

Queensland Ballet



LEO MUJIĆ'S

Hamlet

19 June – 18 July 2026

Talbot Theatre, Thomas Dixon Centre



PRINCIPAL GUARDIAN

KEN TALBOT
FOUNDATION

From the Artistic Director

We are proud to present *Hamlet*, one of the most enduring works in the Western canon. In an Australian first, we welcome director and choreographer Leo Mujić, whose adaptation offers audiences a clear, powerful, and visually striking response to Shakespeare's tragedy.

Leo and I go back to my days in Stuttgart, where we danced and toured together across Europe. Even then, it was clear his choreographic voice and creative energy were something special.

When I began curating my first season for the Company, I knew it would be a perfect fit for Queensland Ballet's dancers and audiences. The Company has always thrived in dramatic, physical, and deeply human works, and I couldn't be more excited to have Leo here to present *Hamlet*.

Internationally recognised for transforming classic literary works into ballets with strong narrative drive, Leo is known for his distinctive choreographic language, with work that is emotionally direct and grounded in storytelling. He translates complex narratives into fluid, expressive movement, blending classical technique with demanding physicality. Leo's productions are celebrated for their clarity, focus and theatrical impact, and have been presented widely across Europe and North America. We are pleased to bring his work to Australian audiences.

First performed more than 400 years ago, *Hamlet* remains relevant because it confronts difficult questions about responsibility, loyalty, and moral choice.

This ballet examines the tension between appearance and reality, sanity and madness, action, and inaction. Themes of betrayal, corruption, and mortality run throughout the work, reflecting Shakespeare's view of a society undone by a single criminal act.

Premiered by the Croatian National Ballet in 2023, *Hamlet* is a visual feast with sumptuous costumes by Manuela Paldin Šabanović. Set to music by Tchaikovsky and Saint Saëns, the score supports a work that is structured, disciplined, and emotionally precise. This production respects Shakespeare's work, while presenting it in a form that is immediate and accessible to contemporary audiences.

Queensland Ballet thanks our Principal Guardian, the Ken Talbot Foundation, alongside all our donors, partners, members, and supporters who enable us to bring new choreographic voices to Brisbane for our 2026 Season.

We invite you to immerse yourself in the story of *Hamlet* presented through movement rather than words, and to engage with the themes that remain current, complex, and deeply human.



Ivan Gil-Ortega
Artistic Director



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.

Credits

Choreographer _____ Leo Mujić
Assistant to the Choreographer and Dramaturg _____ Bálint Rauscher
Music _____ Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky and Camille Saint-Saëns
Costume Designer _____ Manuela Paladin Šabanović
Set Designer _____ Stefano Katunar
Lighting Designer _____ Aleksandar Čavlek
Revival Lighting Designer _____ Ben Hughes
Sound Engineer _____ Svebor Zgurić

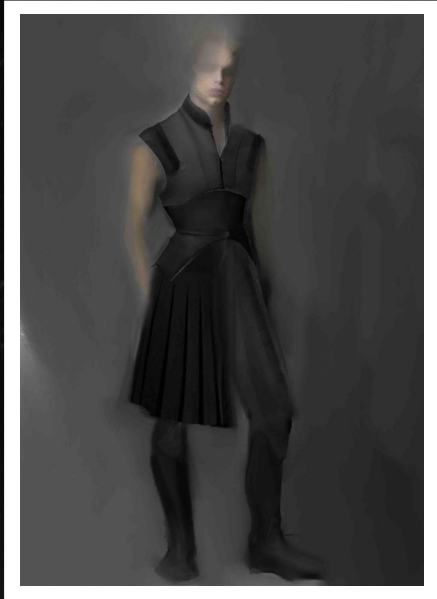
Duration: 2 hours including a 20-minute interval.

The recorded music of *Hamlet* is engineered using the highest quality sound and features the Russian National Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Malmö Symphony Orchestra, and Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

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.

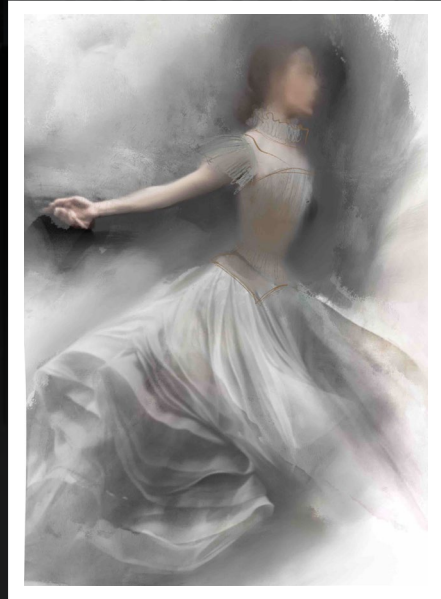


The Characters



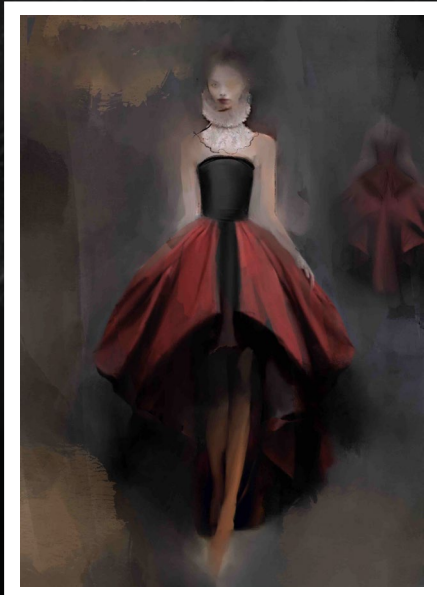
Hamlet

Prince of Denmark



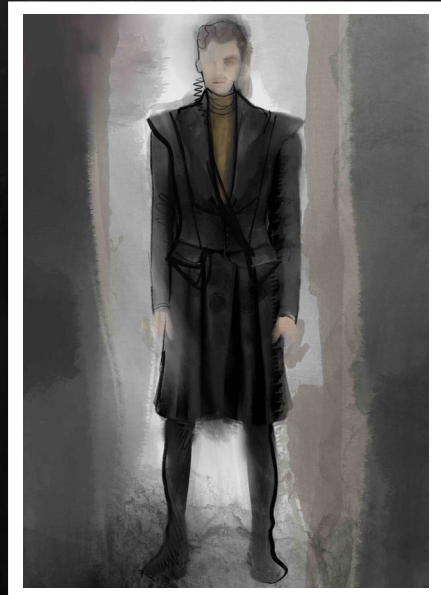
Ophelia

Daughter of Polonius and
Hamlet's love interest



Gertrude

Hamlet's mother and the
Queen of Denmark



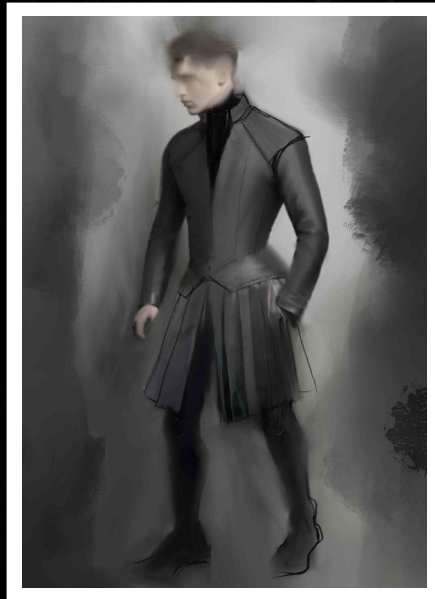
Claudius

Hamlet's uncle and the new
King of Denmark



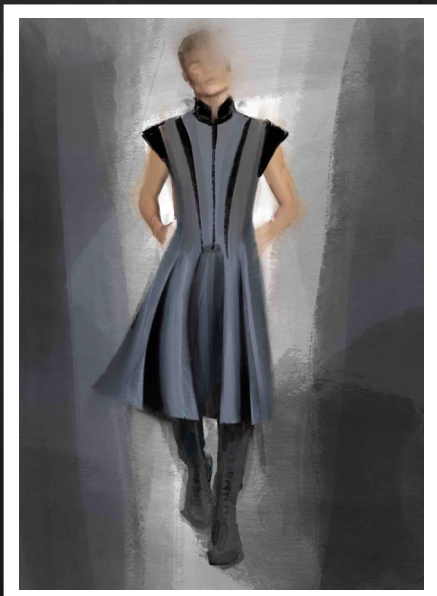
Ghost

The spirit of Hamlet's father and
the former King of Denmark



Polonius

Lord Chamberlain of Claudius'
court and the father of Laertes
and Ophelia



Laertes

Son of Polonius and brother of
Ophelia



Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

Hamlet's school friends,
summoned by Claudius to spy
on him

The Story

Act I

SCENE 1

The ballet begins with the recent death of King Hamlet. Gertrude, Hamlet's mother, has accepted the proposal of Claudius, the late king's brother, who is soon to become the new king. Polonius, advisor to the king, prepares for the departure of his son Laertes, who is heading to France to study. Laertes warns his sister Ophelia, who is romantically interested in Hamlet, to be cautious of the prince's unpredictable nature. Polonius echoes this warning, urging Ophelia not to trust Hamlet's affections.

SCENE 2

Gertrude visits Hamlet in his room to tell him that she has decided to marry his uncle Claudius, and soon both will be coronated. Hamlet becomes deeply frustrated and distressed by the news.

SCENE 3

The coronation ceremony of Gertrude and Claudius takes place in Elsinore Castle and is celebrated by the whole kingdom.

SCENE 4

During the festivities, Horatio, Hamlet's best friend, and three guardians of the castle Marcellus, Bernardo and Francisco, informs Hamlet that they have seen a ghost-like creature flying over Elsinore castle.

SCENE 5

Hamlet is distracted by his love, Ophelia, who urges him to return to the celebration, but his thoughts are elsewhere.

SCENE 6

Shortly after, Hamlet encounters the ghost of his father, who reveals that he was murdered by Claudius. The ghost implores Hamlet to seek revenge and to bring justice for his death. Consumed by this revelation, Hamlet becomes obsessed with avenging his father, and his behaviour grows increasingly erratic and unpredictable.

SCENE 7

Ophelia tells Polonius about Hamlet's strange behaviour, leading him to believe Hamlet's love for her is causing his madness.

Certain that Ophelia's rejection has driven Hamlet into madness, Polonius meets with King Claudius to devise a plan to spy on Hamlet during an encounter with Ophelia.

SCENE 8

Polonius and Claudius observe as Ophelia pretends to read a book while Hamlet approaches. They are confused when Hamlet cruelly spurns her, telling her to go to a nunnery. Ophelia is heartbroken by Hamlet's behaviour.

Claudius concludes that the cause of Hamlet's madness is not his love for Ophelia, but his lust for power.

SCENE 9

Meanwhile, Gertrude asks Hamlet's old friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to discover the cause of his madness.

SCENE 10

Rosencratz and Guildenstern arrive to Elsinore Castle with a theatre troupe, where Hamlet requests that they perform a certain play called The Mousetrap, which includes several passages written by Hamlet himself. He hopes to determine whether the ghost was truly his father or a deceptive spirit urging him towards sin.

The play depicts a king who kills his brother and marries his sister-in-law. During the performance, Claudius abruptly stops the play just after the scene in which poison is poured into the king's ear and rushes out.

SCENE 11

Claudius attempts to pray in church, but his guilt prevents him from doing so. Hamlet enters, prepared to kill him, but hesitates when he realises that Claudius might go to heaven if he is killed while praying.

SCENE 12

Gertrude and Polonius meet in Gertrude's bedchamber to discuss Hamlet's troubling state. When Hamlet suddenly enters, Polonius panics and hides behind a curtain. During a heated confrontation between mother and son, Hamlet hears a noise behind the curtain and, believing Claudius to be hiding there, stabs the intruder. Polonius is instantly killed.

The ghost appears once more, reprimanding Hamlet for his harsh treatment of his mother. Gertrude, unable to see the ghost, becomes convinced that Hamlet is truly mad and fears for her own safety. Hamlet takes Polonius' body with him as he leaves her room.

Act II

SCENE 1

At the beginning of the second act, Hamlet is hiding Polonius' dead body somewhere within the castle. Claudius orders the guards to search Elsinore to find Hamlet and discover where he has hidden the corpse.

SCENE 2

After the body is discovered and retrieved, Hamlet jokes with Claudius about killing Polonius. Fearing for his own life, Claudius orders Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to escort Hamlet to England. Unbeknownst to Hamlet, Claudius has prepared a letter instructing the King of England to have Hamlet killed upon arrival.

SCENE 3

During their journey, Hamlet discovers the letter and secretly forges an alternative one, redirecting the order of execution so that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern will be killed instead.

SCENE 4

Gertrude is told that Ophelia has gone mad after learning of her father's death. Claudius tries to comfort Gertrude as she reels from this devastating news.

Around this time, Fortinbras, King of Norway, crosses Denmark with his army on the way to attack Poland.

SCENE 5

Shortly after, Laertes returns from France seeking his father Polonius. When Claudius reveals that Polonius is dead, Laertes erupts in fury.

SCENE 6

Ophelia enters the room with a bundle of flowers, each one symbolic of her madness. Laertes is horrified by his sister's condition.

SCENE 7

Driven by grief and despair, Ophelia descends into a suicidal state and drowns herself in the river.

SCENE 8

As Hamlet returns to Denmark near Elsinore, he encounters two gravediggers preparing a grave. Discovering the skull of Yorick, the old king's jester, Hamlet reflects deeply on life and death. His contemplation is interrupted by a funeral procession led by Claudius, Gertrude, and Laertes. Hamlet is shocked to learn that the deceased is Ophelia. Revealing himself, he grapples with Laertes, declaring that he loved Ophelia more than forty thousand brothers could.

SCENE 9

Seeking revenge, Claudius and Laertes conspire to kill Hamlet without arousing suspicion from Gertrude or the people of Denmark. They agree to stage a duel. Laertes prepares a poisoned sword, while Claudius plans to poison a goblet for Hamlet.

SCENE 10

Tormented by his inner thoughts, Hamlet dreams of Ophelia who appears alongside his father's ghost for the final time. Horatio awakens Hamlet from this vision and informs him that Laertes has invited him to a duel.

SCENE 11

The duel begins at the court where Laertes secretly wields the poisoned blade. After Hamlet scores the first point, Gertrude drinks from the poisoned goblet meant for her son. In an unguarded moment, Laertes wounds Hamlet, but during their struggle the swords are exchanged, and Hamlet wounds Laertes with the poisoned blade.

Gertrude suddenly collapses, crying that she has been poisoned. Dying, Laertes confesses the plot he shared with Claudius before succumbing to his wound. Enraged, Hamlet stabs Claudius with the poisoned sword and forces him to drink the remaining poison.

Before dying, Hamlet makes Horatio promise to tell his story.

The Choreographer

Leo Mujić studied at the Ballet School in Belgrade until 1993. At seventeen after the Yugoslavian war broke out, he left for Lausanne to study at the school of Maurice Bejart.

Mujić has worked, assisted and created works for dance companies, festivals and dance academies across the world including Paris Opera Ballet, Stuttgart Ballet, Staatsballet Berlin, New National Theater Tokyo, Tokyo City Ballet, Dance Academy Budapest, Dance Academy Zurich, the Hungarian National Theatre of Pécs, Gyor, Jacobs Pillow Festival, Dance Festival New Orleans, Slovenian National Theatre in Ljubljana, Maribor, Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb, Split, Rijeka, Bulgarian National Theatre, Sofia, Slovenian National Theatre in Maribor, Teatro Nuovo Bolzano, Teatro San Remo, Teatro Massimo, Palermo, and Queensland Ballet among others.

Mujić creates ballets based on literature, and along with *Anna Karenina*, he first staged *Hamlet* for the National Theatre in Zagreb in 2014.

Alongside his abstract and full-length narrative ballets, Mujić has also choreographed and directed major musical theatre productions including *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *West Side Story*, Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* and *Cabaret the Musical*.

Mujić first came to Brisbane in 2001 to perform, as well as stage one of his ballets for a Queensland Ballet *Gala*. More than two decades later, he returns for his first full collaboration with Queensland Ballet under Artistic Director, Ivan Gil-Ortega.



Leo Mujić
Choreographer





In Conversation with Leo Mujić

What made you want to translate Shakespeare's *Hamlet* into a ballet?

It's beautiful. It's eternal. I'm in the service of much greater people who came before me. Shakespeare wrote these words more than 400 years ago, and they still remain relevant because they explore human nature. While we've learnt how to fly, extended our lives, and transformed how we live; what drives, defines and destroys us has not fundamentally changed. I think Mr. Shakespeare understood this perfectly. He hit the spot.

The quality and atmosphere of Shakespeare's words allowed me to transform this story into a performance without words. And perhaps their greatest strength is that they sometimes resonate most powerfully when they are not spoken.

How do you go about bringing such an iconic text to life through movement?

Music is essential. I try to transform [the art of Tchaikovsky and Camille Saint-Saëns] into something physical, something moving, alive, and unfolding on the stage. When choosing the music, it has to feel as though it was written for this piece. Of course it isn't, I cannot call Mr. Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky to ask him for a few more notes here or there, so I must take it for what it is, and spread my story through it. I try to create harmony between the audio and visual experience.

Choreography, in its simplest sense, is the organisation of time and space. Space is determined by the theatre and the architecture around you, while time is set by the music. You must listen to the tempos, silences and dynamics of the music closely to shape the story.

I don't do this alone. The musical structure was developed closely with my assistant, Dramaturg Bálint Rauscher. We spend more time listening to music than anything else in the creative process.

How did you translate Hamlet's internal conflict including his torment and duality?

Movement can express this more powerfully than anything else. A dancer can move slowly, remain completely still, or shift into aggression or extreme speed; each of these reveal emotional and psychological states.

In my production, Hamlet's inner world is embodied by a large group of masked dancers. They represent his thoughts or what we call his 'spirits' and are connected to his ancestors. At times they guide and support him, at others, they become his army, his enemies, and ultimately his doom.

What do you hope Australian audiences will take away from this production?

It's my responsibility to build an atmosphere in which people will feel the Gothic, contemporary, medieval madness of the Northern Europe for themselves... When the audience leaves the theatre, the work should hit them somewhere — in the brain, stomach, the heart. If someone who has never been to the theatre decides to come back again, I think we've done our job.

Read the full interview on queenslandballet.com.au

The Company

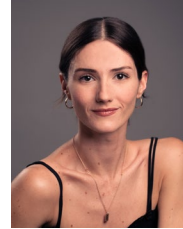
PRINCIPAL ARTISTS



Lucy Green



Neneka Yoshida



Chiara Gonzalez

SENIOR SOLOIST

SOLOISTS



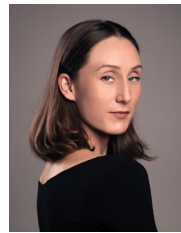
Vito Bernasconi



Lina Kim



Edison Manuel



Georgia Swan



Jake Mangakahia

GUEST ARTIST

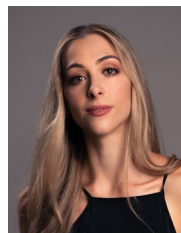
FIRST COMPANY ARTISTS



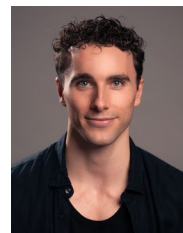
D'Arcy Brazier



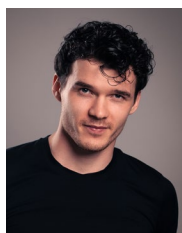
Vanessa Morelli



Libby-Rose Niederer



Joshua Ostermann



Ivan Surodeev



Rian Thompson

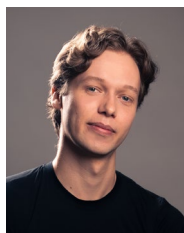


Sophie Zoricic

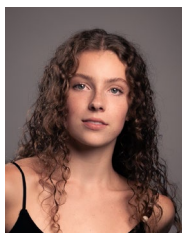
COMPANY ARTISTS



Luca Armstrong



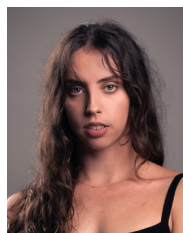
Shaun Curtis



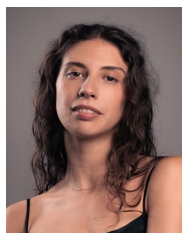
Ruby Day



Clayton Forsyth



Heidi Freeman



Renee Freeman



Taron Geyl



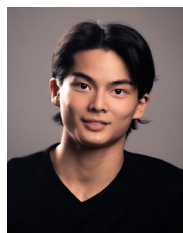
Ines Hargreaves



Kaho Kato



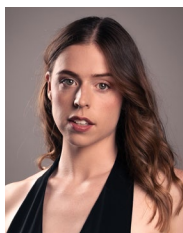
Sophie Kerr



Moeki Kojima



Callum Mackie



Briana McAllen



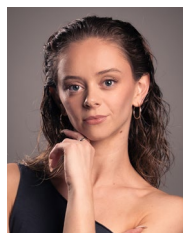
Frederick Montgomery



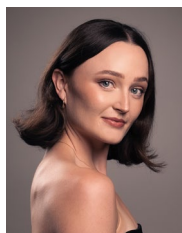
Joseph Moss



Alisa Pukkinen



Brooke Ray



Paige Rochester



Leisel Rose



Alfie Shacklock

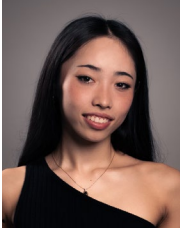


Jessica Stratton-Smith

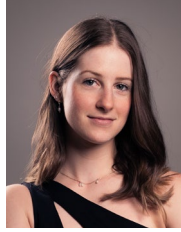


Leona Takada

JETTE PARKER YOUNG ARTISTS



Annie Chen



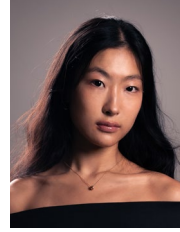
Nicole Drynan



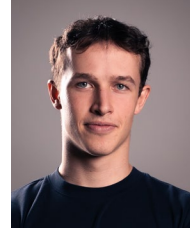
Saya Hibino



Thomas Jones



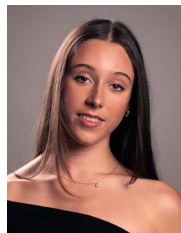
Sooan Lee



Gabriel Lowe



Levi Miller



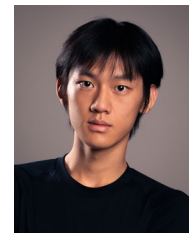
Emily Sprout



Ruito Takabatake



Samantha Wong



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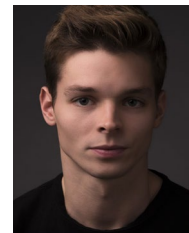
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Queensland Ballet thrives thanks to the passion of our audiences and the generosity of our supporters. There are many ways you can help us continue bringing world-class ballet to life, from making a donation, joining our Giving Circle, becoming a member, or sponsoring a dancer scholarship, to donating on Giving Day or leaving a legacy through a bequest.

Your support nurtures emerging talent, enables the creation of new works, and helps keep ballet accessible to all. Whether you're a lifelong lover of the arts or newly inspired, every contribution makes a meaningful impact.

Join us in shaping the future of ballet. To learn more, visit our website.

Donate today at
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Stand with us Side by Side

This year, Season Launch and Giving Day
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4-5 Costume illustrations by Manuela Paladin

Šabanović.

8 First Company Artist Joshua Ostermann.

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9 Leo Mujić and Bálint Rauscher

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14 Artists of Queensland Ballet

from *Elastic Hearts*.

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To view our full staff list, please visit

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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:

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



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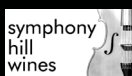
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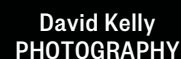
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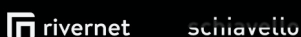
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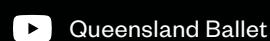
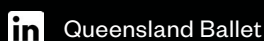
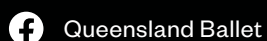
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