

Monday 12 April 2010

JACK PRODUCTIONS

A new dance initiative

Three senior dancers with The Australian Ballet have joined forces with emerging choreographer Lucas Jervies to form a new dance initiative - JACK Productions.

Robert Curran, Andrew Killian, Laura Tong and Jervies founded JACK out of a desire to produce innovative dance in Australia by exploring the endless possibilities of classical ballet technique.

Curran said JACK was aiming to inspire Australian audiences with innovative ballet-theatre.

"With JACK Productions we want to focus on Australian artists, collaborate with other companies and develop a sustainable business platform that will contribute to the future of dance in this country," Curran said.

"We're hoping to occupy a unique 'grey area' that's currently present in the local arts community by exploring the possibilities of the classical ballet technique we all adore."

Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet, David McAllister, said: "The concept of 'what comes next' for an artist after a long career in full-time dance is no longer a taboo subject. While Robert, Andrew and Laura still have wonderful careers on the stage with The Australian Ballet ahead of them, they're cleverly exploring other creative avenues and this is a path we very much support."

The Australian Ballet is proudly supporting Curran and Tong through the Dancers' Further Education Fund.

Established by the Board of The Australian Ballet, the fund aims to assist dancers by paying fees for courses intended to prepare them for new careers outside full-time dance. Curran and Tong are both studying Bachelors of Business Studies, majoring in Management.

Curran said JACK was a platform for ongoing development and education. "This is about demonstrating the potential for dancers to extend their passion and involvement in the art form beyond the stage," he said.

Excited and encouraged by a flourishing European dance scene, the founders of JACK are inspired by a number of companies, including Nacho Duato's Compañía Nacional de Danza, The Forsythe Company, Lyon Opera Ballet, Scapino Ballet Rotterdam and Cullberg Ballet.

Melbourne audiences will have the opportunity to see the debut project from JACK productions when *Human Abstract* opens at The Malthouse on 7 July 2010.

JACK Productions are offering subscribers of The Australian Ballet priority booking access along with a 14 per cent discount on tickets, on sale now through The Australian Ballet's website.

Human Abstract is inspired by the dark and moving poem 'The Human Abstract', by William Blake. Blake's poem lays the atmospheric foundation from which this new production evolves, while the work responds to the poem through the physical exploration of fear.

The project will feature new and exciting classically based choreography by Lucas Jervies by a superb team of dancers from The Australian Ballet including **Robert Curran, Danielle Rowe, Andrew Killian, Leanne Stojmenov, Kevin Jackson and Laura Tong** as well as international guest artist **Sabina Perry** from Canada.

Jervies lyrical physicality attempts to broaden the definition of ballet with complex dynamics which allow a liberated freedom to the technique.

Featuring music by Adam Ster, a young and dynamic artist from Hungary and lighting design by Robert Cuddon, *Human Abstract* will demonstrate the power of cross-disciplinary theatre of the highest standard.

Human Abstract aims to leave audiences haunted, but hopeful. The production opens at the Merlyn Theatre, The Malthouse on 7 July and runs until 11 July 2010.

General public tickets are on sale 3 May 2010 through:

M-Tix: (03) 9685 5111 or www.m-tix.com.au

For more information on JACK Productions:
www.jackproductions.com.au

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Robert Curran

A graduate of The Australian Ballet School, Robert Curran joined The Australian Ballet in 1996 and was promoted to Principal Artist in 2002.

During his time with the company he has performed in numerous classical and contemporary works by choreographers such as Kylián, Forsythe, Welch, Balanchine, Cranko, Baynes, Robbins and MacMillan, carving out a niche with his powerful partnering.

Robert has toured extensively overseas with The Australian Ballet, and a burgeoning interest in choreography has seen him create three works for the company's *Bodytorque* programme. Robert is studying for a Bachelor of Business Studies majoring in Management.

"For me, JACK is about dancers and their potential to have, and do, it all."

Lucas Jervies

Lucas studied dance at the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School and The Australian Ballet School - graduating with Honours 1998 and joining The Australian Ballet in 1999.

Looking to expand his knowledge of physicality, Lucas searched for further professional experience in diverse genres, dancing with, amongst others - Opera Australia, Dance Works Rotterdam and Scapino Ballet Rotterdam in the Netherlands where he has worked extensively with innovative choreographers Georg Reischl and Marco Goecke over the last five years.

Other acclaimed choreographers whose work Lucas has danced and or created with include Bejart, Gingras, Guy & Roni, Linning, Nureyev, Page, Touzeau, Vreugdenhil and Wubbe.

A choreographic interest has lived with Lucas from the beginning of his dance training. In recent years he was invited to create for The Australian Ballet's 2005 *Bodytorque* program and in 2007 he was asked to present a work in Korzo Theatre's (Den Haag) Spring Awakening Festival. In 2008 and 2009 Scapino Ballet invited Lucas to create works for *Twoo/s*, their summer dance festival and in 2009 he was invited to create for the Stuttgart Ballet's Noverre Society.

"JACK promises to leave you energised, refreshed and inspired."

Andrew Killian

Melbourne-born Andrew Killian, a student of The Australian Ballet School, joined The Australian Ballet in 2000 and was promoted to Senior Artist for the 2009 season.

Andrew has performed many leading roles in the company's extensive classical repertoire including, Lescaut in Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon*, Espada in Rudolf Nureyev's *Don Quixote* and the Nutcracker Prince in Peter Wright's *The Nutcracker*.

Andrew has also been involved in the creation of many new works including Stephen Baynes' *Constant Variants* and Tim Harbour's *Wa*, and has performed in all of The Australian Ballet's *Bodytorque* seasons. In this creative process Andrew enjoys working closely with choreographers and offers a unique versatility that places him in high demand.

"One of the most exciting aspects of embarking on this journey with JACK is the opportunity to involve friends and contacts, made over the past ten years in the industry, through a wide range of activities."

Laura Tong

Laura grew up in New Zealand and England, dancing with English National Ballet before joining the Australian Ballet in 2004.

Laura has danced a wide range of roles including Mistress in *Manon*, 'The Wife' in *The Concert*, Cigarette solo in *Suite en Blanc*, and roles in works by Jiri Kylian, Nacho Duato, Steven Baynes, George Balanchine, Steven Page and Kenneth MacMillan.

Laura has performed in three pieces by Robert Curran as part of The Australian Ballet's *Bodytorque* program. She is studying for a Bachelor of Business Studies majoring in Management.

"JACK's ballet-based exploration will add a unique and exciting perspective to Australia's flourishing dance community."

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