

09 July 2009

## Comings and Goings

The Australian Ballet's mid-year break heralds exciting announcements

The Australian Ballet's dancers and artistic staff are currently enjoying a mid-year mini-break to relax and reflect on the company's highly successful and extremely busy first six months of performances.

In the lead up to their return on Monday 13 July, the company is pleased to announce an exciting guest artist appearance, and few changes amongst the ranks.

### Guest Artist for *The Sleeping Beauty*

Former Sydney boy and Principal Artist with The Royal Ballet, **Steven McRae** will join The Australian Ballet in December to star in select performances of *The Sleeping Beauty* in Sydney. Steven is one of a very select group of Australians to be honoured with the rank of Principal Artist at The Royal Ballet in London; others include Sir Robert Helpmann and Leanne Benjamin.

### Dancers in demand

Three Principal Artists, **Lucinda Dunn**, **Robert Curran** and **Rachel Rawlins** will perform at the World Ballet Festival in Tokyo hosted by the Japan Performing Arts Association. Only the best of the best from the world's top ballet companies are invited. These talented dancers will perform an all-Australian showcase of excerpts from Graeme Murphy's critically acclaimed *Nutcracker - The Story of Clara* and his *Swan Lake*. They head off at the end of July.

As the second recipient of the Walter Bourke Prize, Principal Artist **Danielle Rowe** will take up an incredible invitation to perform with Christopher Wheeldon's *Morphoses* in New York, London and Amsterdam. She departs towards the end of August.

### Fond farewells

Artistic Director David McAllister paid tribute to dancers **Marc Cassidy**, **Paul Knobloch** and **Jared Rainford-Wright** who have decided to leave the company and forge new career paths.

After 16 distinguished years with company, Senior Artist Marc Cassidy is retiring to pursue his future career in Pilates instruction.

David McAllister said Marc would be missed both on and off the stage. "Marc has always been an incredibly passionate performer who has brought so many characters to life over the broadest sweep of the company's repertoire through his artistry and technique. I am sure this next phase of Marc's career will be equally rewarding and successful," he said.

For the past eight years Soloist Paul Knobloch has amazed audiences with his uniquely beautiful dancing and choreography. Originally from Canberra, Paul now heads for further adventures in Lausanne, Switzerland to dance with the renowned BÉjart Ballet Company.

Paul said of his time with The Australian Ballet: "I feel extremely blessed to have been a part of many new creations, to have worked closely with renowned choreographers and dance masters from around the world and to have been a part of making history for our nation's leading ballet company. My faith lies firmly with The Australian Ballet. It is a place where I have made a family," he said.

After three years with The Australian Ballet, Corps de Ballet member Jared Rainford-Wright is heading overseas for dance adventures in Europe.

"Marc, Paul and Jared have each made an enormous and unique contribution to our company and while we're sad to see them go, we wish them every success for their future," McAllister said.

### Warm welcomes

But it's not all goodbyes! The Australian Ballet is thrilled to welcomes two new members to the company: **Brett Simon** joins us as a Coryphée and **Jessica Wood** enters the Corps de Ballet.

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Bookings:  
australianballet.com.au  
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Originally from Adelaide and trained at The Australian Ballet School, Brett spent several years with the West Australian Ballet and most recently the Hong Kong Ballet.

Originally from Sydney Jessica was an Australian Ballet School Associate and recently graduated from The Royal Ballet School. During her training in London, she performed with Birmingham Royal Ballet and the Royal Ballet.

### Telstra Ballet Dancer Award

In just ten weeks the 2009 Telstra Ballet Dancer Award (TBDA) nominees will be judged by a select panel. The winner will be announced in December with people's choice voting closing on 15 November.

The Australian Ballet is delighted to announce that respected journalist and prominent television personality **Chris Bath** has joined the TBDA judging panel. Chris is the anchor of Sydney's 6pm Seven News bulletin and hosts the Seven Network's new current affairs program *Sunday Night*. Chris was also the runner up in *Dancing with the Stars* 2005.

Chris is joined on the judging panel of The Australian Ballet's Artistic Director David McAllister; The Australian Ballet's Executive Director Valerie Wilder and Associate Artistic Director Danilo Radojevic, Media Representative Chris Boyd and Telstra's Consumer Group Managing Director David Moffatt.

The nominees for 2009 are: Andrew Killian, Leanne Stojmenov, Juliet Burnett, Laura Tong, Robyn Hendricks and Stephanie Williams.

### Citizen bloggers

The Australian Ballet it is on the hunt for one emerging writer, one emerging photographer and one emerging video artist.

Throwing the opportunity open via its widespread online networks on Friday 3 July, the company will commission members of the public to document the creation of its upcoming **Concord** season.

In a first for the company, The Australian Ballet is looking to provide insights into the creation of new work from a punter's point of view.

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Commissioned work will be created for behindballet.com, The Australian Ballet's blog. Applications close 14 July 2009.

### Up next: Around the world in three ballets

The Australian Ballet gathers together three of the most exciting choreographers in the world to present **Concord**.

*Concord* is a triple treat bringing together the world's best in choreography to uncover the boundless invention and possibilities of dance. *Concord* opens in Melbourne on 21 August at the Arts Centre and in Sydney on 11 November at the Opera House.

The programme features two world-premiere works from British luminary **Wayne McGregor** and St Petersburg's **Alexei Ratmansky**. The programme is perfectly rounded off with the welcome return to the Australian stage of a much-loved ballet by Spain's **Nacho Duato**.

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