

The Australian Ballet has experienced a rich and varied era since its beginning in 1961, so too has Australia. Here are just some of those memorable moments...

The Australian Ballet

Historic Event

1961
Australia feels the pinch of growing unemployment and falling gold reserves. In response, the Government sharply curtails immigration and begins an all-out drive to encourage foreign industry.

1962
A retrospective of Arthur Boyd's work, held in London, establishes his reputation in Europe and helps kindle British interest in contemporary Australian art. Rod Laver wins the Australian, British, French, and United States tennis championships.

1963
Australia becomes a signatory to the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty; and the Commonwealth Arbitration Commission introduces the grant of three weeks paid annual leave.

The Australian Ballet Event

1961



18 February
The Borovansky Ballet gives its final performances in Melbourne.

The Australian Ballet Foundation is formed under the codirection of Dr Coombs of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust and Sir Frank Tait, Managing Director of JC Williamson.

1962



June
The Australian Ballet's founding Artistic Director Peggy van Praagh returns from England to commence national auditions for soloists and corps de ballet for the new company. Principal dancers are enlisted from the now defunct Borovansky Ballet.

3 September
First rehearsal day for The Australian Ballet in the Albert Street, East Melbourne studios – formerly a condemned building of the Presbyterian Ladies College.

2 November
The Australian Ballet opens its inaugural season with the first production of Peggy van Praagh's *Swan Lake* at Her Majesty's Theatre in Sydney.

16 November
The Melbourne Cup, choreographed by Rex Reid and the first work to be commissioned by The Australian Ballet, premieres at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney.

1963



The Australian Ballet premieres a new contemporary work, *Jazz Spectrum*, by Betty Pounder, who was JC Williamsons' resident choreographer, responsible for choreographing major musicals.

9 January
Tatiana Zimina and Nikita Dolgushin are the first Soviet guest artists to appear with an Australian company. They debut with The Australian Ballet in *Les Sylphides* and *Don Quixote pas de deux* at Her Majesty's Theatre, Adelaide.

1964
 Australia joins the United States in the Vietnam War.
 Roger Woodward, now one of the world's finest concert pianists, wins the ABC's Concerto and Vocal Competition.
 Dawn Fraser becomes the first woman to swim 100 metres freestyle in less than a minute, with a time of 59.5 seconds, winning her third successive Olympic Games Gold Medal (1956, 1960, 1964).

1964



March
 The Australian Ballet School, under the direction of the former Ballet Rambert dancer Margaret Scott, opens to full-time advanced students from all over Australia.

April
 Margot Fonteyn and Rudolph Nureyev guest in *Swan Lake* and *Giselle* at the Elizabethan Theatre, Newtown. It is the first time they dance a complete ballet with any company other than The Royal Ballet.

14 March
 Choreographed by Robert Helpmann, with music by Malcolm Williamson and decor by Sidney Nolan, *The Display* is dedicated to Katherine Hepburn. The world premiere is at Her Majesty's Theatre in Adelaide at the third Adelaide Festival of Arts.

1965
 Natural gas and oil are discovered in Bass Strait.
 Ron Clarke becomes the first man to run three miles in less than 13 minutes.

1965



Sir Robert Helpmann becomes Associate Artistic Director.

17 November
 Peggy van Praagh's *Giselle* awarded the Grand Prix of the City of Paris. With Kathleen Gorham and Garth Welch heading the cast, it is performed as part of the third International Festival of Dance at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées.



14 December
 A gala performance of *Raymonda* is held in London with guest artists Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev, in the presence of HM Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, HRH Princess Margaret and the Earl of Snowdon. It is the first time The Australian Ballet performs before royalty.

1966
 Pounds and pence give way to a dollars-and-cents currency.

1966

15 March
 Australian premiere of Robert Helpmann's *Elektra*, designed by Arthur Boyd, is held in Adelaide.

25 March
Raymonda premieres in Adelaide – again with Rudolf Nureyev and Margot Fonteyn in the lead roles.

12 August
 The first international tour by the company is also the longest, with seasons in Baalbeck, Nice, Liverpool, Glasgow, London, Birmingham, Paris, Copenhagen, Berlin, Los Angeles and Honolulu – 67 performances seen by more than 170,000 people.



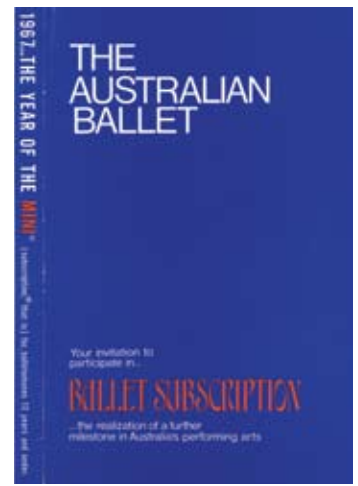
October **1967**

Prime Minister Harold Holt announces the opening of an Office of Aboriginal Affairs in Canberra, following a referendum in favour of changing the Australian constitution to give Aborigines equal rights.

17 December

Australia is shocked when Prime Minister Harold Holt vanishes while swimming off a beach near Melbourne.

1967



The introduction of subscription season selling – an enormous queue forms outside Sydney's Tivoli Theatre for the \$3 Youth Series.

15 February – 28 July 1967

International tour of New Zealand, North America and South America.

1968

The oldest dated human remains in Australia are found by archaeologists at Lake Mungo, Western New South Wales.

20 August

A new National Gallery is officially opened in Melbourne.

1968



The Australian Ballet moves into a former tyre factory in Flemington provided by the Melbourne City Council. They remain there for 20 years!

2 August

The world premiere of Helpmann's *Sun Music* at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, breaks all previous attendance records of The Australian Ballet.

16 August

The world premiere of *Threshold*, choreographed by John Butler, at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney. After the Helpmann works it's the first major contemporary dance piece to be created for the company by an internationally acclaimed choreographer.

26 June **1969**

Australia's biggest iron ore development is officially opened by Sir Paul Hasluck, the new Governor – General of Australia.

July

NASA's tracking station built at Woomera, 480 kms northeast of Adelaide, serves as a vital communications link for Apollo XI as Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin land on the moon.

August

The Commonwealth Arbitration Commission adopts the principle of equal pay for equal work regardless of gender.

1969



June – July

Antony Tudor arrives in Australia to stage *Pillar of Fire* and create an original work, *The Divine Horsemen*.

8 August

The world premiere of *The Last Vision*, choreographed by Igor Moiseyev, at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney. It's the first ballet ever commissioned from a resident Soviet choreographer for an Australian-based company, launching the partnership of two young Australian dancers, Marilyn Rowe and Kelvin Coe.

20 February 1970

A new communications station providing the first direct link between Australia and Great Britain in Ceduna, South Australia.

March 30 - June 30

1,000 Australian service personnel withdraw from South Vietnam, leaving about 6,000 Australian forces there.

1970



The dancers strike over pay disputes, which results in a reformation of the hierarchy and pay structure.

28 March

Australian premiere of Nureyev's *Don Quixote* at Her Majesty's Theatre, Adelaide, featuring Lucette Aldous as Kitri, Robert Helpmann as the Don and Nureyev as Basilio.

Neville Bonner, Liberal Party senator for Queensland (1971-1983) becomes the first Aboriginal member of the Australian Parliament. Helen Mary Caldicott, an Australian physician, writer and anti-nuclear activist, initiates mass protests against the French conducting nuclear weapons tests at Mururoa Atoll.

1971

1971



3 June

Othello, choreographed by Garth Welch, opens at Her Majesty's Theatre, Adelaide. Originally created for The Australian Ballet School in 1969, it employs the film score from the *Planet of the Apes*.

8 July

The first choreographic workshop presented at the Princess Theatre, Melbourne, which introduces the creations of five young members of the company. Each goes on to become an artistic director and all are internationally recognised today - Don Asker, John Meehan, Graeme Murphy, Ian Spink and Leigh Warren.



21 October 1972
 Governor General Sir Paul Hasluck activates a switch to open the Snowy Mountains Hydroelectric Scheme's main power station, Tumut Three. Australia's largest national development, costing \$943 million, the ceremony comes almost 23 years to the day after the project began.

1973
 Patrick White is the first Australian to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. The Sydney Opera House opens. Its remarkable engineering makes it world famous, though the original architect Jorn Utzon resigns following a disagreement with the Government. The voting age is lowered from 21 to 18.

1974
 Cyclone Tracy ravages Darwin on Christmas Eve. 45,000 people are left homeless, 1,000 seriously injured and 66 killed.

1972 John Lanchbery appointed Music Director of The Australian Ballet.



17 March
 The company celebrates its 10th anniversary with the Australian premiere of Frederick Ashton's *Cinderella*. Ashton and Helpmann reprise their original roles of the Ugly Sisters.

19 July
 Robert Helpmann again collaborates with Rudolf Nureyev to make the film version of *Don Quixote*, giving history a unique record of 20th century dance. It features Nureyev, Aldous and Helpmann, with Marilyn Rowe as Queen of the Dryads. The film is made in three huge hangers at Melbourne's Essendon Airport over a period of five weeks and receives its world premiere screening at the Sydney Opera House.



1973



Both Kelvin Coe and Marilyn Rowe win Silver medals at the second International Ballet Competition in Moscow.

6 April
 World premiere of *Gemini* performed at the Elizabethan Theatre, Newtown. Choreographer Glen Tetley creates the lead roles on Marilyn Rowe, John Meehan, Gary Norman and Carolyn Rappel.



7 December
 World premiere of *The Sleeping Beauty* at Sydney Opera House also marks The Australian Ballet's first season at this new venue. Designed by Kenneth Rowell, directed by Helpmann and produced by van Praagh, *Beauty* also marks the farewell performance of Garth Welch, who had danced the leading male role of every classical work staged by the company.

1974

17 July
 World premiere of *Sacred Space* at Canberra Theatre. Barry Moreland's Bach-scored, Martha Graham-influenced piece is his first work created for The Australian Ballet.
28 November
 Australian premiere of *Romeo and Juliet* at Sydney Opera House. Anne Woolliams reproduces John Cranko's production with Lucette Aldous and Kelvin Coe in lead roles.



Colour television is introduced into Australia. **1975**

November

Gough Whitlam's Government dismissed by Australia's Governor General Sir John Kerr after the Senate rejects the national budget. Kerr appoints Malcolm Fraser as Prime Minister and instructs him to form a temporary Government until an election can be held. The Liberal and National Country parties combine forces to win the election in December, and Fraser continues as Prime Minister.

1975



October

British choreographer Gillian Lynne arrives to create The Australian Ballet's first work expressly commissioned for television – *The Fool on the Hill*. Inspired by the Beatles' song and employing a score based on their compositions, arranged and orchestrated by John Lanchbery, the work wins a number of international television awards and is later revised for stage performances.

13 November

World premiere of *The Merry Widow* at the Palais Theatre, Melbourne. Choreographed by Ronald Hynd and produced by Robert Helpmann, it is the first full length ballet created for the company.

John Bloomfield wins the Archibald Prize for portraiture but is disqualified on the grounds his work was painted from a photograph, not real life. The prize is rejudged and awarded to Kevin Connor. **1976**

1 October

The new Medicare system initiated. The Government amends the existing Medibank insurance system installing a general levy on the incomes of those receiving Medibank benefits.

1976



Anne Woolliams is appointed Artistic Director



October

International tour of Manila. *The Merry Widow* is the arts highlight of the World Bank Conference. Imelda Marcos organises to ship the sets and costumes back by Army Hercules for *Widow's* opening in Melbourne two days later.

29 November

World premiere of *Glimpses* in Canberra. Choreographed by Graeme Murphy for The Australian Ballet's 'Ballet '76', it receives the Canberra Times Award for outstanding choreographic achievement.

21 May **1977**

A voluntary referendum on the national anthem proves Advance Australia Fair (AAF) the winner with 2,940,854 votes. Waltzing Matilda receives 1,918,206; God Save the Queen 1,257,341; and Song of Australia 652,858 votes. However, it isn't until 1984 that AAF is finalised as the anthem for all occasions.

1977



January

Superboy Came to Class, choreographed by Walter Bourke for Danilo Radojevic, is performed at the Third International Ballet Competition in Moscow where Danilo is the first Australian to receive a Gold Medal.

19 October

Anne Woolliams' *Swan Lake* commissioned to mark the centenary of the ballet's original production in Moscow. It's performed at the Palais Theatre, Melbourne.

1978
The Third World War: A Future History by Sir John Winthrop Hackett is published, speculating on the possibility of a third global conflict.
 The Northern Territory becomes responsible for its own administration, the first step toward statehood.

1979
October
 The Federal Parliament passes a bill to provide a new charter of operation for the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO).
 A new Federal Police Force created when the former Commonwealth Police merges with the Australian Capital Territory Police.

1980
 Australia starts developing the vast fields of natural gas that have been discovered on the northwest coastal shelf of Western Australia, the largest single resource development project in Australia's history.

1978
19 September
 Marilyn Jones retires from the stage.
October
 Marilyn Rowe and Kelvin Coe the first Australian artists to appear as guests of the Bolshoi Ballet when they perform the leading roles of *Don Quixote*.

26 November
 László Seregi's three act *Spartacus*, set to Aram Khachaturian's music, is the first Central-European ballet to be performed in Australia.



1979



Marilyn Jones is appointed Artistic Director.



23 February
Coppélia, choreographed by Peggy van Praagh, produced by George Ogilvie and designed by Kristian Fredrikson, premieres at the Palais Theatre, Melbourne.

1980



The Dancers Company is founded by Marilyn Jones to take the great repertoire of The Australian Ballet in specially modified staging to areas of the country where the full company is unable to perform.

21 March
 The Gala Tribute to Borovansky at the Sydney Opera House, including *Pineapple Poll*, *Schéhérazade*, and *Graduation Ball*, celebrates Edouard Borovansky, the father-pioneer of ballet in Australia.

8 May
 World premiere of Graeme Murphy's *Beyond Twelve* performed at the Sydney Opera House.
June-July
 The company make an historic visit to the People's Republic of China – the first by a major ballet company since the Cultural Revolution. The company are feted everywhere they go. A televised performance of *Don Quixote* attracts an audience of some 200 million people throughout China. Opera House.

July **1981**
The 24-nation Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) predicts that Australia will have the fastest growth rate of all member countries

The Dalai Lama visits Australia to mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of Buddhism in Australia. **1982**

The High Court of Australia decides the Tasmanian Government must halt work on a dam on the Franklin River, an area designated as a World Heritage site. **1983**

1981



May
The Merry Widow is performed by The Australian Ballet as part of the Cervantino Festival in Guanajuato and in the Palacio de bellas Artes in Mexico City.



September

A special performance of *Onegin* is given in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

October

The Three Musketeers is performed at the Palais Theatre for the Heads of Government attending CHOGM in Melbourne.

Late October

Dancers go on strike over the number of performances Principal Artists are required to dance, and the artistic direction and administration of the company. The Brisbane season and parts of the Melbourne and Sydney seasons are cancelled due to unresolved issues between dancers and staff. The strike lasts for 26 days and settlement of the dispute requires the appointment of independent consultants to review the operation of the company in all its aspects.

1982



As a consequence of the strike, Marilyn Rowe Maver is appointed to the new position of Ballet Director.



8 October

World premiere of a new version of *Nutcracker* created for The Australian Ballet by Leonard Koslov.

1983



September

Maina Gielgud is appointed Artistic Director.

Former Principal Walter Bourke is the first dancer to be made a member of the board of The Australian Ballet Foundation. ABC Television simulcast *Swan Lake* from the Festival Theatre, Adelaide to celebrate the company's 21st anniversary.

19 April 1984
Prime Minister Bob Hawke announces that Australia's official colours are green and gold.

1985
The land surrounding Ayers Rock is returned to its traditional Aboriginal owners, the Mutijula people, and renamed Uluru.

1986
Janine Haines, leader of the Australian Democrats (1986-1990) becomes the first woman in Australian history to head a political party.

1984



30 October
The State Theatre at the Victorian Arts Centre opens with Maina Gielgud's new production of *The Sleeping Beauty*. An onstage party follows.

1985



8 May
World premiere of Robert Ray's Australian classic *The Sentimental Bloke* at the Sydney Opera House.

1986



6 May
The Australian Ballet's *Checkmate* premieres at the Sydney Opera House. Robert Helpmann performs as the Red King in his final season with the company.



12 September
Kelvin Coe is lured out of retirement to appear as Albrecht in the world premiere season of Maina Gielgud's production of *Giselle*.

19 May **1987**
The population of Australia passes 16 million

1988
Australia celebrates the bicentennial anniversary of European settlement and becomes one of the first countries to put a hologram on its currency when it introduces new plastic \$10 bills.

December 1990
Recession is officially declared in Australia. Foreign debt, the high value of the Australian dollar, rising oil prices and falling commodity prices, particularly for wheat and wool, are blamed for the declining economy.

1987



20 February
Glen Tetley's *Orpheus* created on The Australian Ballet and performed at the Victorian Arts Centre.

1988



18 February

The Australian Ballet moves to its new purpose-built home in Southbank, Melbourne, opened by Prime Minister Bob Hawke.

April

Elizabeth Toohey and David McAllister are the first dancers from The Australian Ballet to guest with the Kirov Ballet.

9 November

Stephen Baynes presents *Ballade* for the 25th Anniversary Choreographic Competition in Melbourne.

1990



4 May

Stephen Baynes' first commissioned work for the The Australian Ballet, *Catalyst*, receives a nomination for Best New Dance Production at the Laurence Olivier Awards during the 1992 tour of London.



Steven Heathcote is the face of *Spartacus* on billboards during the New York season at the Met. The company also tours to Washington DC and Costa Mesa.

Fire engulfs six tanks at Australia's biggest chemical storage plant at Coode Island in Melbourne. **1991**

2 September **1992**
US President George Bush announces his intention to subsidise US wheat sales abroad, action expected to cost Australian farmers about \$20 million in business.

Cathy Freeman carries both the Australian and Aboriginal flags at the Commonwealth Games as she runs a lap of honour following her victories in the 200-metre and 400-metre finals. **1994**

1991



1992



1994



18 October
Stanton Welch's *Of Blessed Memory* premieres at the State Theatre, Melbourne. A tribute to mothers, his own mother Marilyn Jones – to whom it is dedicated – makes a guest appearance.
October – November
Principal members of the company perform as guest artists on Rudolf Nureyev's farewell tour of Australia.



12 March
Graeme Murphy's quintessentially Australian production of *Nutcracker* receives its world premiere at the Sydney Opera House.
27 June – 18 July
The Australian Ballet undertakes an international tour of Nervi (Italy) and London, during which Diana, Princess of Wales attends the Royal Gala performance of *Coppélia* at the London Coliseum.

The company launches its first extensive education programme to foster and expand knowledge of dance across Australia. It offers informative talks and behind-the-scenes tours for the general public, and master classes for dance students and teachers.



1 September
Divergence, choreographed by Stanton Welch, premieres at the Victorian Arts Centre.

May 1995

The Northern Territory enacts landmark legislation legalising voluntary euthanasia. The mainstream medical community and church organisations oppose the new laws, passed by a conservative Government.

1995



Stephen Baynes and Stanton Welch are appointed Resident Choreographers of the company.

24 February

Stanton Welch creates a full-length *Madame Butterfly*, which premieres at the Victorian Arts Centre. Welch also choreographs *Corroboree* for the UNited We Dance Festival in San Francisco to celebrate the UN's 50th anniversary.

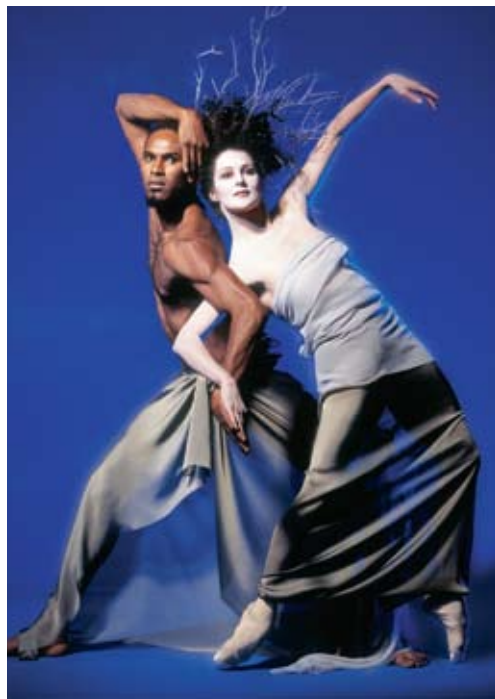


The Australian Ballet premieres three new works produced by Australians: Stanton Welch's *Red Earth*; Stephen Page's *Alchemy*, and Meryl Tankard's *The Deep End*.

1997

The Workplace Relations Act takes effect. It reduces the power of unions, making it easier for employers to dismiss employees and enable employers to reach non-union agreements, containing no-strike clauses, directly with individual workers.

1997



January

Ross Stretton, former Principal Artist with the company, takes over the helm as Artistic Director.

29 October

For the Melbourne Festival there are three new commissions: Stephen Baynes' *At the edge of night*, shown on ABC Television; Twyla Tharp's *The Storyteller*, created on the company in New York; and Stephen Page's *Rites*, choreographed on his own company, Bangarra Dance Theatre, and The Australian Ballet.

1998

28 December The Sydney-to-Hobart yacht race ends in tragedy when winds of 145 kilometres per hour and 10-metre swells strike the racing fleet. Australian authorities confirm that several sailors either died or were presumed drowned, while more than 50 people were rescued.

1998



7 April

1914 is Stephen Baynes first full length ballet for the company.

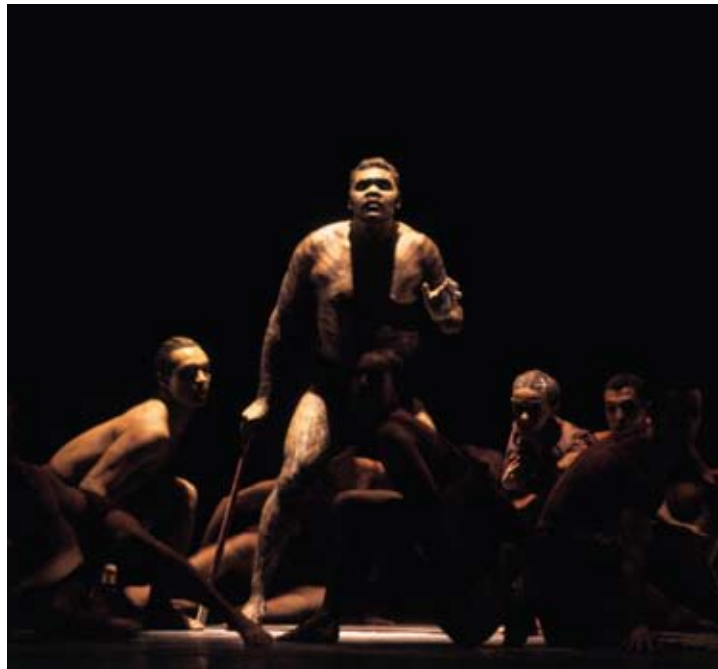
1 July

Natalie Weir's *Dark Lullaby* is created for The Australian Ballet's *Collaborations* season at the Malthouse in Melbourne. It receives rave reviews when performed by the company in New York in 1999.

June 1999

The Senate passes legislation to introduce Australia's first consumption tax (GST); a 10% levy on all goods and services.

1999



12 – 23 October

The company wows Americans in New York and Washington with its programme by Australian choreographers, including *Divergence*, *Rites*, *At the edge of night*, *Dark Lullaby* and *Madame Butterfly*

September 2000

The Sydney 2000 Olympic Games are the largest yet. Declared "the most successful Olympic Games ever" by President of the IOC, Juan Antonio Samaranch, the Olympics see 10,651 athletes competed in 300 events.

2000



16 June
Mirror Mirror, Natalie Weir's first full-length work for the company, has its world premiere.

January 2001

Australia celebrates 100 years since its inauguration as the Commonwealth of Australia.

25 February

Revered cricketer Sir Donald Bradman dies in his home in Adelaide.

17 November

At just 20 years old, Australia's Lleyton Hewitt becomes the youngest player ever to achieve world number one tennis ranking.

2001



23 May

In the first performance of its kind for the company, Stephen Baynes' *Requiem* and the Lindy Hume/Natalie Weir *Carmina Burana* premiere in a joint production with the State Opera of South Australia.

18 May

Tivoli sees The Australian Ballet and Sydney Dance Company join creative forces to perform in a dance musical by Graeme Murphy. It performs sell out seasons Australia wide.

July

After his farewell performance as Albrecht in *Giselle*, David McAllister is appointed the new Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet.



2002
Athlete Cathy Freeman is the only Australian nominated in a list of 101 significant leaders of the future by the World Economic Forum.

20 May

Former Liberal Prime Minister John Gorton, who came to office after the 1967 drowning of Harold Holt, dies in Sydney at age 90.

4 July

Millionaire adventurer Steve Fossett becomes the first person to successfully complete a solo navigation of the world in a balloon when his Spirit of Freedom lands in Outback Australia.

2003

Australia continues to battle the worst drought in 20 years while kangaroos reach record plague proportions, competing with livestock for scarce food.

February

Hundreds of thousands of people turn out to peace rallies across Australia to protest likely involvement in a war against Iraq. The protests are described as the biggest since the Vietnam War 30 years before.

2004

May
Australian Mary Donaldson marries Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark in a fairytale ceremony.

February

The Ghan becomes the first passenger train to travel from Adelaide to Darwin. The journey is 3000 kilometres.

2002



The Australian Ballet celebrates its 40th Anniversary: it now has a repertoire of 225 ballets by 74 choreographers, of whom 27 are Australian. Throughout the year, the company hosts a series of gala events entitled *Beyond 40*. The company also hosts a reunion for dancers and employees past and present.

The greatest triumph of the year is the premiere of Graeme Murphy, Janet Vernon and Kristian Fredrikson's *Swan Lake*, which premieres to sell-out seasons in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide. For the first time in The Australian Ballet's history, the company performs simultaneously in two different venues, allowing the company to broaden its performance reach.

2003



The inaugural Telstra Young Ballet dancer of the Year Award is announced at the Melbourne Telstra Ballet at the Bowl performance. Principal Matthew Lawrence takes home the prize, while Danielle Rowe wins the special People's Choice award.

29 April

Meryl Tankard's *Wild Swans*, her first full-length work for the company, receives its world premiere in Sydney.

2004



The inaugural season of *Bodytorque* continues The Australian Ballet's tradition to foster choreographic talent in outstanding young dancers, with the theme *Women on Men* – women creating performances for male dancers.

The centenary celebrations of two the 20th century's most influential choreographers, George Balanchine and Frederick Ashton. As a tribute, the company performs Ashton's *La Fille mal gardée* and *Mr B*, a programme of Balanchine's works.

The Dancers Company celebrates its 25th anniversary year with a seven-city tour including Darwin and Alice Springs; the company gave a special Gala Performance to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the opening of the Arts Centre, Melbourne.



June 21 2005

French black truffles are grown successfully in NSW and Victoria for the first time.
Australia enters a free trade agreement with the United States of America. Negotiations for a free trade Agreement with China are well under way.

2005



July

The company embarks on its first overseas tour in four years, taking Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake* to London and Cardiff. A great success with audiences, the company is also rewarded with the UK Critics Circle Award for Best Foreign Dance Company. The dancers are accompanied by a documentary team, telling a story of the dancers as they travel. Principal Dancer Steven Heathcote is its co-producer. *On the Wings of a Swan* screens on Channel Ten early 2006.

October

The company premieres its largest ever production, Stanton Welch's new version of *The Sleeping Beauty*, designed by Kristian Fredrikson. It is a great success and is performed to sell-out seasons in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide.

9 May 2006

Miners Brant Webb and Todd Russell are freed from Tasmania's Beaconsfield Mine after being trapped underground for two weeks.

20 March

Tropical Cyclone Larry slams Australia's northeast coast, damaging homes and devastating crops. Over 90% of Australia's banana crops are wiped out.

4 September

'Crocodile Hunter' Steve Irwin dies on the Great Barrier Reef after being pierced in the chest by a stingray. Irwin was filming a documentary called *The Ocean's Deadliest*.

2006



The Australian Ballet, National Library of Australia and The University of Adelaide launch a groundbreaking partnership designed to commemorate Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, in particular the impact the Ballets Russes' Australian tours had on our society and cultural heritage.



17 March

The Australian Ballet and Bangarra Dance Theatre's creative energies are reunited for the world premiere of Stephen Page's *Amalgamate* and the much-awaited return of *Rites*. This programme entitled *Gathering* achieves record single ticket sales for a double bill in Melbourne and is later performed in Sydney to capacity houses.

June

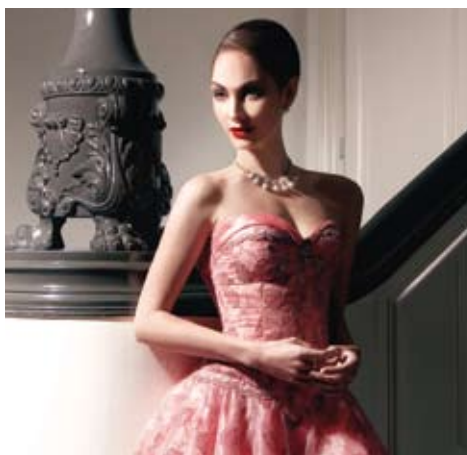
Pirouettes in the Pilbara! The Australian Ballet travels west to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Karratha's Walkington Theatre, the largest community venue above the 26th parallel in Western Australia. It is the first time The Australian Ballet's main company has performed in regional WA. Local school children, including students from Karratha's ballet school, are given the opportunity to watch class.

19 September

World premiere of Stephen Baynes' *Raymonda*. He and his design team update and rework the story to be set in the 1950s, loosely based on the Hollywood film legend Grace Kelly.

October

The company perform Stanton Welch's *The Sleeping Beauty* in Auckland and then travel to Shanghai to perform Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake*. The company has performed in Auckland four times and Shanghai five.



2007
Residents in towns and cities throughout Australia continue to struggle with water restrictions due to severe drought conditions. The enforced restrictions brings major changes to Australians' attitudes to water and climate change and the impact it has on their lifestyles.

24 November
After being in opposition since 1996, the Australian Labor Party wins the federal election and Kevin Rudd becomes Prime Minister.

2007
The Australian Ballet celebrates its 45th year.

3 July
At the age of 42, The Australian Ballet's longest-serving Principal Artist, Steven Heathcote retires from dancing Principal roles. In his 25 illustrious years performing with the company, Steven earned numerous awards, including three Helpmann Awards, two Mo Awards and was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for his services to dance. Renowned as a prince among Principals – an extraordinary dancer who achieved enviable synergy with his leading ladies, and valued as a mentor to younger dancers. Steven continues to perform major character roles with the company.

30 August
The Australian Ballet premiere of Leonard Massine's *Les Présages* and his *Symphonie Fantastique* is seen in a new version by Dutch choreographer Krzysztof Pastor in *Destiny*, a programme dedicated Massine and the Ballets Russes.

18 September
Sir Peter Wright's spectacular production of *The Nutcracker* enters The Australian Ballet's repertoire and is seen by audiences in Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney, receiving rapturous reviews and is huge success at the box office.

July
The Australian Ballet performed in Japan in 1968, 1987, 1993, 1996 and returned to Tokyo in 2007 to perform Stanton Welch's *The Sleeping Beauty* and Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake*.

7 December
Through a groundbreaking partnership between the Australian Film Commission and The Australian Ballet a performance of Peter Wright's *The Nutcracker* is filmed live at the Sydney Opera House and beamed via satellite to eight regional cinemas throughout Australia. In addition to the capacity house in the Opera Theatre, thousands viewed the live performance on a giant screen on the forecourt outside.



13 February **2008**

New Prime Minister Kevin Rudd makes an emotional apology to the Stolen Generations at Parliament House in Canberra. Hundreds of people fill the lawns outside and thousands more gather all over Australia to witness the historic moment.

17 March

The Finding Sydney Foundation discovers the wreckage of HMAS Sydney at the bottom of the Indian Ocean off the coast of WA, solving one of Australia's oldest maritime mysterious .

5 September

Australia's first female Governor-General Quentin Bryce is sworn in to office.

10 October

The global financial crisis reaches Australia. Dubbed 'Black Friday', October 10 sees Australian markets lose a massive eight percent.

January - February **2009**

During extreme weather, bushfires sweep through Victoria. Over 200 people die in the fires and thousands of homes are destroyed.

2008

April

The Australian Ballet joins global celebrations honouring the choreographic genius of Jerome Robbins. Performing three of his most famous works; *The Cage*, *The Concert* and *A Suite of Dances*, this tribute marks the 10th anniversary since his death.



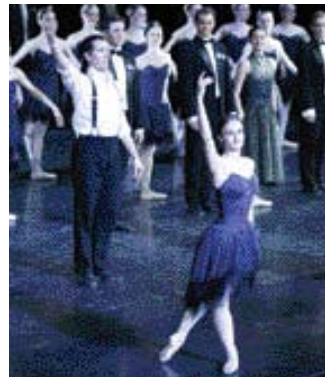
September

In the spirit of the creativity and innovation of the Ballets Russes, three new works with three new music scores is commissioned. Entitled *Interplay* it features *Night Path* by Stephen Baynes (Chor)/Richard Mills (Comp), *The Possibility Space* Nicolo Fonte (Chor)/Ross Edwards (Comp) and *Semele* by Matjash Mrozewski (Chor)/Gerard Brophy (Comp).



October

After an absence of 43 years, the company returns to Paris. They perform Krzysztof Pastor's *Symphonie Fantastique*, Stephen Page's *Rites* with Bangarra Dance Theatre and Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake* to resounding success. They also perform at Sadler's Wells Theatre in London and at The Lowy in Manchester.



2009

Baby boom! The Australian Ballet's Principal Artists experience a veritable baby boom with a total of six babies being born in 2008-09.

2009 marks the final year of The Australian Ballet's four year project *The Ballets Russes in Australia: Our Cultural Revolution*. A treasure trove of discovery, the Ballets Russes project brought to the fore the amazing companies that toured Australia in the 1930s and their explosive impact on its cultural life and heritage.



February

Firebird and other legends features three works that were first performed in Australia by Colonel De basil's Ballets Russes in 1936. *Les Sylphides*, *Petrouchka* and a new *Firebird* by Graeme Murphy and Janet Vernon completes the bill. These programme is filmed and beamed live by ABC2 to audiences in cinemas throughout Australia.