

Tuesday 13 January 2009 – for immediate release

The Australian Ballet back in the studio

Refreshed and ready for a diverse feast of dance, music and design in 2009



Stephanie Williams and Rudy Hawkes photo Tim Richardson

"If you're missing Olympian feats performed by extraordinary, athletic bodies... The Australian Ballet will put you out of your misery... a feast of superfit flesh." *Herald Sun* 2008

"... the company has lived up to its motto of 'caring for tradition, daring to be different.'" La Tribune (Paris) 2008

"The Australian Ballet ... opt for muscular, energetic and lucid dance that is urgent, powerful and unapologetic." *Metro Life (London)* 2008

"McAllister's dancers are a sleek and versatile bunch." *The Sunday Telegraph (London)* 2008

The Australian Ballet's dancers and artistic team are back in the studio tomorrow after a well-deserved break to celebrate and rejuvenate following the success of 2008.

Artistic Director David McAllister said he was looking forward to another extraordinary year.

"There is a wonderful buzz in the corridors as we return to our Melbourne studios," he said. "We're rested, ready and thoroughly excited about getting stuck into the diverse feast of dance, music and design that is our year in 2009."

The year begins with a few changes amongst the ranks, new faces and fabulous guest artists.

Dancer promotions

The Australian Ballet is delighted to announce that a number of talented dancers have been promoted. Amber Scott, Lana Jones, Leanne Stojmenov, Andrew Killian and Remi Wörtmeyer have all been promoted to Senior Artist. Juliet Burnett and Laura Tong received promotions to the rank of Soloist, while Ben Davis and Rudy Hawkes moved up to Coryphée.

Special guests

Former Borovansky Ballet member **John Auld** will travel to Australia to reproduce the stunning *Petrouchka*. Australian ballet royalty **Marilyn Jones** and esteemed dance coach **Ai-Gul Gasina** will guest star in the pivotal role of Clara the Elder in Graeme Murphy's *Nutcracker*. We're also delighted to have two of the world's most sought-after choreographers, British luminary **Wayne McGregor** and St Petersburg's **Alexei Ratmansky**, creating two new works for us to premiere in *Concord*. More news on international guest stars to come soon!

- continues -

Bookings:
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We welcome

We also welcome several new members to the company. Brett Chynoweth, Kristy Corea, Noah Gumbert, Luke Marchant, Karen Nanasca and Valerie Tereshchenko will join the Corps de Ballet.

Ballet baby update

After the birth of daughter Claudia Radojevic in July, Lucinda Dunn will return to the stage in February. Lynette Wills welcomed her second child Sophie Bella Burke in mid December while Olivia Bell will join Madeleine Eastoe in pregnancy duties, announcing that she is expecting in June!

We farewell

A small number of dancers depart this year to embark on new experiences - Tristan Message, Adam Thurlow, Frances Murphy, Melissa Lenehan and Simone Pulga. "We wish them every success for the future and thank them for the unique contribution they have made to this company," said David McAllister.

The year ahead

Six seasons, 15 ballets and 156 performances will feature in 2009. The programme ranges from full-length ballet classics to contemporary works by major Australian and international choreographers: *Firebird and other legends*, *Nutcracker – The Story of Clara*, *Bodytorque 2.2*, *Paris Match*, *Concord* and *The Sleeping Beauty*.

2009 will also bring eight world premieres to the stage beginning with a brand-new interpretation of *Firebird* by one of Australia's greatest choreographers Graeme Murphy. This is Murphy's first outing for The Australian Ballet since 2002's international smash hit *Swan Lake*. Wayne McGregor and Alexei Ratmanský will create two new works to premiere in *Concord*, while *Bodytorque 2.2* continues the company's investment in emerging choreographic artists as new works by Robert Curran, Damien Welch, Kevin Jackson, Remi Wörtmeyer and Reed Luplau are presented.

The Ballet Russes legacy

2009 marks the centenary of the first season in Paris of the legendary Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. This year also marks the conclusion of our four-year exploration and celebration of the impact the Ballets Russes has had on the world of art – and in particular, their influence on the arts in Australia.

David McAllister said: "We will certainly be marking the centenary year of the Ballets Russes' debut in the West with great style and artistry."

Regional touring

The Australian Ballet's regional touring arm - The Dancers Company - will present a Ballets Russes inspired programme with 21 performances in three states: Victoria, Queensland and Northern Territory, engaging more people than ever in regional Australia.

Silver anniversary

The Australian Ballet and Principal Sponsor Telstra celebrate **25 years of partnership** in 2009 – a remarkable achievement. We're delighted to announce that Telstra has recently signed on as The Australian Ballet's Principal Sponsor for a further three years, from 2009 through to 2011.

David McAllister said: "This is one of the longest running arts partnerships in Australia – an achievement we're all incredibly proud of."

In celebration of this milestone, six new Telstra Dancer Award nominees will be announced in February, and in March we return to Brisbane to present Telstra Ballet in the Gardens. As Production Sponsor of the *Firebird and other legends* seasons in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney, Telstra has a number of special surprises in store – watch this space!

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