

Queensland Ballet



Strings

A Triple Bill

22 – 30 May 2026

Playhouse, QPAC



Queensland
Government



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CAMERATA
QUEENSLAND'S CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

From the Artistic Director

Welcome to *Strings – A Triple Bill*, a program that cuts straight to the nerve of our 2026 season.

After the impact of *Messa da Requiem*, which struck a powerful chord with our Queensland audiences, we shift focus. This is a more distilled offering, but no less ambitious - stripping things back to expose something rawer, and more immediate.

Strings brings together three of the world's most compelling choreographic voices: Edward Clug, Christian Spuck and Goyo Montero. Each is reshaping what ballet can be today. United by the intensity of string music, their works move between restraint and rupture, intimacy and force, revealing dance as both deeply personal and unmistakably collective.

It is a privilege to welcome Christian Spuck back to Brisbane with his haunting *The Seventh Blue*. Where *Messa da Requiem* was monumental, this work is more surgical: precise, poetic, and quietly devastating in its meditation on mortality and memory.

Edward Clug's choreography is defined by its clarity and control. Nothing is wasted. In his work *Chamber Minds*, he pares movement back to its essence, allowing tension, silence and detail to carry emotional weight. The result is a work that doesn't ask for attention, it commands it.

Goyo Montero, by contrast, pushes outward. His physical instinct is immediate and unapologetic, fusing athleticism with lyricism. His work, *Chacona*, thrives on contrast, control and abandon, structure and risk, creating something visceral, urgent and alive.

At the core of my directorship is a commitment to bringing bold, exciting and important artists to Queensland Ballet. With *Strings*, we present choreographers who are not simply working within the tradition, but actively challenging it - testing its limits, and expanding its future.

This program demands everything from our dancers: precision, courage, and a willingness to take risks. It reflects our belief that ballet cannot afford to stand still, it must evolve, provoke, and speak to the present.

My gratitude to our Principal Guardians, the Ken Talbot Foundation, whose support has helped enable our 2026 Artistic Season – and to all our donors, partners and members for their ongoing contribution to all that we do both on and offstage.

I hope this evening challenges you, in the best way, and stays with you long after the curtain falls.



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

Chamber Minds

Choreographer _____ Edward Clug
Staged by _____ Daniel Mulligan
Music _____ Milko Lazar
Costume Designer _____ Leo Kulaš
Set Designer _____ Marko Japeli
Lighting Designer _____ Martin Gebhardt
Revival Lighting Design by _____ Dino Strucken
Dramaturg _____ Michael Küster
Music performed by _____ Camerata – Queensland's Chamber Orchestra
Pianist / Harpsichordist _____ Roger Cui or Muyu Liu

The Seventh Blue (das siebte blau)

Choreographer _____ Christian Spuck
Staged by _____ Daniel Mulligan
Music _____ Franz Schubert, György Kurtág, Dieter Fenchel
Costume Designer _____ Miro Paternostro
Set Designer _____ Christian Spuck
Lighting Designer _____ Martin Gebhardt
Revival Lighting Design by _____ Dino Strucken
Music performed by _____ Camerata – Queensland's Chamber Orchestra

Chacona

Choreographer _____ Goyo Montero
Staged by _____ Ivan Gil-Ortega
Music _____ Johann Sebastian Bach
Costume Designers _____ Verena Hemmerlein and Goyo Montero
Lighting Designer _____ Nicolas Fischtel
Music performed by _____ Camerata – Queensland's Chamber Orchestra
Pianist _____ Roger Cui or Muyu Liu

Duration: 1 hour and 35 minutes, including one 20-minute interval and one 15-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.

Chamber Minds

Edward Clug's *Chamber Minds* brings subversive humour and inventive physicality to the stage, blending minimalist movement with intricate limb interlocking patterns and moments of playful imbalance.

Performed with razor sharp comedic timing, the piece celebrates the quirks of human behaviour through unexpected physical comedy, striking shapes and swift tonal shifts. The dancers tilt, teeter and wind themselves into surprising configurations, crafting a world where wit softens technical precision.

About the Choreographer

Born in Romania, Edward Clug began his ballet training at the National Ballet School in Cluj-Napoca in 1983, during the final years of Nicolae Ceaușescu's directorship. After completing his studies in 1991, he joined the Slovene National Theatre in Maribor, at a moment when Slovenia itself was taking its first steps as an independent nation.

In Maribor, he met the visionary theatre director Tomaž Pandur, who invited him to create his first choreography for the theatre project *Babylon* (1996). Two years later, Clug presented his first independent project, *Tango* (1998), marking the beginning of a long-standing collaboration with costume designer Leo Kulaš and set designer Marko Japelj. Composer Milko Lazar joined this core creative team in 2008 with *Prêt-à-Porter*, establishing a lasting artistic partnership.

Appointed Artistic Director of Maribor Ballet in 2003, Clug has since shaped the company's distinctive identity while gaining international recognition. Breakthrough works such as *Radio & Juliet* (2005) and his interpretation of *The Rite of Spring* (2012) were followed by full-length creations including *Peer Gynt* (2015), confirming him as one of the important choreographic voices of his generation.

Clug has created works for leading companies worldwide, including Stuttgart Ballet, Zurich Ballet, Nederlands Dans Theater, Bolshoi Ballet, Vienna State Ballet, Staatsballett Berlin, and La Scala Ballet.

Supported by clever stage design that enhances its visual mischief, *Chamber Minds* is both a charming satire of ballet's traditions and a showcase of Clug's ability to reveal beauty through eccentricity, rhythm and delight.

Notable works include *Faust* (Zurich Ballet, 2018), *The Master and Margarita* (Bolshoi Ballet, 2021), *The Nutcracker* (Stuttgart Ballet, 2022), and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Staatsballett Berlin, 2025), as well as *Mutual Comfort*, *Aperture*, and *Cluster* for Nederlands Dans Theater.

Recently, Clug made his debut as an opera director at the Grand Théâtre de Genève with *Castor et Pollux* by Jean-Philippe Rameau. The production drew striking critical attention; in *Opera Magazine* it was noted that he "achieved something rare," while *Tribune de Genève* described the staging as a "stunning miracle."

His work has been recognized with major national and international accolades, including Slovenia's Prešeren Foundation Award and the Glazer Charter, as well as nominations for the Benois de la Danse and the German Theatre Prize Der Faust. In 2022, he was awarded the Silver Order of Merit (Slovenia) and the Medal for Cultural Merit (Romania). In 2025, he was appointed Artist-in-Residence with Ballett Dortmund.



Edward Clug
Choreographer

The Seventh Blue

Christian Spuck's *The Seventh Blue* (*das siebte blau*) draws its emotional spine from Schubert's *Death and the Maiden*, interwoven with music by György Kurtág and atmospheric sound textures.

Spuck constructs a world of shared mortality using simple yet incisive movement, rapid fire tableaux and unison patterns that strip dancers of individual identity, emphasising the collective human condition.

Scenes of lowering dancers into mist covered "grave like" spaces create a haunting meditation on fragility and the inevitability of death. With its stark imagery, breathless pacing and psychological charge, the work resonates as a powerful reflection on impermanence and the tension between life and loss.

About the Choreographer

Christian Spuck is from Marburg, Germany, and trained at the John Cranko School in Stuttgart. He began his dance career with Jan Lauwers' Needcompany and Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker's Ensemble Rosas. In 1995, he became a member of the Stuttgart Ballet and served as the company's resident choreographer from 2001 to 2012. In Stuttgart, he created fifteen world premieres, including the ballet *Lulu. Eine Monstretragödie* after Frank Wedekind, *Der Sandmann* and *Das Fräulein von S.* after E.T.A. Hoffmann. In 2026 he created *The Return of Ulysses* for the Royal Ballet of Flanders. *Woyzeck*, after Georg Buchner, was premiered at the Norwegian National Ballet Oslo. The ballets *Die Kinder* and *Leonce und Lena* premiered at the Aalto Ballett Theater Essen. The world premiere of *Poppea//Poppea* for Gauthier Dance at the Theaterhaus Stuttgart was voted one of the ten most successful dance productions worldwide by the magazine Dance Europe in 2010 and was awarded the German Theatre Prize DER FAUST in 2011 as well as the Italian *Danza/Danza Award*. His ballet *Orlando* premiered at the Bolshoi theatre in Moscow in 2021.

From 2012 to 2023, Christian Spuck was director of Ballett Zürich. His choreographies *Romeo und Julia*, *Leonce und Lena*, *Anna Karenina*, *Woyzeck*, *Der Sandmann*, *Messa da Requiem* (a co-production of the Oper and Ballett Zürich), *Nussknacker und Mausekönig*, *Dornröschen* and *Monteverdi* have been shown there. For *Winterreise*, which premiered in October 2018 in Zürich, he was awarded with the "Prix Benois de la Danse 2019".

In 2019, he staged *Das Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern* by Helmut Lachenmann with Ballett Zürich, which was awarded "Production of the Year" by German magazine *tanz*. In 2022, Ballett Zürich was named "Highlight of the Year" by *tanz*.

Christian Spuck has been appointed Artistic Director of Staatsballett Berlin since the 2023/24 season and created *Bovary* after the novel *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert in his first season. The jury of *tanz* voted soloist Weronika Frodyma "Dancer of the Year" for the title role of Emma Bovary and the Staatsballett Berlin "Company of the Year 23/24" for its overall performance. In the 2025/26 season, Staatsballett Berlin was named "Highlight of the Year" by *tanz*. In February 2026, Christian Spuck received the German Dance Prize 2026.



Christian Spuck
Choreographer

Chacona

Goyo Montero's *Chacona* is a powerful, physically demanding work inspired by the emotional depth and structural unity of Bach's *Chaconne*.

Built on a blend of classical technique and contemporary sensibility, the ballet drives dancers to the "tip of falling," exploring off balance tension, weight and momentum with relentless intensity. Moving through contrasting musical worlds shaped by live violin, guitar and piano, the piece

unfolds like a marathon—exhausting yet profoundly rewarding.

Montero believes this extremity reveals honesty, presence and transformation, inviting audiences into a visceral journey that resonates long after the final note.

About the Choreographer

Since the 2025/26 season, Goyo Montero has been Artistic Director of the Staatsballett Hannover, placing one of the most influential ballet directors and choreographers of his generation at the head of the company. From 2008 to 2025 he directed the ballet of the Staatstheater Nürnberg, which he shaped into an internationally renowned and award-winning ensemble. For the company, he created 25 new works. Furthermore, Goyo Montero is closely connected to Acosta Danzam it's resident choreographer and has also created works for companies such as The Royal Ballet London, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Les Ballets de Monte Carlo, Finnish National Ballet, Ballet of the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, São Paulo Companhia de Dança, Perm Opera Ballet/Diana Vishneva Context Festival, Ballet Nacional de Sodre in Uruguay, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Ballet Nacional de Cuba, Ballet Kiel and the State Ballet Ankara. Goyo Montero has a long-standing relationship with the Prix de Lausanne: as a regular member of the jury, choreographer and artistic director of two choreographic projects (2018 and 2023) with selected students from the Prix de Lausanne's partner schools (premieres of *Pulse* and *Bold*).

Born in Madrid, Goyo Montero initially trained with Carmen Roche and at the Royal Conservatory of Professional Dance in Madrid and then completed his training at the Cuban National Ballet School under the direction of Alicia Alonso. His extensive career as a dancer began at the age of 17 in the English National Ballet and continued later as a soloist at the Leipziger Ballett, in the ballet of Hessisches Staatstheater Wiesbaden, in the Royal Ballet of Flanders and as first soloist at the Deutsche Oper Berlin.

His honours as a dancer include the Prix de Lausanne in 1994 and the Grand Prix and Gold Medal of the Luxembourg International Dance Competition in 1996. Critics from the *Dance Europe* Magazine nominated him as "Best Dancer" of the 2003/04 season. As a dancer and as a choreographer, he was awarded the Premio Nacional de Danza by the Spanish Ministry of Culture. Further awards for his choreographic work include the Villa de Madrid Prize, the 1st prize in the Ibero-American Choreography Competition, the Villanueva Prize (awarded by the UNEAC Association of Cuban Authors and Journalists), the Teatro de Madrid Prize, the Cultural Award of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce of Middle Franconia, and the Bavarian Culture Prize in 2014. In 2018 the ballet of the Staatstheater Nürnberg under Goyo Montero's direction received the German Dance Award in the "Current" category for "Outstanding Developments in Dance." In the same year, critics of *Dance Europe* named him "Best Ballet Director." This was followed by two of Bavaria's highest cultural honours: in 2023, the Pro meritis scientiae et litterarum prize from the Bavarian State Ministry of Science and the Arts, which recognises individuals for outstanding services to science and the arts, and in 2024, the Bavarian Order of Merit.



Goyo Montero
Choreographer

The Company

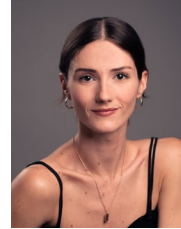
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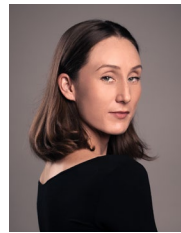
Vito Bernasconi



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Edison Manuel



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Jake Mangakahia

GUEST ARTIST

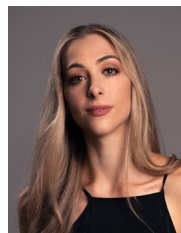
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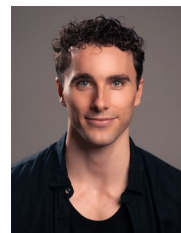
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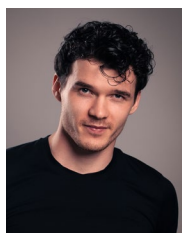
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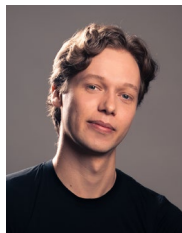


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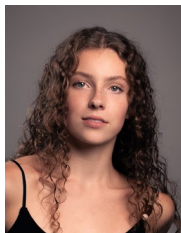
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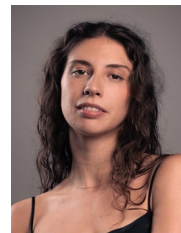
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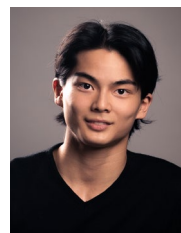
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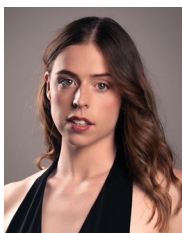
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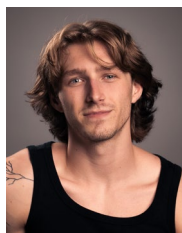
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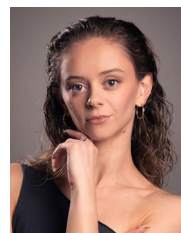
Frederick Montgomery



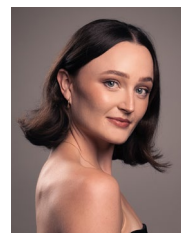
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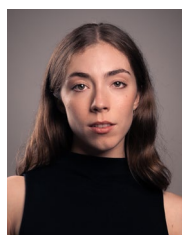
Paige Rochester



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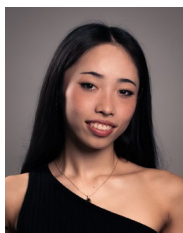


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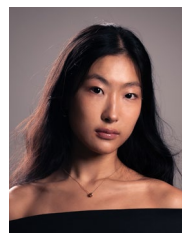
Nicole Drynan



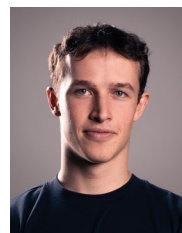
Saya Hibino



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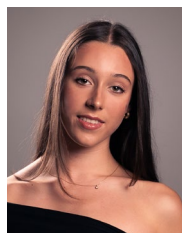
Sooan Lee



Gabriel Lowe



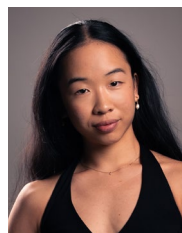
Levi Miller



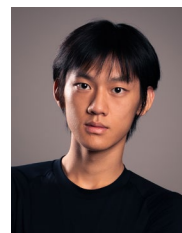
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Music that moves us

Queensland Ballet's Music Fund celebrates and sustains the musicians, scores and partner orchestras that make ballet possible - from the first rehearsal to the final curtain call. Playing piano for ballet is a very unique field with very limited tertiary training opportunities. There are currently no ballet pianist courses in Australia and very few postgraduate courses overseas.

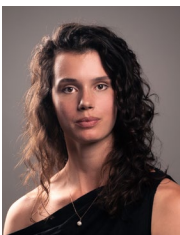
If you move with the music, or dance in your seat, a donation to the Queensland Ballet Music Fund helps us sustain the heartbeat of every performance - placing musicians in the studio and on the stage, and creating the pathways that bring new artistry to life.

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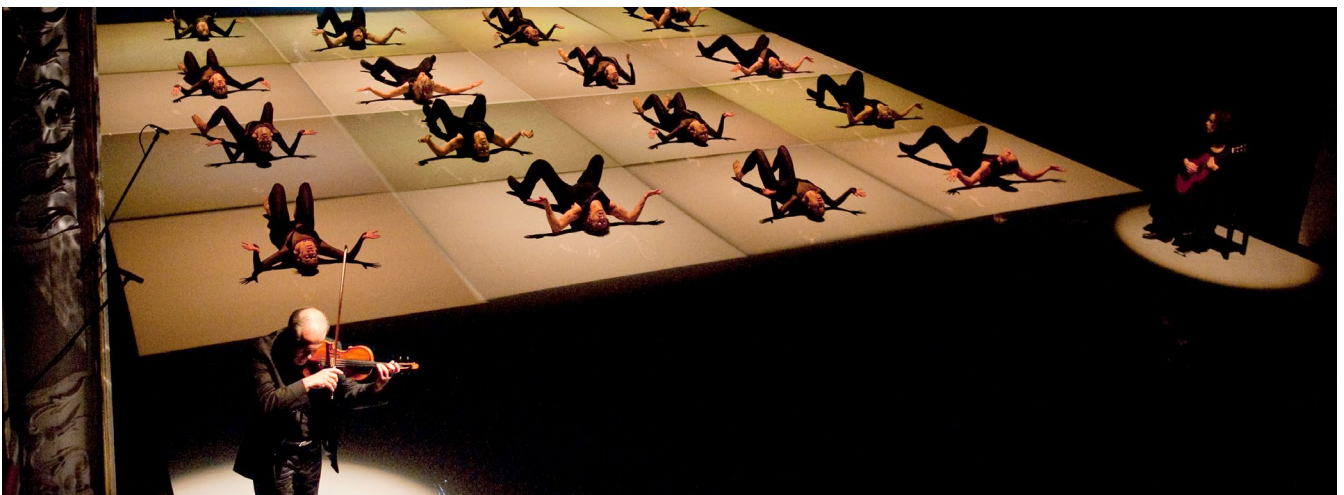
"I am very grateful for the opportunity to work with such inspiring artists and professionals at the intersection between such beautiful art forms. The Kathleen Lott Ballet Piano Fellowship at Queensland Ballet has allowed me to explore and develop my artistic expression in many ways I had never imagined. Seeing the visual interpretation of my playing unfolding through movement in real time has been absolutely magical.

Both ballet companies and future pianists of Australia, will benefit significantly from this program and pathway into collaborative pianism.

I am forever grateful to the generous support of Marion Pender, through which I have been welcomed into this vibrant arts company."



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The Honourable John-Paul Langbroek, MP
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Sharon Schimming, Director-General,
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QPAC rests on the lands of the Yuggera
and Turrbal peoples. We acknowledge the
Traditional Custodians of this country and
recognise their rich cultural heritage and
enduring connection to the land, waters and
skies. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
peoples are this country's original storytellers,
and it is our privilege to continue to share
stories and be a place of gathering on this
land that has been a meeting place for
millennia.

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