cast and stunning visual design, *Cinderella* has enchanted audiences around Australia and in London and Shanghai. This witty and romantic production returns to Sydney for an exclusive encore season in December.

The Australian Ballet's 2018 activities will also include a range of audience engagement events, a regional tour, a free outdoor event in Sydney, a children's ballet and an education program which tours to schools across the country.

For full season details, visit [www.australianballet.com.au](http://www.australianballet.com.au).

2018 Season Packages for Melbourne and Sydney performances are available from 9am on Wednesday 27 September 2017.

## The Australian Ballet

The Australian Ballet exists to inspire, delight and challenge audiences through the power of its performances.

It is one of the world's premier ballet companies and has delivered extraordinary performances for over 50 years. A commitment to artistic excellence, a spirited style and a willingness to take risks have defined the company from its earliest days, both onstage and off.

The company regularly represents Australia on the world stage and has performed to critical acclaim in 87 cities worldwide including New York, Shanghai, Tokyo, London and Paris. Caring for tradition yet daring to be different, The Australian Ballet performs beloved classical ballets and commissions new work annually and presents upwards of 250 shows and 1,700 education and audience engagement events each year.

In addition to 80 exceptional dancers, The Australian Ballet employs master craftspeople and leaders in injury prevention, dance education, marketing and philanthropy as well as the 62 musicians of Orchestra Victoria.

Government  
Partners



Lead  
Partners

Principal  
Partner



The  
Australian  
Ballet



# NEWS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

Moving effortlessly between the great classical ballets and new contemporary commissions, the company has a uniquely Australian style, powered by artistry and athleticism.

**For all media enquiries**, including interviews and images, please contact:  
Kate Muir, Public Relations Manager  
P: 0405 141 958 E: [katem@australianballet.com.au](mailto:katem@australianballet.com.au)

---

Government  
Partners



Lead  
Partners



Principal  
Partner



The  
Australian  
Ballet

