

1 October 2009

The Australian Ballet heads west this October

Performing Graeme Murphy's internationally acclaimed smash-hit *Swan Lake*

****HURRY tickets selling fast!**

The Australian Ballet is returning to Perth for the first time in five years to perform Graeme Murphy's smash-hit *Swan Lake* from 21 October.

Following sell-out seasons around Australia and critical acclaim in Paris, London, Tokyo and Shanghai, Perth audiences will finally get to see this dramatically intense and visually stunning crowd favourite.

Perth-born Artistic Director David McAllister said he was delighted to be returning to Perth in 2009 with *Swan Lake*.

"This production is dazzling, infusing the most classic of ballets with a contemporary storyline full of drama, wit and passion. I have no doubt the people of Perth will love it as much as we do."

Two dancers of The Australian Ballet who hail from Western Australia – Senior Artist Leanne Stojmenov and Soloist Kevin Jackson – will perform the lead roles in the production for the very first time.

"Kevin has been cast in the role of Prince Siegfried while Leanne will take on Odette which is sure to be incredibly special," McAllister said. "For a dancer, there's nothing quite like giving it your all in front of a home crowd."

Conceived in collaboration with Janet Vernon and the late Kristian Fredrikson, Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake* was the first ballet commissioned by McAllister after becoming Artistic Director in 2001. It was created to mark The Australian Ballet's 40th anniversary in 2002.

Since its debut, this powerful interpretation has sold over 230,000 tickets, sold out seasons across four Australian states, won ten major awards, and moved audiences to tears.

Opulent sets and costumes and Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's immortal score make this a theatrical experience not to be missed.

The Australian Ballet performs Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake*, 21–25 October 2009 (seven performances only) at the Burswood Theatre, Burswood Entertainment Complex with the W.A. Philharmonic.

Bookings can be made:

- in person at all Ticketek outlets or at the venue;
- by phone on 1300 795 012; or
- online at ticketek.com.au

FAST FACTS:

- The Australian Ballet's last visit to Perth was in November 2004 when a small group of dancers performed the triple bill *Southern Lights*. The full company, at 70 dancers strong, has not performed in Perth since *Beyond 40* in October 2002.
- Three leading dancers of The Australian Ballet hail from WA: Principal Artist **Madeline Eastoe**, Senior Artist **Leanne Stojmenov** and Soloist **Kevin Jackson**.
- Eastoe was the Telstra People's Choice Award winner in 2006; Stojmenov a Telstra Ballet Dancer Award nominee in 2005, 2007 and again in 2009; and Jackson was the Telstra Ballet Award winner in 2008.
- Former Principal Artist and arguably one of The Australian Ballet's most-loved stars **Steven Heathcote**, is also a local Perth boy.
- Steven Heathcote, Madeline Eastoe and Graeme Murphy's choreography all star in the recently released blockbuster film ***Mao's Last Dancer***.
- Perth-born David McAllister began his training with Evelyn Hodgkinson and joined The Australian Ballet in 1983.

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THE PRODUCTION

Choreography Graeme Murphy

Music Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Concept Graeme Murphy, Janet Vernon and Kristian Fredrikson

Set and costume design Kristian Fredrikson

Lighting design Damien Cooper

Swan Lake is one of the iconic ballet narratives. The creative team sought to give relevance to the often implausible story while retaining an intrinsic magic. Murphy's choreography communicates the passion and emotion of betrayal and unrequited love.

The story follows the fortunes of Odette, betrothed to Prince Siegfried yet deeply apprehensive of his relationship with the Baroness von Rothbart. It's not until after the wedding that the true nature of Siegfried and the Baroness' relationship becomes clear, causing Odette such distress that by royal command she is committed to a sanatorium. There she finds comfort and escape amongst serene white swans in a frozen dream world. Critics worldwide have picked up on more than a hint of another world-famous royal love triangle that finds several parallels in this story of adultery, personality disorders and betrayal of innocence.

Creator Graeme Murphy said: "I always wanted to give The Australian Ballet a unique *Swan Lake*. Every company would love to have one, yet not many companies do."

THE MUSIC

A constant driving force behind the success of *Swan Lake* is the Tchaikovsky score: one of the greatest ever composed for ballet. It is dramatic, colourful and intensely moving.

However on its debut at the Bolshoi Theatre in 1877, *Swan Lake* was not an immediate success. The legend was not born until the work was restaged by Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov in 1895. Since then, *Swan Lake* has exercised a continual fascination for artists including George Balanchine, Margot Fonteyn, Rudolf Nureyev and Mikhail Baryshnikov – to name but a few.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Graeme Murphy, master storyteller and one of Australia's greatest choreographers, along with his creative associate Janet Vernon are best known for their long and influential tenures as leaders of Australia's internationally renowned contemporary dance troupe Sydney Dance Company. Both trained at The Australian Ballet School and started their careers dancing with The Australian Ballet.

A designer of vivid imagination and scope, New Zealand-born Kristian Fredrikson enjoyed a long career at the forefront of Australian design. His award-winning creations spanned ballet, opera, theatre, film and television. His collaboration with Murphy began in 1975 when both worked on *The Revenger's Tragedy* for Melbourne Theatre Company. They went on to join forces on many productions for Sydney Dance Company, The Australian Ballet and Opera Australia.

DAVID MCALLISTER AM

David McAllister joined The Australian Ballet in 1983 and was promoted to Principal Artist in 1989. During his career David performed a wide variety of Principal roles from the major classical repertoire as well as many contemporary works.

In 1985 he won Bronze at the 5th International Ballet Competition in Moscow. David has danced with the Bolshoi Ballet, Kirov Ballet, National Ballet of Canada and Birmingham Royal Ballet.

David danced for the final time in *Giselle* in March 2001 at the Sydney Opera House and was appointed Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet in July 2001. He was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia in the 2004 Australia Day Honours List and was elected Vice President of the Royal Academy of Dance in 2005.

CRITICAL ACCLAIM

- Winner Best Foreign Dance Company UK Critics' Circle Awards 2005
- Winner of four Helpmann Awards in 2003
- Winner of four Green Room Awards 2003
- Winner, Mo Award 2003

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