

Academy^{OF}
Queensland Ballet



Soirée

24 – 26 September 2026

Talbot Theatre, Thomas Dixon Centre



Queensland
Government



Australian Government



LIVE MUSIC PARTNER



QUEENSLAND'S CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Welcome

I would like to warmly welcome you to the sixth season of our annual *Soirée* series.

I hold this special season particularly close to my heart, having had the privilege of being involved as a choreographer since its inception in 2021. Through the fusion of art, live music and dance, I have seen *Soirée* mature into an event that nurtures emerging choreographic talent while offering established choreographers the opportunity to explore a unique creative landscape.

This year, we are honoured to feature the work of the extraordinary Australian artist Jeffrey Smart, whose art has inspired our imaginations and enabled the creative team to connect with the breadth and brilliance of his vision. His artworks serve as the catalyst for every movement and narrative-driven sequence created in *Soirée*, taking each choreographer on a unique and deeply personal journey as they interpret the art through their own creative lens.

We are proud to continue our valued collaboration with Camerata – Queensland's Chamber Orchestra, a partnership that brings the vibrancy and magic of live music to this creative endeavour. *Soirée* is an essential training platform for our students, preparing them for the professional world of dance. The opportunity to perform alongside a live orchestra is both a privilege and an invaluable component of our young artists' development.

This year's program features four new creations, including two student works, alongside extended works by choreographer Grant Aris and myself.

Opportunities and evenings such as this are where young choreographic talent is discovered, encouraged and mentored. The artworks and musical selections inspire a movement language and vocabulary unique to each creator, while offering students the chance to witness first-hand the creative processes of established choreographers. In turn, a valuable learning journey begins. I would like to thank Grant for inspiring our students and for contributing his distinctive choreographic voice to this evening. I also congratulate our student choreographers for their courage, tenacity and artistry.

Each *Soirée* season represents the culmination of many months of dedication from our choreographers, students, and artistic and business teams. This year, audiences will not only see the talented dancers of our Clark Pre-Professional Program, but also our Jette Parker Young Artist dancers. I would like to thank the coordinators of these programs for their assistance in bringing this production to life.

The contribution of our costume, visual and lighting creatives to this evening cannot be overstated. I would sincerely like to thank and congratulate Costume Stylist Kathryn Lee, Lighting Designer Glenn Hughes and Visual Content Specialist Jakob Perrett for their unwavering support and expertise, and for the many ways they continue to elevate the visual storytelling of this production.

Additionally, I would like to thank everyone across the broader Academy of Queensland Ballet and Queensland Ballet teams for their contribution to and support of this important season.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Dr Philip Bacon AO for his continued support and enduring belief in the Academy and this program. On a personal note, I will always remember Philip's presence in the studio in 2021 when he attended a rehearsal of my first *Soirée* work, *Echo of Reflection*. While I felt somewhat nervous knowing he was watching, his warm demeanour and good humour immediately put me at ease. He made me feel that we had a patron who genuinely admired and appreciated our art form.

Thank you to our loyal patrons for joining us in celebrating this special event of live theatre. Your support helps keep our wonderful art forms thriving, and allows us to showcase the exceptional choreographic, musical and artistic talent that exists here in our vibrant city of Brisbane.

Enjoy the performance!



Paul Boyd
Acting Director, Academy of
Queensland Ballet

The Program

Act I

SWEET AND SOUR

Choreographed and performed by _____ Sienna Baensch & Leah Chapman

Composer _____ Gioachino Rossini

Choreographic Mentor _____ Paul Boyd

Lighting Designer _____ Glenn Hughes

Costume Stylist _____ Kathryn Lee

Artwork by Jeffrey Smart _____ *Quinces by the Sea* (1989-03) — Private Collection

THE GTRI T WAS

Choreographed and performed by _____ Ava Eie

Composer _____ Frederic Chopin

Choreographic Mentors _____ Paul Boyd & Zenia Tatcheva

Lighting Designer _____ Glenn Hughes

Costume Stylist _____ Kathryn Lee

Artwork by Jeffrey Smart _____ *The Steps, Palma* (1965) — Private Collection

LABYRTNTH

Choreographer _____ Grant Aris

Composer _____ Enzo Bosso

Lighting Designer _____ Glenn Hughes

Costume Designer _____ Kathryn Lee

Artwork by Jeffrey Smart ————— *Labyrinth* (2011) — Private Collection

Act II

LIFE'S ROADMAP

Choreographer _____ Paul Boyd

Choreographic Assistant _____ Zenia Tàtcheva

Composers _____ Lily Boulanger, Josef Suk & Giacomo Puccini

Lighting Designer _____ Glenn Hughes

Costume Stylist _____ Kathryn Lee

Artworks by Jeffrey Smart ————— *T.S. Eugenides, Piraeus* (1970 - 71) — Private Collection

Morning Practice, Baia (1969 – 70) — Private Collection

Morning, Yarragon Siding (1983 – 84) — Private Collection

The Traveller (1973) — Queensland Art Gallery

Waiting Woman, Naples Turnoff (1969 - 70) — Private Collection

The Walker I (1965) — Private Collection

House of Portuense (1969) — Private Collection

The Flea Market, Rome (1966) — Private Collection

Dancers by the Sea (1998) — Private Collection

Trumper Park (1961) — Private Collection

Self Portrait (1993) — University of Queensland

Music performed by Camerata – Queensland's Chamber Orchestra.

Duration: Approximately 90 minutes including a 20-minute 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.

Jeffrey Smart

Jeffrey Smart (b.1921, Adelaide – d.2013, Arezzo, Italy) was an iconic expatriate realist painter, acclaimed for his precisely delineated urban and industrial landscapes. Believing he should paint from the environment around him, Smart's work leveraged the play of shapes, light, and the geometry of the objects that intrigued him from the urban environment. Smart's compositions of urban and industrial settings are renowned for their highly finished and precise qualities and often feature a solitary figure that lends the works an air of suspense and anticipation.

Recognised for his talent for drawing at an early age, Smart was initially attracted to a career in architecture but due to financial considerations in 1939 he entered the Adelaide Teacher's College to study art. He began painting with artist John Giles and was taught by Mary Tuck (painting) and Ivor Hele (life drawing and painting) at the South Australian School of Arts and Crafts. As a member of the RSASOA he contributed works to several group exhibitions in the early 1940s. In 1944 he held his first solo exhibition with the Kozminsky Gallery in Melbourne, opened by Robert Menzies. Four years later, in May 1948 before leaving Adelaide for travels abroad, Smart exhibited with John Martin's Art Gallery.

Smart travelled to England via the United States, working his passage as a pantry boy. He left the UK for Paris and studied at the Grande Chaumière School before attending the Académie Montmartre, studying under Fernand Leger for six months. Throughout this period Smart caught up and travelled Europe with numerous Australian friends including Michael Shannon, Jacqueline Hick, Donald Friend and Margaret Cilento. Travelling allowed Smart the opportunity to view and study the work of artists he admired - Cezanne, Piero della Francesca (by whom he was particularly influenced), van der Weyden, Bellini, and Titian. On returning to Australia in 1951, Smart relocated to Sydney. There he lived, worked, and exhibited until permanently moving to Italy in 1963, where he initially lived in Rome before later settling in Arezzo, Tuscany in the very early 1970s.

In mid-1961, Smart's work was curated in the influential exhibition *Recent Australian Painting* at London's Whitechapel Gallery. In early 1963 his work was again shown in London at the Tate Gallery in *Australian Painting: Colonial, Impressionist, Contemporary*. In 1983 his work was curated in the exhibition *Images in Recent Australian Art*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, and in 1988 it was shown in Bicentennial exhibition *The Great Australian Art Exhibition 1788-1988/Creating Australia: 200 Years of Art 1788-1988*, at the Art Gallery of South Australia and touring. In the 1990s, his work was curated in a host of museum exhibitions including a touring exhibition of Japan coordinated by the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW) for the Australia-Japan Foundation. In 1999, Smart's work was the subject of a major retrospective curated by the AGNSW. In 2012-13 the retrospective exhibition *Master of Stillness: Jeffrey Smart Paintings 1940-2011* was exhibited concurrently at Carrick Hill and the Samstag Museum of Art, Adelaide and later travelled to the TarraWarra Museum of Art, Victoria. In 2019 the AGNSW curated the exhibition *Jeffrey Smart: constructed world*, which featured the gallery's holdings of the artist's work including recent acquisitions. To celebrate the centenary of his birth, the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, curated a major retrospective in October 2021.

Smart's work has been extensively written on and is held in significant collections both in Australia and abroad including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Yale University, New Haven; Carlo Boatti Collection, Milan; Thyssen Bornemesza Collection, Lugarno; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; and all Australian state collections, significant regional gallery, and university collections.

Cite: Art Gallery of NSW.



Phillip Bacon Galleries

Philip Bacon Galleries is one of Australia's leading art galleries. It plays a pivotal commercial and educational role in the thriving Brisbane art scene. The gallery is renowned for the depth of its stockroom and for exhibiting many of the country's most collectable, twentieth century and contemporary artists.

The gallery was opened in 1974 with the encouragement of artists Lawrence Daws, Margaret Olley, Charles Blackman and Robert Dickerson. It soon became Brisbane's leading commercial gallery and attracted national attention. The gallery, designed by award-winning architects Cox Rayner, has five exhibition spaces that allow for monthly represented artist exhibitions, display of works from the stockroom and a designated works on paper gallery.

Artists represented include: Rick Amor, Cressida Campbell AM, Jun Chen, the Estate of Ray Crooke, Lawrence Daws, the Estate of Robert Dickerson, William Mackinnon, Michael McWilliams, Estate of William Robinson, the Estate of Margaret Olley, Jude Rae, the Estate of Jeffrey Smart, Tim Storrier, Philip Wolfhagen, the Estate of Fred Williams, Zoe Young and Michael Zavros.



PHILIP BACON
GALLERIES



Synopsis

The Labyrinth

Choreographed by Grant Aris

Inspired by the ancient myth of the labyrinth and the guiding thread, this piece explores the human search for direction through uncertainty, memory, and transformation. Drawing on the image of a winding maze, the dancers navigate physical and emotional landscapes where every choice opens new possibilities and every dead end invites reflection.

A single strand of yarn becomes both a tangible object and a powerful metaphor. It represents connection, intuition, and the traces we leave behind as we move through life's complexities.

As the thread is woven, stretched, tangled, and unwound across the stage, it creates shifting pathways that bind and separate the dancers, revealing the delicate balance between freedom and entrapment.



Life's Roadmap

Choreographed by Paul Boyd

The Jeffrey Smart artwork "T.S. Eugenides, Piraeus" immediately captured my imagination. Who was the woman in the yellow dress, the diver in her pink swimsuit and cap, the elderly gentleman in his bathrobe and slippers? Who is he and why did his smile fascinate me? How could they be connected?

The rest of my art selection had to relate to the elderly gentleman, tell his story, his travels, his relationships and so began the journey of linking all my selected artwork together.

I recently read an article from film icon, Clint Eastwood, who spoke of aging and the changes that go along with that inevitable life process. He wrote, "When the present moment becomes quiet and isolated, the human mind naturally seeks refuge in the past. The wrinkles on one's face aren't just signs of ageing, they are a beautiful roadmap of a life fully lived".

Maybe as I age myself, I feel compelled to honour lives filled with adventures, relationships and all their life roadmaps, so this work pays homage to those. Sometimes with humour, sometimes in poignant silence but through the remarkable art of Jeffrey Smart this work was inspired.

My heartfelt thanks are extended to the inspiring creatives and the versatility and talents of the Jette Parker Young Artist dancers who all came on the journey during this creation.



Student Works

Sweet and Sour

Choreographed by Sienna Baensch and Leah Chapman (Clark Pre-Professional Program)

Sweet and Sour explores the playful relationship between visual art, dance, and music. Inspired by Jeffrey Smart's, *Quinces by the Sea* (1989 - 2003), we wanted to bring the artwork to life within the piece, imagining it displayed in a gallery, suspended on a wall for an audience to observe and interpret.

As *Soirée* celebrates the many forms of art, we were interested in exploring how a single idea can be transformed through different artistic mediums. The painting's flavourful subject matter and vibrant colours sparked feelings of joy, curiosity, and playfulness for us, which became the foundation of our movement. *Rossini's Duo* for Cello and Double Bass helped shape the character of the choreography, with its lively rhythms and playful music exchanges, encouraging us to explore quick, energetic, and mischievous movement.

We invite audiences to experience the painting beyond its still image, allowing its energy and character to unfold through movement. At its heart, the piece celebrates the freedom of interpretation and the way art can inspire different emotions and perspectives in each of us.



The Girl I Was

Choreographed by Ava Eie (Clark Pre-Professional Program)

Reigniting the passion and joy of living, my creation *The Girl I Was* explores the relationship between who we are and who we once were.

Inspired by Jeffery Smart's *The Steps*, Palma (1965), the choreographic piece was influenced by my interpretation of the two striking female figures portraying different versions of the same woman. The woman at the forefront represents her slightly older, present self, weighed down by time and life's struggles. While the woman behind represents her younger self - full of passion, vigour, freedom, and energy. I was drawn to the idea of the older woman looking back at who she used to be, wishful to reconnect with the spark she once had.

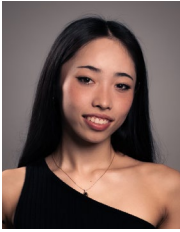
I wanted my creation to show a real sense of humanity and inner emotions of the mind, exploring the quiet conflict of choosing to live freely and unapologetically in an ever-changing world - that it is never too late to rediscover oneself and reignite passions, as time passes us by so quickly.

The musical composition by Chopin, *Piano Concerto in F Minor*, has a serenity that I felt complimented the painting and also inspired the mood of the choreography, and I can't wait for audiences to be swept into the beauty of music and the artwork with me.

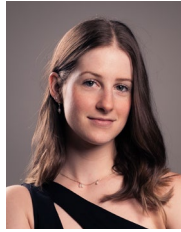


Dancers

JETTE PARKER YOUNG ARTISTS



Annie Chen



Nicole Drynan



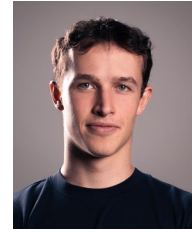
Saya Hibino



Thomas Jones



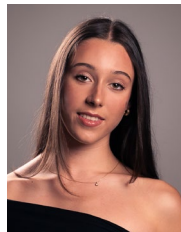
Sooan Lee



Gabriel Lowe



Levi Miller



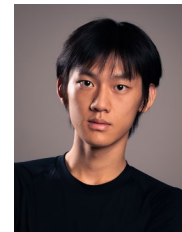
Emily Sprout



Ruito Takabatake



Samantha Wong



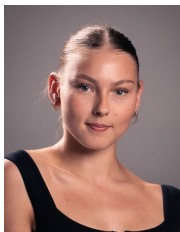
XinYao Zhu

The Jette Parker Young Artist Program is generously supported by Oak Foundation, Barbara Bedwell, Darren & Carmel Brown, Brett Clark AM & Maria Clark, Dr Ben Duke & Ms Cate Heyworth-Smith KC, Frazer Family Foundation, and CP Morris Fund at the APS Foundation.

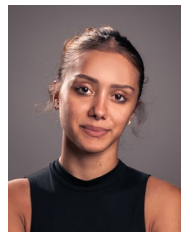
CLARK PRE-PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM ARTISTS



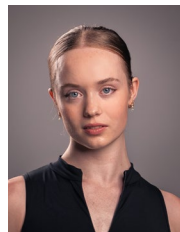
Sienna Baensch



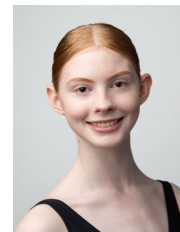
Ashlyn Beggs



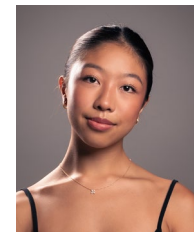
Elijah-Jade Bowen



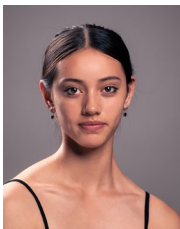
Olivia Canny



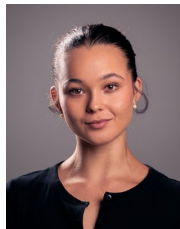
Leah Chapman



Chloe Dan



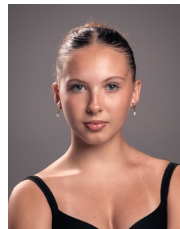
Beatrice Doe



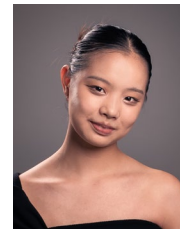
Ava Eie



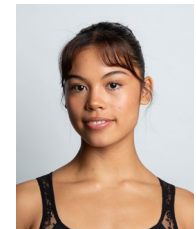
Ophelia
Grimshaw-Jones



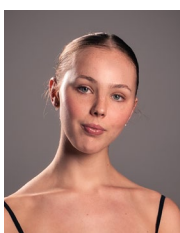
Matilda Guerin



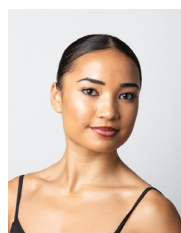
Lucy Hu



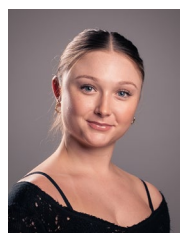
Erin King



Arabella Shackel



Zi Sione



Avril Thompson



Esther Smith
Academy of
Queensland Ballet
Level 1 Student

Live Music Partner

Camerata – Queensland's Chamber Orchestra is a two-time Helpmann Award nominated ensemble and was recently awarded the APRA AMCOS Award (2024) for Championing Australian Music. Camerata has established itself as a chamber orchestra of national significance, and is known for its innovative and adventurous programming, thriving on collaborations with artists across a range of artforms.



CAMERATA

QUEENSLAND'S CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

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Artistic Director
Ivan Gil-Ortega

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Head of Lower School
Veronika Sheremetieva
Head of Upper School
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Guest Academy Program Coordinator
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Foundation Program and Visiting Student Coordinator
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Paige Ristevski
John Sandurski
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Grant Aris
Tabitha Buttsworth
Amelia Waller
Academy Pianists
Mark Leung
Catherine Yu
Feodora Zu Hohenlohe

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Enrolments Manager
Dr Madelyn Coupe
Education Support and Student Wellbeing Manager
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Academy Administrator
Courtney Adams

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Michelle White
Academy Physiotherapists
Michelle Istra
Kate Martyn
Academy Strength Coach
Tony Lewis

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Production Manager
Ben Shaw
Stage Manager
Ben Mills
Assistant Stage Manager
Mak Purdy
Head Mechanist
Declan Bell
Head of Costume
Lauryn Jackson
Academy Costume Manager / Associate Designer
Kathryn Lee
Costume Performance Manager
Barb Kerr
Costume Workroom Manager
Kathi Lionheart
Costumiers
Rebecca Farag
Ai Shaw
Chiahui Tseng
Holly Watson
Volunteers
Rayne McGann
Daniel Rodriguez

To view our full staff list, please visit
academy.queenslandballet.com.au/about/faculty

ARTWORK CREDITS BY JEFFREY SMART

Cover *Corrugated Gioconda* (1976) — National Gallery of Australia
05 *The Traveller* (1973) — Queensland Art Gallery
06 *Labyrinth* (2011) — Private Collection
The Walker I (1965) — Private Collection
07 *Quinces by the Sea* (1989 – 03) — Private Collection
The Steps, Palma (1965) — Private Collection
11 *House of Portuence* (1969) — Private Collection
Morning Practice, Baia (1969 – 70) — Private Collection
The Steps, Palma (1965) — Private Collection

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

09 Image courtesy of Camerata – Queensland's Chamber Orchestra

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 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.

Our Supporters

Our grateful thanks go to Dr Philip Bacon AO, Ermes De Zan, Allan Green and Lynette Denny AM, who have donated to the Academy of Queensland Ballet.

We are so deeply grateful to you and all our supporters, who make the greatest impact in our community to ensure a world-class training ground for the next generation of artists, and to enrich lives and lift the spirits of humanity high - thank you.

Kathleen Lott Ballet Piano Fellowship

Supported by Marion Pender

Queensland Regional Scholarship Fund

Mr Tim Fairfax AC & Mrs Gina Fairfax AC

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Li Cunxin Scholarship Fund - Supported by Cathie Reid and Stuart Giles

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Chris and Kate May

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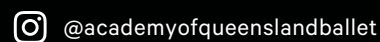
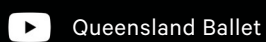
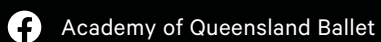




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Gate 1/101 L'Estrange Terrace, Kelvin Grove QLD 4059 | 406 Montague Road, West End QLD 4101 | PO Box 3791, South Brisbane QLD 4101
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