

Queensland Ballet



QUEENSLAND BALLET AND HOTA PRESENT

Elastic Hearts

Featuring the music of Sia

30 April – 9 May 2026

Talbot Theatre, Thomas Dixon Centre



PRINCIPAL GUARDIAN
KEN TALBOT
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From the Artistic Director

It is always exciting to share new work with our audiences and to continue expanding the artistic voice of Queensland Ballet. *Elastic Hearts* is a vibrant and powerful addition to our repertoire, bringing together Australian creatives and highlighting the remarkable versatility of our dancers in a work that is both visually striking and theatrically dynamic.

The work premiered last year at HOTA on the Gold Coast, where it was met with standing ovations at every performance. It quickly proved to be a production that audiences connect with strongly, while also showcasing the expressive range and power of the dancers. We are very pleased to now share *Elastic Hearts* with Brisbane audiences.

Music has always been a powerful source of inspiration for me. For dancers, the connection between movement and music is essential, precision must live alongside deep musicality to truly move an audience.

Composer Elliott Wheeler has transformed Sia's iconic songs into a rich orchestral score of remarkable depth and colour. Recorded by the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, his reimagining creates a vivid musical landscape and provides the perfect canvas for Garry Stewart's choreography.

Garry brings a bold and distinctive vision to *Elastic Hearts*. What begins with vibrant colour, playfulness and raw energy gradually evolves into something more expansive, a world shaped by nature, ritual and imagination. The work celebrates physicality, creativity and the powerful connection between music, movement and design.

The generosity of Queensland Ballet's philanthropic community is fundamental to the Company's ability to create and share work such as *Elastic Hearts*. Their belief in the power of ballet allows us to continue expanding our artistic vision and bringing ambitious productions to the stage. We also thank the Australian and Queensland Governments, and our valued partners, for their ongoing support.

I hope you enjoy discovering *Elastic Hearts* as much as our dancers enjoy performing it.



Ivan Gil-Ortega
Artistic Director



Music that moves us

Queensland Ballet's Music Fund celebrates and sustains the musicians, scores and partner orchestras that make ballet possible—from first rehearsal to final curtain call.

"I'm grateful to work with inspiring artists at the intersection of such beautiful art forms. The Kathleen Lott Ballet Piano Fellowship has expanded my artistic expression beyond expectation. Seeing my playing translated into movement in real time is magical. Piano for ballet is a specialised field with limited tertiary pathways, making this Fellowship a

vital pathway for young Australian pianists. I'm deeply thankful for the generous support of Marion Pender."

— Feodora Zu Hohenlohe, Kathleen Lott Ballet Piano Fellow

If you move with the music, help sustain the heartbeat of every performance with a gift to the Queensland Ballet Music Fund.

queenslandballet.com.au/support/giving/make-a-donation

Credits

Music _____ Sia
Choreographer / Director & Staging Concepts _____ Garry Stewart
Music Producer & Arranger _____ Elliott Wheeler
Originating Artistic Producer _____ Leanne Benjamin OBE AM
Music Recording _____ Queensland Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Nigel Gaynor
Set & Costume Designer _____ Charles Davis
Lighting Designer _____ Alexander Berlage
Dramaturg _____ Lou Cope
Assistant to the Choreographer _____ Daniel Jaber

Duration: 1 hour, no interval.

Every effort was made to ensure program details were correct at the time of printing, however details are subject to change where necessary and without notice. Please check queenslandballet.com.au for updates.



Queensland Ballet acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we train and perform. Long before we arrived on this land, it played host to the dance expression of our First Nations Peoples. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging, and acknowledge the valuable contribution they have made and continue to make to the cultural landscape of this country.

Synopsis

Elastic Hearts is a powerful work by internationally acclaimed Choreographer, Garry Stewart. Created for Queensland Ballet and set to the music of Sia, this dynamic work has been reimagined in a sweeping orchestral score by Elliott Wheeler, and recorded by Queensland Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Nigel Gaynor.

At the heart of the work is Gaia, the primordial goddess of the Earth. From her first solitary steps, Gaia's journey unfolds as more dancers join her — embodying cycles of destruction, renewal, and transformation. Around them, the stage itself grows and evolves. Forests take root, swings sweep in, ramps tilt into slides, and a monumental pink heart bursts into bloom. The result is a world that is simultaneously playful, ritualistic, and deeply resonant.

Visually striking and emotionally charged, *Elastic Hearts* explores our connection to nature and to each other. It reflects on the resilience of the human spirit—the ability to bend, adapt, and endure without breaking.

Stewart draws on both ballet and contemporary dance to reveal new dimensions of the dancers' artistry, creating an experience that is accessible to first-time dance-goers while offering depth and surprise for seasoned audiences.

More than a performance, *Elastic Hearts* is a sensory journey through music, movement, and imagery—a celebration of creativity, community, and the power of resilience.

From the Choreographer

Elastic Hearts is an homage to the music of Sia, an Australian artist whose musical genius launched her into the stratospheric heights of international renown. After being commissioned to make this work by former Queensland Ballet Artistic Director Leanne Benjamin OBE AM, I spent many, many hours wandering the streets of Paris where I currently live, listening to her exceptional canon of music on repeat. What an unforgettable delight to spend this time in Sia's world, developing my own creative responses to her unforgettable songs about resilience, loss, love, creativity, joy, heartbreak and overcoming.

I wish to thank all of my collaborators and the entire company for their support and creativity. It was inspirational to work with composer/arranger Elliott Wheeler who has transformed Sia's music into an uplifting and powerful orchestral score. The designer Charles Davis did incredible work to bring his impeccable attention to detail and unyielding imagination to bear on the mise en scene. Huge thanks to the exceptionally talented lighting designer Alex Berlage.

Thank you to the Director of Production Services, Shaun O'Rourke, and his first rate crew as well as the wonderful Lauryn Jackson and her team in costume. And enormous gratitude to Craig Cathcart — Executive Producer and producer on this show.

I really couldn't have made *Elastic Hearts* without the support of the exceptional Daniel Jaber, whose support brought an unrelenting energy, creativity and joy into the rehearsal room. And of course I owe enormous thanks to Artistic Director Ivan Gil-Ortega who has been steadfastly supportive and unwaveringly generous to me during my time with the Company. Thank you, Ivan.

Finally — massive thanks to the dancers of Queensland Ballet who are an astoundingly versatile, hardworking, kind and generous bunch. Who could ask for more?!

Please enjoy *Elastic Hearts*.

Garry Stewart
Choreographer

The Choreographer

Garry Stewart began his dance training at the age of 20 after university studies in social work. He then trained at the Australian Ballet School and danced with Australian Dance Theatre, Expressions and Queensland Ballet before beginning his choreographic career in 1990. In 1999 he was appointed Artistic Director of Australian Dance Theatre (ADT).

Over the next 21 years, Stewart established the company as a leader in ambitious artistic collaborations and research-driven contemporary dance. His choreography became known for its distinctive movement language integrating various movement disciplines. These works toured internationally on a regular basis to major venues including London, Paris and New York. Many of his works were co-commissioned by international dance houses.

His first work for ADT, *Housedance*, famously featured six dancers abseiling down the exterior of the Sydney Opera House. Created for the International Millennium Broadcast, the work was viewed by a global television audience of one billion.

Stewart has received multiple Australian Dance Awards and Helpmann awards. He received the inaugural Australia Council Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dance and a Winston Churchill Fellowship which permitted him to make a comparative study of seven international choreographic centres before establishing the International Centre for Choreography at ADT.

Stewart's work is notable for its interdisciplinary collaborations, including *Devolution* with French-Canadian roboticist Louis-Philippe Demers, *Be Your Self* with New York based architecture firm Diller, Scofidio & Renfro, and *Held* with renowned US dance photographer Lois Greenfield. His collaboration with theatre director Nigel Jamieson on *Honour Bound* examined the detention of Australian citizen David Hicks at Guantánamo Bay, touring to the Barbican Centre (London), the Vienna Festival and the Holland Festival.

Other works include *The Age of Unbeauty* and *G*, a deconstruction of the classical ballet *Giselle* which toured across the globe. Later ADT works explored themes of nature, including *The Beginning of Nature* as well as a virtual reality project based on this stage work. Both incorporated the local indigenous Kurna language. *South* was a commentary on climate change, referencing Sir Douglas Mawson's 1912 Antarctic expedition.

Stewart has choreographed for the television series *So You Think You Can Dance* (Australia and US) and directed various short films including *The Circadian Cycle* which won numerous international awards. He also choreographed the TV series *Stateless* starring and co-produced by Cate Blanchett.

He has been commissioned to make works for; Birmingham Royal Ballet, Royal Flanders Ballet, Le Ballet du Rhin, Rambert Dance Company, The Australian Ballet, Sydney Dance Company, West Australian Ballet and Tanz Mainz (Germany).

He was founding director of the Assemblage Centre for Creative Arts at Flinders University. In 2021 he created *Rituals of Memory* for industrial robots and dancers and directed an accompanying short film *Ghosts in the Machines*. In 2023 he was commissioned by Theatre national de Chaillot in Paris to create the duet *Terrestrial Fabulation*. In 2025 Stewart made *Elastic Hearts* for Queensland Ballet to music by Sia Furler.

He is currently working with director Neil Armfield on the opera *La Cenerentola* for State Opera South Australia.



Garry Stewart
Choreographer

From Pop Anthem to Ballet Stage

When Sia's *Elastic Heart* hit the airwaves, it was defined by the pulse of electronics, vocal firepower and unapologetic emotion. Translating that into the lush, physical world of ballet was never going to be a simple cut-and-paste job. It required imagination, technical mastery, and an ear finely tuned to both pop production and orchestral colour.

That's where Elliott Wheeler stepped in. An arranger, composer, and producer with roots stretching from jazz big bands to film scores, Wheeler took on the challenge of reimagining Sia's music for our 2025 premiere of *Elastic Hearts* — scored entirely with a 44-piece orchestra and Sia's unmistakable voice.

The journey from studio synths to soaring strings was part adrenaline, part problem-solving, and part pure artistry, with each musician hand-making sounds that had once only existed in Wheeler's head. Having previously produced some of Sia's tracks, Wheeler said he was eager "to bring her music into a whole new world."

At first, he planned to arrange Sia's songs purely for orchestra with no vocals, but something felt missing. "What so many people respond to in Sia's songs, apart from the incredible lyrics and unnerving knack for melody, is her voice. It's a force of nature," he explains.

He returned to Sia's team asking for access to isolated vocal recordings. They agreed, giving Wheeler a "tether" for his arrangements — a human anchor amid orchestral waves. From there, he began deconstructing the pop production. A barely noticeable chopped vocal sample in *Elastic Heart* became a central orchestral motif, driving the emotional arc of the piece.

The music didn't develop in isolation. From the outset, Wheeler and Choreographer Garry Stewart exchanged ideas about structure, pacing, and emotional flow. Stewart selected songs that resonated with his vision, and Wheeler shaped his arrangements to serve the choreography. Pop songs are concise, often built on just a few musical ideas. In ballet, those same ideas might need to stretch to eight minutes. Wheeler expected to run out of material, but the opposite happened. "It was liberating", he said. "You can take a small idea and build an entire landscape around it, letting the orchestra play to its strengths."

A key decision was to keep all sounds organic — no drum machines, no synth pads. Every beat of pop energy had to be translated into orchestral timbres, requiring creative approaches to percussion, string articulation, and rhythmic layering. The result preserves the drive of Sia's originals while remaining true to a classical frame.

Given Wheeler's film background, it's no surprise the score carries a cinematic sensibility. "You want to take people on a journey," he says. "Sia's songs already have such incredible emotional cores. The melodies are so strong — they stand on their own when played by the orchestra." The music moves like a story: dynamic peaks, moments of stillness, emotional turning points. Even without words or visuals, it invites the audience into a narrative shaped by Sia's lyricism and Stewart's choreography.

Elastic Hearts promises a bold meeting of worlds: contemporary pop anthems by Sia, reimagined for symphony orchestra, set to dynamic choreography by Garry Stewart, and recorded by the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. It is a score built with imagination, craft, and profound respect for the emotional power of the originals.

Wheeler hopes audiences leave feeling as though they have experienced Sia's music anew — whether they know every lyric or are hearing it for the first time. "It's about that thrill of so many people working at the top of their game to create something new, right here and now... it's going to be a really great show."

Read more about *Elastic Hearts* on queenslandballet.com.au



Elliott Wheeler
Music Producer & Arranger

The Company

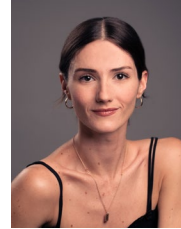
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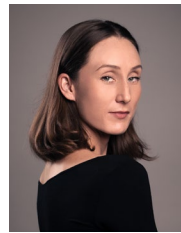
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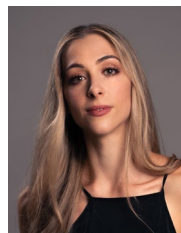
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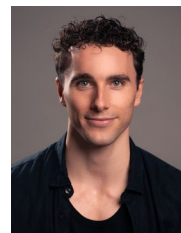
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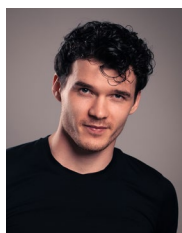
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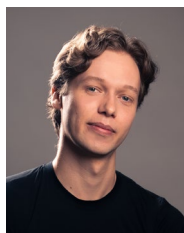


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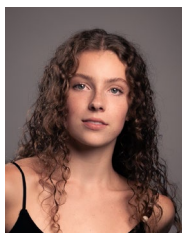
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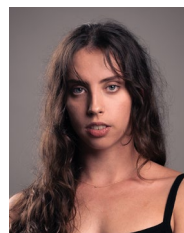
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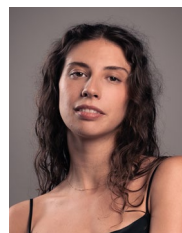
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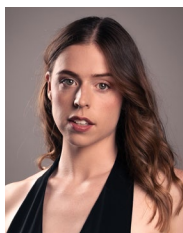
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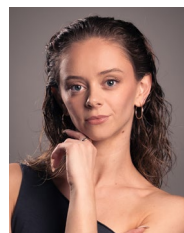
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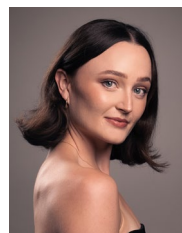
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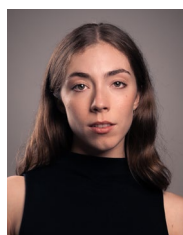
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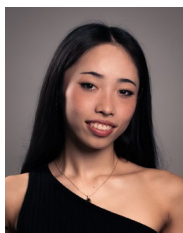


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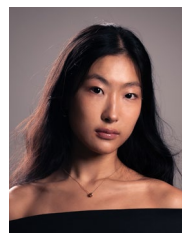
Nicole Drynan



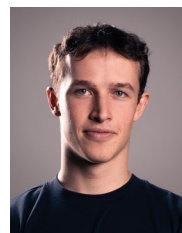
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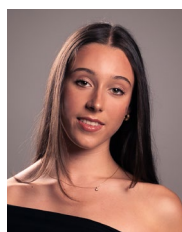
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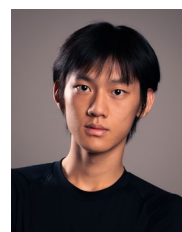
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Executive Director

Dilshani Weerasinghe

DIRECTORS

Ballet Répétiteur and Philanthropy

Engagement Director

Rachael Walsh

Director of Academy of

Queensland Ballet

Christian Tatchev

Director of Academy Business Operations

Kelly McBurnie

Director of Audience and Engagement

Lisa Summer-Hayes

Director, Community Health Institute

Zara Gomes

Director of Finance & Impact

Paula Perkins

Director of Precincts and Capital Projects

Lucas Gilroy

Director of Production Services

Shaun O'Rourke

Executive Producer

Craig Cathcart

Rehearsal Director

Lisa-Maree Cullum

ARTISTIC OPERATIONS

Company Manager

David Power

Artistic and Business Liaison

Elise Azar

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Head of Production

Don Mackenzie

Production Stage Manager

Heather O'Keeffe

Assistant Stage Manager

Maddison Penglis

Head Mechanist

Sam Packer

Deputy Head Mechanist

Declan Bell

Head Electrician

Matthew Allan

Lighting Programmer / Operator

Clare Browning

Tim Gawne

Head of Costume

Laurn Jackson

Costume Performance Manager

Barb Kerr

Costume Workroom Manager

Kathi Lionheart

Principal Cutter

Sharon Clarke

Cutter

Aeron Malbasias

Costumier / Milliner &

Costume Administration

Vicki Martin

Costumiers

Bethany Cordwell

Rebecca Farag

Isabelle Lacombe

Michelle Potts

Frances Pyper

Ai Shaw

Holly Watson

Theatre Dresser / Maintenance

Bethany Cordwell

Wig, Hair, and Makeup Supervisor

Michael Green

Wig, Hair, and Makeup Artists

Aislynn Maczyszyn

Stella Harris

Art Finisher

Elsbeth Cameron

Quilting

Leanne Valiukas – Love It Quilting

Printing

Emerald Dreams Textiles

PERFORMANCE HEALTH

Head of Performance Health

Michelle White

Physiotherapist

Kate Martyn

Massage Therapist

Pedro Alcobio

Pilates Instructor

Catherine Neal

Strength Coach

Tony Lewis

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

Artists of Queensland Ballet.

Photography David Kelly.

To view our full staff list, please visit

queenslandballet.com.au/discover/company/staff

THOMAS DIXON CENTRE

HOME OF Queensland Ballet

On Yuggera and Turrbal Country

From its beginnings in 1908 as a boot factory, the heritage-listed Thomas Dixon Centre has been transformed into a world-class performing arts destination, cultural precinct, and home of Queensland Ballet. It features a state-of-the-art theatre, stunning public art, dance studios, and two new dining destinations, Layla and Tom's Kitchen. With health and wellbeing at its heart, the Thomas Dixon Centre has become the first arts precinct in the world to achieve the International WELL Building Certificate.

The revitalisation of the Thomas Dixon Centre is an incredible story of passion, tenacity, and altruism. Queensland Ballet, a not-for-profit arts company, refurbished its heritage home, not only to house its own artists and arts workers for years to come, but to create a vibrant space for its neighbours, sector and wider community.

The Thomas Dixon Centre is an extraordinary space, where stories are shared, creativity flourishes, and connections between artists and audiences are forged.

Discover more about the Thomas Dixon Centre at thomasdixoncentre.com.au and see stories unfold.



@thomasdixoncentre



Thomas Dixon Centre

We are welcoming and accepting of people from diverse backgrounds and identities, and strive to create an accessible and inclusive environment for all.

Queensland Ballet is proudly supported by:

GOVERNMENT



Queensland Ballet receives financial assistance from the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland.



Queensland Ballet is assisted by the Commonwealth Government through Creative Australia, its arts funding advisory body.



PRINCIPAL GUARDIAN

KEN TALBOT
FOUNDATION

MAJOR AND PRESENTING PARTNERS



SEASON PARTNERS



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

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Southside



CREATIVE PARTNERS

Bigfish

David Kelly
PHOTOGRAPHY



Thomas Dixon Centre Partners

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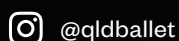
Academy of Queensland Ballet Partners



Club REVOLUTION Members

A cultural club celebrating heritage and vibrancy of ballet.

Dr Marosh & Lily Vrtik



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Queensland Ballet

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