Royal New Zealand Ballet
Sat, Feb 8, 8:00 pm
Orpheum Theatre

28 Variations on a Theme by Paganini
Banderillero
Bier Halle pas de deux
Through To You
Dear Northrop Dance Lovers,

Welcome to Northrop’s final performance here at the Orpheum Theatre, and thank you for taking this journey with us. We have a beautiful company to close out our downtown run and point us to the future at the New Northrop. Their program is a delicious mix of work in one of the most exciting collections of contemporary choreographers ever to be assembled on one bill! It’s also a program that demonstrates the incredibly international art form that is ballet.

The Royal New Zealand Ballet is New Zealand’s national ballet company, and in this role, they tour the entire country every year. Artistic Director Ethan Stiefel has found that each region has its own tastes: “Certain areas are really about tutus and tiaras, and other areas are more avant-garde.” Tonight’s program will celebrate that incredible variety, showcasing 34 technically strong and emotionally expressive dancers in works that move from the classical canon to the most innovative.

28 Variations on a Theme by Paganini is a delightful dance party, showing off choreographer Benjamin Millepied’s wonderful musicality, and the dancers’ athleticism and technical prowess. Bier Halle was the second work that Ethan Stiefel set on Royal New Zealand Ballet. Originally taking inspiration from the polka band music he remembered from his youth in Wisconsin, Stiefel went on to incorporate Straus waltzes, which will be heard in tonight’s romantic pas de deux.

Andrew Simmons is a former Royal New Zealand dancer turned choreographer, and his Through To You has a soft and delicate mood, reflecting Arvo Pärt’s achingly beautiful music. And moving from the delicate to the dynamic, Venezuelan choreographer Javier De Frutos closes out the program in a work named for the matador in a bullfighting ring. It’s a passionate piece with flamenco flourishes driven by gong and drum music from China and the Zhoushan Islands.

For our final program at the Orpheum, I want to extend my thanks to the Hennepin Theatre Trust and the staff and crew here at the Orpheum. They have been wonderful to work with, and truly made us feel like welcome guests. Thank you also to David and Desiree Abele, Aresi Group, and North Loop Capital Management for their generous support of Northrop and Royal New Zealand Ballet.

Enjoy the performance!

Christine Tschida
Director of Northrop

NEXT UP AT NORTHROP: TRISHA BROWN DANCE COMPANY, March 12-15 at Walker Art Center. Then, NORTHROP GRAND REOPENING WEEKEND, April 4-6 featuring American Ballet Theatre in Giselle with live orchestra.
THE PROGRAM

28 Variations on a Theme by Paganini

Choreography by Benjamin Millepied
Music by Johannes Brahms, “28 Variations on a Theme by Paganini”
Lighting Design by Nigel Percy

“Benjamin Millepied created the ballet, 28 Variations on a Theme by Paganini, in 2005 for The School of American Ballet in New York. It was later performed at The Joyce Theater, New York, by Danses Concertantes, a company featuring dancers from American Ballet Theatre.

Millepied’s work reflects the subtly shifting moods of Brahms’ intricate piano score with its rhythmic pulse and driving, forward motion. Millepied explores the potential of the art-form to convey a range of emotions through a play on a pose and its counter-pose; swirling motion is followed by quietness. He creates patterns that build. Courty in tone, the ballet hints at the ballroom with its single chandelier, while simultaneously maintaining a spare modernity. The dancers move in and out of ensemble formation; couples come together and move apart. We glimpse fleeting narratives; she refuses his kiss, he implores her on his knee, imbuing the piece with romantic implication.

Millepied knows what well-trained dancers can do and 28 Variations on a Theme by Paganini is technically demanding, stretching the virtuosity of the dancers in the manner of a finely tuned orchestra.”

—Original program note by Janet Colson, RNZB 2012

28 Variations on a Theme by Paganini was first performed by the Royal New Zealand Ballet in February 2012 as part of NYC: Three Short Ballets from the Big Apple, the first program created by Ethan Stiefel on assuming the role of RNZB Artistic Director.

Staging was by guest repetiteurs Amanda McKenzie and John Gardner, with lighting design by Nigel Percy.

The RNZB’s performances of 28 Variations in the U.S.A. will use a recording of Brahms’ piano work by Jian Liu, Head of Piano Studies at the New Zealand School of Music.

Through To You

Choreography by Andrew Simmons
Costume Design by Tracy Grant Lord
Lighting Design by Nigel Percy

“For inspiration I took the name of the music which translates loosely to “Mirror in the Mirror.” I thought that it was an interesting term and started to think about the many ways it could be interpreted. For example, looking into someone and seeing a part of you in them, or looking into yourself and seeing what you give out as a person. I found that seeing a part of yourself in another person and feeling a connection creates a very comforting feeling where you are at ease to be truly yourself and express yourself fully in whatever sense. Dancers, I feel, share a uniquely intimate bond, strengthened by the proximity of their work environment and the challenges they all face. This in turn heightens aspects of their relationships with each other, which I was keen to explore deeper with the movement.

As for the music, I like that the movement can at times sit comfortably with it and then also seem to skim along the surface. Because it repeats a theme consistently throughout, I like that what we are seeing could be just a fraction of something that is infinite in its directions, both previous and ongoing, larger than the few minutes we view—which is again the effect you get looking into two mirrors.”

—Andrew Simmons, Choreographer

These performances of “Spiegel im Spiegel” by Arvo Part are given by permission of Hal Leonard Australia Pty Ltd, exclusive agents for Universal Edition of Vienna.

Excerpts from Bier Halle

Choreography by Ethan Stiefel
Production Design by Allan Lees
Music for Bier Halle by Johann Strauss II and Josef Strauss

“About two years ago, I originally thought I might like to create a ballet using polka music. Polka bands are very popular around where I grew up in Wisconsin, and I knew I wanted to explore creating something fun and vibrant. To be honest though, after listening to polka music for about 20 minutes, I felt it was not sustainable for me to use only polkas for an entire ballet. Fortunately, it led me to the wonderful polkas, waltzes, and marches of the Strauss brothers, Josef and Johann II. About an hour or two later, I had roughly pieced together various musical selections and began envisioning it being set in a Bavarian type of beer hall (I had made a pilgrimage to Oktoberfest roughly 15 years before). Hence, Bier Halle was conceived and I cracked open a brew for further creative stimulus.

As my imagination took flight, I envisioned it being virtuosic, amusing, and sophisticated, whilst evoking the conversations, relationships, and merriments one might encounter when spending a night at the pub. I also wanted it to present some authentic references to the dances, clothing, and atmosphere of Germanic culture, yet not necessarily become a literal and historical reconstruction of any specific place. Therefore, the fantastical country of Bierland was founded! A charming nation, nestled between the borders of Germany and Austria, famous for its beer, humour, and incompalable dancing.

Herzlich Willkommen to Bierland and I hope you enjoy your visit to this festive place!”

—Original program note by Ethan Stiefel, 2013

Please note that staging of Bier Halle will be adapted for touring.

Music for Bier Halle is by Johann Strauss II and Josef Strauss:
“Pielke und Polka” (Johann Strauss II)
“Pazizaco Polka” (Johann Strauss II and Josef Strauss)
“Die Libelle” (Josef Strauss)
“Indigo March” (Johann Strauss II)

The specially arranged score for Bier Halle was recorded by Orchestra Wellington under the baton of RNZB Music Director Nigel Gaynor in March 2013.

Bier Halle

Music for Bier Halle by Johann Strauss II and Josef Strauss

Indigo March

Pianist Studies at the New Zealand School of Music.

Bier Halle

Three Short Ballets from the Big Apple

28 Variations on a Theme by Paganini

28 Variations on a Theme by Paganini

British, American, and Australian Polka

Music for Bier Halle by Johann Strauss II and Josef Strauss

Royal New Zealand Ballet in Bier Halle in 2015. Photo: Evan Li.
Javier De Frutos created *Banderillero* for the Royal New Zealand Ballet in 2006 as part of the Trinity program of new works. It was his second original work for the RNZB, following his award-winning take on *The Rite of Spring*, Milagros, created in 2003. *Banderillero* was included in repertoire for the RNZB’s 2011 tour to the U.K. and France, where it met with widespread acclaim.

De Frutos’ work for ten dancers (five male, five female) takes its name from the banderillero (pronounced ban-dair-e-ee-air-oh) bullfighter that teases the bull in the arena—all the time preparing it for the matador’s kill.

In a frenzied ritual, half sport, half spectacle, the banderillero poses and pirouettes reaching over the bull’s horns to stab colored darts into its flanks.

*Banderillero* lashes out, plunging the senses into a swirling intensity of self and purpose. It takes its form from a triptych—a picture or carving on three panels—as two groups of dancers combine drama and daring in a special space created on the stage. Tamed and tangled, the dancers are coaxed by the whirlwind power of rhythms from Chinese virtuoso percussionist Yim Hok-Man and his Poems of Thunder.

From the delicate to the dynamic—*Banderillero* drives, pounds, and beats at the heart.

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**The Royal New Zealand Ballet (RNZB)** is a versatile company of 34 dancers. Bringing together artists of six different nationalities and from many schools and traditions, the RNZB is proud to offer New Zealanders the opportunity to see ballet and dance of an exceptionally high standard, in their home towns. The company tours regularly to ten centers around New Zealand, and undertakes a biennial tour of small towns which takes the dancers to up to 50 communities, from the tip of New Zealand’s North Island to the bottom of the South.

The RNZB is an intrinsic part of New Zealand’s national heritage, receiving a proportion of its operating income from the New Zealand government through the Ministry for Culture and Heritage and with one of the largest followings of all New Zealand arts organisations. The award of a Royal Charter in 1984, making the RNZB one of just four ballet companies in the British Commonwealth to enjoy this recognition, was further proof of the company’s leading place in New Zealand’s cultural life.

Today, the RNZB has developed a reputation for strong and unique interpretations of full-length dramatic works, something which has been a hallmark of its work since the 1980s. To this base have been added many of the masterworks and major ballets of the 20th century, including works by Balanchine, Kylian, Jorma Elo, and Mark Morris, and the Prokofiev and Stravinsky ballets, notably versions of *Cinderella* and *Romeo and Juliet* by British choreographer Christopher Hampson, a fine Petrovichka and an award-winning interpretation of *The Rite of Spring*, Milagros, by Venezuelan choreographer Javier De Frutos. The company has an enviable track record in commissioning and performing works from New Zealand and international choreographers including, in recent years, Mark Baldwin, Andrew Simmons, David Dawson, Cameron McMillan, and Larry Keigwin.

The RNZB undertakes an international tour most years, with recent destinations including China (2007, 2009 and 2013), where the company enjoyed sell-out performances in Shanghai and Guangzhou; the United Kingdom and France (2011); and Australia (2008). The RNZB’s 2014 U.S. performances, the first time that the company has performed there for over two decades, will be followed by a return to the U.K. and Ireland in 2015. International touring has led to prestigious award nominations, including two Best New Dance Production nominations at the 2005 Society of London Theatre Laurence Olivier Awards (for Romeo and Juliet and Milagros at Sadler’s Wells), and nominations at the 2011 U.K. Critics’ Circle National Dance Awards, for Best Classical Choreography (for Andrew Simmons’ *A Song in The Dark*) and as Outstanding Company.

The embracing of new opportunities through the media and digital technology has brought the RNZB to an ever-widening audience, both at home and abroad. The company is the subject of *The Secret Lives of Dancers*, a winner of the 2011 UK Critics’ Circle National Dance Awards, for Best Classical Choreography (for Andrew Simmons’ *A Song in The Dark*) and as Outstanding Company.

The company has performed for over two decades, will be followed by a return to the U.K. and Ireland in 2015. International touring has led to prestigious award nominations, including two Best New Dance Production nominations at the 2005 Society of London Theatre Laurence Olivier Awards (for Romeo and Juliet and Milagros at Sadler’s Wells), and nominations at the 2011 U.K. Critics’ Circle National Dance Awards, for Best Classical Choreography (for Andrew Simmons’ *A Song in The Dark*) and as Outstanding Company.

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The RNZB’s 2012 production of *Giselle*, co-produced by Ethan Stiefel and Johan Kobborg and starring Gillian Murphy as Giselle and Qi Huan as Albrecht, was developed into a feature film by New Zealand director Toa Fraser, produced by Matthew Metcalfe of General Film, with support from the New Zealand Film Commission. Following its premiere at the New Zealand International Film Festival in July 2013, Giselle was selected for both the Toronto and Vancouver International Film Festivals and is now on international release, including 100 cinemas in France. The RNZB’s education program takes the company’s work into classrooms, school halls, dance schools, and community centers around New Zealand. Special classes, including dedicated Ballet for Boys sessions, are offered for pre-vocational dance students around New Zealand alongside each tour, and the RNZB has also created a mentoring program which pairs aspiring young dancers with company members for regular advice and encouragement.

The appointment of Ethan Stiefel as Artistic Director in 2011 has raised the national and international profile of the Royal New Zealand Ballet further. As the company begins its sixth decade it does so in good heart, proud of its place in New Zealand and on the world stage.
Ethan Stiefel, Artistic Director, Royal New Zealand Ballet

Ethan Stiefel, born in Pennsylvania, is the Artistic Director of the Royal New Zealand Ballet. Just prior to being appointed the RNZB’s Artistic Director, Stiefel served as Dean of the School of Dance at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA).

Stiefel began his dance studies in Madison, Wisconsin. His early teachers included Paul Sutherland and Ted Kivitt. He continued his studies at Marcia Dale Weary’s Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet. He was awarded a full scholarship at the School of American Ballet, where he studied under Stanley Williams and then trained with Mikhail Baryshnikov at his School of Classical Ballet.

Stiefel began his performing career at age 16 with the New York City Ballet where he quickly rose to the rank of Principal Dancer. He was also a Principal Dancer with the Zürich Ballet and joined American Ballet Theatre in 1997. Stiefel gave his final performance as a Principal Dancer with ABT in July 2012.

His repertoire of full-length works included Flaminourd (The Sleeping Beauty), Siegfried (Swan Lake), Romeo (Romeo and Juliet), James (La Sylphide), Albrecht (Giselle), Lescaut (Manon), Lenski (Onegin), Jeanne (Raymunda), Colas (La Fille Mal Gardée), Solor (La Bayadère), Oberon (A Midsummer Night’s Dream), Prince (Cinderella) Cassio (Otello), Basilio (Don Quixote), Franz (Coppélia), Conrad and the Slave (Le Corsaire). He appeared in a wide variety of shorter works by George Balanchine, Jerome Robbins, Michel Fokine, William Forsythe, Lar Lubovitch, Jiri Kylian, August Bournonville, Bob Fosse, Antony Tudor, Christopher Wheeldon, Eugene Loring, Peter Martins, Nacho Duato, Frederick Ashton, including works created on him by Twyla Tharp, Paul Taylor, Nils Christe, Susan Straman, Mark Morris, and Christopher Wheeldon among others.

He made his debut with London’s Royal Ballet in Twyla Tharp’s Juk’n Man pas de deux and returned frequently as a guest, dancing the roles of Franz, Solor, Colas, Albrecht, Lenski, the Prince in Natalia Makarova’s new production of The Sleeping Beauty, and in the Midsummer Elevated by William Forsythe. The Mariinsky (Kirov) Ballet first invited him to dance Apollo in St. Petersburg. He later returned to perform the role of Solor. Other guest appearances included the Australian Ballet, the Zurich Ballet, the Bayerische Staatsballett Hamburg Ballet, The National Ballet of Canada, Teatro Colon, and tours in the United States, Japan, Russia, and throughout Europe.

He starred in the feature film Center Stage, and returned to play the role of Cooper Nielsen in Center Stage 2 – Turn it Up. Stiefel’s television and video credits include The Dream, Le Corsaire, Die Fledermäus, Gossip Girl, and the documentary, Born to be Wild.

In 2004, Stiefel founded a summer training program on Martha’s Vineyard, Stiefel and Students, which took place for four years. He was the founding director of the Nantucket Dance Festival.

He has been a guest teacher for many institutions including the American Ballet Theatre II, American Ballet Theatre, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School, The National Ballet of Canada, and The Royal Ballet School.

In 2009, Stiefel created a new staging of The Nutcracker for the UNCSA, which continues to be performed every Christmas season. Most recently, he choreographed Bier Halle and collaborated with Johan Kobborg on choreographing and producing a new production of Giselle for the RNZB. In 2015, Giselle was adapted into a feature film, directed by Tao Fraser, and was selected for screening in the New Zealand International Film Festival, Vancouver International Film Festival, and the Toronto International Film Festival.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Albert of Monaco presented Stiefel with the Statue Award of the Princess Grace Foundation, the Foundation’s highest honour, in October 1999. He received the prestigious Dance Magazine Award in December 2008, was a juror for the Prix de Lausanne in 2001, and served on the selection committee for the 2010 International Ballet Competition held in Jackson, Mississippi.

Turid Revfeim, Ballet Mistress

A New Zealander by birth, Turid Revfeim was appointed Ballet Mistress at the Royal New Zealand Ballet in 2003. Her association with the RNZB dates back to 1980 when she was a dancer in The Nutcracker. She spent four years as a soloist with the Theater der Stadt Koblenz in Germany. In Europe she danced at the prestigious Bayreuther Festspiele each summer from 1982-86. Revfeim re-joined the RNZB as a dancer in 1986. In 1997 she worked for the Eric Languet Dance Company as Rehearsal Assistant and Stage Manager, and later that year had her daughter Emma. In 1999 she retired from dancing and took up the position of Artistic Coordinator with the company. The RNZB has performed four of her works: Si Supieras for the 2004 Otago Festival of the Arts, subsequently rested for the RNZB’s Tutus on Tour regional tour of New Zealand in 2005; Three over Four and Bernarda Alba’s House featured in the RNZB’s 1999 ’Original’s season; and Kleines Requiem in 2000’s Next Step season.

Amanda Skoog, Managing Director

Amanda Skoog left New Zealand as a teenager to pursue a career as a classical ballet dancer, touring Europe extensively before accepting a position with English National Ballet where she met her husband Matz (the Artistic Director of the Royal New Zealand Ballet from 1996 to 2000).

Skoog has worked in arts administration for the past 20 years. She was Education Officer with English National Ballet, the Development Manager at London’s Design Museum, Assistant Director at Central School of Ballet with the late Christopher Gable, and Visitor Services Manager at the Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre, where her responsibilities included the trading operations of the museum. She has a post-graduate Diploma in Arts Administration from City University, London.

Skoog began her role with the RNZB in September 2006 and says the most satisfying aspect of her job is enabling talent from throughout the country to shine, be it dancers, production, or any area of administration.

In 2014, Skoog was honoured for her services to ballet by becoming a member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MOMZ).

Martin Vedel, Ballet Master

Born in Greenland, with Danish nationality, Martin Vedel trained at the Royal Danish Ballet School and danced with the Royal Danish Ballet from 1988-2000, rising to the rank of Soloist. In 2000 he became a Principal with the Béjart Ballet in Lausanne, Switzerland, under the direction of Maurice Béjart and Gil Raman.

As a dancer, his repertoire included works by Bourneville and Balanchine as well as classics such as Swan Lake, The Sleeping Beauty, Don Quixote, and Frederick Ashton’s Romeo and Juliet. His contemporary roles included works by William Forsythe, John Neumeier, Maurice Béjart, and Jiří Kylián as well as recent creations by Kim Brandstrup and Liam Scarlett.

While at the Béjart Ballet he began to teach the company, and on his retirement from dancing in 2010 he became a guest teacher for English National Ballet, working with Wayne Eagling on his new production of The Nutcracker and assisting with principal coaching for productions of Romeo and Juliet and Manon.

From 2011-12 he was Ballet Master at the Royal Ballet of Flanders, where he taught company class and coached a wide range of ballets including John Cran Gods’s Onegin, Marcia Haydée’s production of The Sleeping Beauty and works by William Forsythe and Christopher Wheeldon.

Vedel joined the Royal New Zealand Ballet as Ballet Master in January 2013.
Benjamin Millepied, Choreographer of

Born in Bordeaux, France, Benjamin Millepied began his dance training at the age of eight with his mother, Catherine, a former modern dancer, continuing at the Conservatoire National de Lyon. In the summer of 1992, Millepied went to New York to the School of American Ballet (SAB), the official school of New York City Ballet, becoming a full-time student in 1993. Millepied originated a principal role in Jerome Robbins’ 2 & 3 Part Inventions set to music by J.S. Bach at the SAB Workshop. He joined New York City Ballet in 1995, and was promoted to Principal in 2001. Millepied directed the Morris Center Dance Workshop and was choreographer-in-residence at the Baryshnikov Arts Center.


In January 2013, it was announced that Benjamin Millepied will be the new Director of Dance at the Opéra National de Paris. He will take up this appointment in September 2014.

Andrew Simmons, Choreographer and Designer for Through to You

Andrew Simmons was born in Christchurch, New Zealand and attended the International Ballet Academy from 2001 to 2003. He was a member of the Royal New Zealand Ballet between 2004 and 2008 before moving to Dresden, Germany. During his time with the company, Simmons danced roles in a wide range and style of works—highlights including pieces in the company’s contemporary repertoire by Mark Baldwin, Jorma Elo, Michael Pink, and Javier De Frutos, along with participating in the company’s choreographic workshops. After creating on his fellow dancers during a 2006 workshop, Simmons was given the opportunity to make his first piece, Theme and Deviations, for the company in 2007. His second work for the RNZB, Through to You, was premiered during the RNZB’s 2009 Tutus on Tour programme and has just been revived as part of the RNZB’s 2013 Tutus on Tour programme, performed in 47 centres around New Zealand. In 2010 Simmons’ largest new work for the RNZB, A Song in the Dark, was commissioned and joined the company’s repertoire after a successful triple bill season. This was followed by equally successful and critically praised performances of the same piece on the company’s 2011 tour of the United Kingdom and France—resulting in A Song in the Dark receiving a nomination for best classical choreography in the 2011 U.K. Critics’ Circle National Dance Awards.

Javier De Frutos, Choreographer and Designer for Banderillero

Javier De Frutos began his dance training in his native Venezuela before undertaking further study at the London School of Contemporary Dance and the Marce Cunningham School, New York. On returning to the U.K. in 1994, he established the Javier De Frutos Dance Company. His growing body of work was recognized in 1997 with the South Bank Award, followed in 1999 by a South Bank Show dedicated to his achievements.

Highlights of his subsequent career include being among the first to be made a Fellow of the Arts Council of England (2000), a collaborative film project with Isaac Julien, The Long Road to Mazatlan, which was nominated for the Turner Prize (2001); and representing Britain at the 2006 Venice Biennale with a trilogy of his work De Frutos’ work is in the repertoire of companies around the world, including Rambert, Rotterdam Dance Group, Nuremberg Ballet, Candoco, The Royal Ballet, and the Royal New Zealand Ballet. He has choreographed for the Chichester Festival Theater, London’s National Theatre, and Shakespeare’s Globe. In 2007 he won an Olivier Award for his choreography for the acclaimed West End revival of Cabaret. His recent collaboration with Pat Shop Boys, The Most Incredible Thing, earned him a 2011 Evening Standard Theatre Award together with a Best Choreographer nomination at the 2012 Critics’ Circle National Dance Awards (U.K.).

Banderinillo was De Frutos’ second work for the RNZB, following Milagros (2003), which was commissioned to celebrate the company’s 50th anniversary. In 2013 the RNZB commissioned and performed a new work from Javier De Frutos, The Anatomy of a Passing Cloud, to mark its 60th anniversary.

Abigail Boyle, Dancer

Abigail Boyle is a graduate of the International Ballet Academy in Christchurch. She joined Royal New Zealand Ballet in 2005 and has received critical acclaim for her dancing. Notable mentions include her performance as Mercedes in 2008’s The Meridian Season of Don Quixote, which The Press described as “seductive hard-edged elegance, coupled with superb comic timing.” Boyle was applauded for her 2010 performances in The Tower Season of From Here to There and her portrayal of Carmen also drew rave reviews with Theatreview saying, “her first solo drips with alluring sexuality as the choreography sits deliciously in her highly articulate body.”

In 2011, the Dominion Post described her performance in TOWER Tutus on Tour as “superb allegro and serene adagio, which covers all there is.” Most recent among Boyle’s leading roles are Aurora and the Lilac Fairy in The Meridian Season of The Sleeping Beauty.

Brendan Bradshaw, Dancer

Brendan Bradshaw began ballet lessons as a six year-old in the small New South Wales town of Wauchope. He then trained at The Australian Ballet School in Melbourne, graduating with the Graeme Murphy Award for Excellence in Contemporary Dance. Bradshaw joined Royal New Zealand Ballet in 2004 and has danced a variety of roles including The Prince in The Meridian Season of The Sleeping Beauty. Personal highlights include working with Javier De Frutos and Jorma Elo and performing in the U.K., France, San Francisco, and China. His favorite role to date has been Romeo in Christopher Hampson’s Romeo & Juliet. His performance was praised for its “serenity and passion.” Bradshaw co-choreographed the popular Koa Koa Ka Choo for The Tower Season of Tutus on Tour in 2009 and WOW, and has choreographed works for Tempo Festivals in 2010 and 2011. Bradshaw has an interest in photography and has documented many Royal New Zealand Ballet tours.

Clytie Campbell, Dancer

Clytie Campbell joined the RNZB in 2005, returning from eight years dancing in Europe. Starting at the age of five, her entire ballet training was at her mother’s school, the Phillips Campbell School of Ballet in Auckland. At 17, Campbell joined the Deutsche Oper Ballet in Berlin, where she danced for more than six years, before moving to Vienna’s Staatsoper Ballet.

Campbell has danced many lead roles with the RNZB including Kitri in Don Quixote, the sylph in La Sylphide, Myrtha, Queen of the Wills in Giselle, the grand pas de deux in The Nutcracker, and Carabosse and the Lilac Fairy in The Sleeping Beauty, as well as solos in Esquisses, Silhouette, and A Million Kisses to My Skin. Her role as Lady Capulet in Romeo and Juliet was described as “a knockout.” Campbell received critical acclaim for her lead roles in all three works in 2010’s From Here to There, which she also performed during the RNZB’s European Tour in 2011.

Jacob Chown, Dancer

Jacob Chown graduated from The Australian Ballet School. A former Western Australia state trampoline champion, he began his career with Royal New Zealand Ballet in 2006. Chown has performed in numerous productions with the company.

In 2008, Dominion Post critic, Jennifer Sherman, commended his performance in the triple bill RED. “the eye was continually drawn to young Jacob Chown for his remarkable combination of control and majesty in solo passages.”

In 2009, his performance as John in Peter Pan was praised by critics. He followed this with lead roles in Silhouette and A Million Kisses to My Skin in the 2010 TOWER Season of From Here to There. When he is not dancing, Chown loves surfing, skate boarding, breakdancing, and circus arts.

Abigail Boyle, Dancer

Benjamin Millepied, Choreographer of

CHOREOGRAPHERS

DANCERS

Abigail Boyle, Dancer

Benjamin Millepied, Choreographer of 28 Variations on a Theme

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NBR remarked that Hewitt’s performance as the Sylph “shone through with a lustrous richness” and in 2011, the NZ Herald commended her performance in TOWER Tutus on Tour’s Pinocchio, saying, “Antonia Hewitt is the ultimate Blue Fairy, all willowy grace.”

Oscar Hoelscher, Dancer
Born in Brisbane, Australia, Oscar Hoelscher started dancing at the young age of 5 learning ballet, contemporary, jazz, and tap before focusing on ballet. He is a founding member of the Brisbane City Youth Ballet and danced many ballets with them including the Prince in The Nutcracker. Hoelscher attended and graduated the Queensland Dance School of Excellence in 2010 gaining the Dance Student of the Year award. He then started his training at the New Zealand School of Dance in 2011. In October 2013, Hoelscher danced in RNZB’s Swan Lake tour on secondment and has since joined the company.

Antonia Hewitt, Dancer
Born in Wellington, Antonia Hewitt moved to Coromandel as a toddler and started taking ballet lessons at the age of four. She trained at the Kim Harvey School of Dance before returning to Wellington in 2004 to attend New Zealand School of Dance. She joined Royal New Zealand Ballet in 2007 and has performed in every production since then. Her roles have included the Fairy Godmother in the Lion Foundation Season of Cinderella, the Young Nurse in The Nutcracker, the title roles in The Meridian Season of La Sylphide and Carmen, and the Lilac Fairy in The Meridian Season of The Sleeping Beauty.

Maclean Hopper, Dancer
Maclean Hopper was born in 1992 in Richmond, Virginia. He started dancing when he was 9 years old and went onto train at University of North Carolina School of the Arts and San Francisco Ballet School, with summers spent at The Washington Ballet and Boston Ballet.

Career highlights while at UNCSA include dancing Act 2 of Swan Lake and Little Improvisations with the Royal New Zealand Ballet company member Sara Havener. His favorite ballets are Romeo and Juliet and Giselle, and he loves the work of David Dawson and William Forsythe. In his spare time, he likes to cook and surf. Hopper joined the Royal New Zealand Ballet for The TelstraClear Season of Giselle.
Qi Huan, Dancer
Qi (pron: Choo) Huan began his ballet study in Shenyang, in China’s Liaoning Province. While a student at the Beijing Dance Academy in 2000 he reached the finals of the New York International Ballet Competition. From 2003-04, he taught at the Beijing Dance Academy alongside former Royal New Zealand Ballet Principal Dancer, Ov Lu.

Since joining Royal New Zealand Ballet in 2005, Huan has performed a number of lead roles including the title role in Dracula, Romeo in Romeo & Juliet, Basilio in The Meridian Season of Don Quixote, Captain Hook in Peter Pan, Grand pas de deux in The Nutcracker, and Prince Désiré in The Meridian Season of The Sleeping Beauty. In 2011’s TOWER Tutus on Tour the Capital Times said Huan gave an “outstanding performance” in Vervi Variations and “stole the show with his solo”.

Alexander Idaszak, Dancer
Born in Sydney, Alexander Idaszak began his dance training at J and L Productions. He successfully auditioned and was offered a place at the McDonald College of Performing Arts, taught by Josephine Jason and Alan Cross.

After graduating, Idaszak accepted a place at The Australian Ballet School in Melbourne, where he completed a Diploma in Dance and a Vocational Graduate Certificate in Classical Ballet. Idaszak joined Queensland Ballet as a Diploma in Dance and a Vocational Graduate Certificate in Classical Ballet. Idaszak joined Queensland Ballet as a Research Artists' Apprentice in 2006, as the T odd Corporation Scholar. He was awarded a scholarship to train with the School of American Ballet in 2007 and 2009. Arata Miyagawa was born in Japan and trained there, as well as at the prestigious John Cranko school in Stuttgart, Germany, and studied with Petr Pestov. Miyagawa makes his Royal New Zealand Ballet debut in 2013 with Masle to Move. He has danced with the Stanislavski and Nemirovich-Danchenko Academic Music Theatre in Moscow (2010-11) and in 2012 won the silver medal at the International Ballet Competition in Varna, Bulgaria, one of the world’s most highly regarded competitions for young professional dancers. Other awards include a bronze medal at the 2010 Youth America Grand Prix in New York, the gold medal at all the Royal Ballet School Competition in 2010, and medals at the Tanzolymp (‘Dance Olympics’) competitions in Berlin in 2005 and 2009.

Kohhei Iwamoto, Dancer
Kohhei Iwamoto joined Royal New Zealand Ballet at the start of 2010. He started ballet at the age of 11 in Japan, his talent was evident at an early age and he received a scholarship to further his training at The Australian Ballet School.

A career highlight for Iwamoto was performing the role of a tourist in The Meridian Season of Carmen as he has a passion for playing comical roles. In 2011, he performed the roles of Pinocchio and the adventurous puppet Arlequino in Pinafore in TOWER Tutus on Tour, and Bluebird and Prince’s Friends in The Meridian Season of The Sleeping Beauty. “Bluebirds (..Kohhei Iwamoto) shimmered like flutes,” said The Dominion Post.

Juan Peng Fei, Dancer
Juan Peng Fei was born in Anhui province, People’s Republic of China. He started dancing at the age of four and undertook his formative training at the Secondary School of the Beijing Dance Academy. In 2012, at the prestigious Youth America Grand Prix ballet competition in New York City, Fei was placed amongst the top 12 men. In the same year, he participated in the Beijing International Ballet Competition and was awarded 3rd place in the Tao Li Cup. As a consequence of his success at YAGP, Fei was granted an international scholarship to study full-time at the New Zealand School of Dance, in 2013. Fei is thrilled to be joining the Royal New Zealand Ballet in 2014.

Laura Saxson Jones, Dancer
Australian born, Laura Saxson Jones began dancing at the age of 6 with Christine Atkinson—the Ballet Class, Sydney. With dual nationality, Jones came to New Zealand in 2011 to further her training at the New Zealand School of Dance.

In the NZSS’s graduation program, Jones was chosen to dance Violetta Verdi’s role in Balanchine’s Emeralds (staged by Diana White). Capital Times wrote, “excerpts of Balanchine’s sparkling Emeralds were fluidly danced by all, but especially Jones. This elegant dancer has a lovely, unforced technique and personality that should take her far.” In her second year of training at the school, Jones toured with the Royal New Zealand Ballet in Ethan Stiefel and Johan Kobborg’s new production of Giselle. Jones was awarded the 2012 Todd Scholarship and joins the Royal New Zealand Ballet in 2013.

Bronte Kelly, Dancer
From Queensland, Australia, Bronte Kelly started dancing at the age of four and went on to train at The Australian Ballet School. She joined Royal New Zealand Ballet at the start of 2011, performing in TOWER Tutus on Tour, Stravinsky Selection and The Meridian Season of The Sleeping Beauty, in which she danced the role of the Green Fairy.

Other career highlights include dancing ‘Girlfriends’ in Don Quixote for Australian Dancers Company 2010 Tour, and performing the role of Gerda in their 2010 production of The Snow Queen.

Dimitri Kleioris, Dancer
An Australian of Greek and Maltese heritage, Dimitri Kleioris took his first dance lessons in jazz and tap at the age of six, later taking up classical ballet at the McDonald College under the direction of Nigel Burtle. He graduated from The Australian Ballet School in 2009 and joined the RNZB the following year.

Words of praise include, “A piece that requires from its dancers soul and raw physicality as well as technique, and for an embodiment of this...one can’t go past Kleioris,” from Australian Stage. In 2012, Kleioris danced the lead couple in Larry Keigwin’s Final Doors and the role of Hilarion in Giselle; he also choreographed the piece 4:01 for Leaps & Sounds. He has recently been coached by and thanks Irina Brecher Hamilton and the team at Soul Motion in Los Angeles.

Kleioris’ favourite production is Graeme Murphy’s Swan Lake. He has played the role of a sailor in Murphy’s The Nutcracker and Jagger in Opera Australia’s production of Death in Venice choreographed by Meryl Tankard.

Yang Liu, Dancer
Chinese-born Yang Liu started dancing at the age of five and went on to train at the Beijing Dance Academy from 1996–2003, before joining National Ballet of China.

Liu joined Royal New Zealand Ballet in 2010. Her audition and first season dancing in The Tower Season of From Here to There were featured in the first series of TV3’s The Secret Lives of Dancers.

Her favorite ballets are Giselle, The Sleeping Beauty, and Don Quixote. Liu loves updating her blog with stories and photos from her time with the Royal New Zealand Ballet and enjoys cooking and collecting traditional Chinese clothing and accessories. Her goals for the future include improving her spoken English and becoming a dance teacher.

Tonia Looker, Dancer

Originally from Australia, Tonia Looker trained at The Australian Ballet School. In 2007, she was awarded a scholarship to train with the School of American Ballet in New York and Toronto's National Ballet School. Looker joined Royal New Zealand Ballet in 2008, and in her debut in RED, she was described by one critic as a dancer to watch, noting, “her exuberance and dynamic line is noticeable amongst the ranks.” She performed Tinkerbell in Peter Pan at the end of 2009 to critical acclaim: “a tempestuous wonder as Tinkerbell,” said the Dominion Post.

Paul Mathews, Dancer
Paul Mathews was born in Auckland, and took his first ballet steps at the age of four. He attained his Solo Seal from the Royal Academy of Dance in 2004, and joined Royal New Zealand Ballet from the New Zealand School of Dance in 2006, as the Todd Corporation Scholar. He has performed a variety of roles including Gamache in The Meridian Season of Don Quixote, Gurn in The Meridian Season of La Sylphide, Hook in Peter Pan, Tybalt in Romeo & Juliet, and Blackamoor in Petrouchka.

In 2010, he performed in the triple bill From Here to There, including a lead role in David Dawson’s acclaimed A Million Kisses to My Skin, and he featured in all three works in the company’s 2011 tour of the U.K and France. When he’s not in the dance studios rehearsing, Mathews likes watching cricket or stand-up comedy, reading popular science, or studying for his Diploma in Business.
**Gillian Murphy, Dancer, Principal Guest Artist**

Gillian Murphy is a principal ballerina with American Ballet Theatre, and in 2012, she also became Principal Guest Artist with the Royal New Zealand Ballet. Murphy was raised in Florence, South Carolina, U.S., and received her high school education and advanced dance training at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts.

Murphy’s repertoire includes leading roles in all of ABT’s current full-length classics and in shorter works by George Balanchine, Jerome Robbins, Jiri Kylian, Antony Tudor, William Forsythe, Martha Graham, Lar Lubovitch, Paul Taylor, Frederick Ashton, and Agnes de Mille.

She starred as Odette/Odile in ABT’s PBS television production of Swan Lake, and she has appeared in world premieres of new creations by Benjamin Millepied, Stanton Welch, Jerma Eli, Peter Quanz, Natalie Weiss, John Neumeier, Alexei Ratmansky, Christopher Wheeldon, and Twyla Tharp.

Murphy has danced with the Kirov Ballet, the Royal Swedish Ballet, the Staatsballett Berlin, the Kiev Ballet, and in numerous other international engagements and galas. In 2009, Murphy was the recipient of a Princess Grace Statue Award, the organization’s highest honor.

**Alayna Ng, Dancer**

Wellington-born Alayna Ng has been dancing since the age of four. Ng graduated from the New Zealand School of Dance in 2006. Her graduation season was described as “feminine charm in galas. In 2009, Murphy was the recipient of a Princess Grace Statue Award, the organization’s highest honor.”

**Loughlan Prior, Dancer**

Originally from Melbourne, Loughlan Prior began dancing with the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School before finalizing his training at The New Zealand School of Dance. In his final year, he toured with Royal New Zealand Ballet in their season of TOWER Tutus on Tour and upon graduation joined the company in 2010.

Prior is an emerging choreographer. He has created works for the NZSD as well as for RNZB’s Leaps and Sounds program. His work First Light was recently performed at the closing night gala of the Asian Grand Prix in Hong Kong.

His career highlights include working with Javier De Frutos, Camaron McMillan, Larry Keigwin, and Sarah Foster-Spruill. Prior was recently sponsored by The Wallace Arts Trust to develop a dance film with Sir Jon Trimmer and artists of the Royal New Zealand Ballet.

**Joseph Skelton, Dancer**

Born in Gisborne and raised in Pukekohe, Joseph Skelton started dancing at the age of four. He trained in the U.K. at the Elmhurst School for Dance and the Royal Ballet School. He returned to New Zealand to join the Royal New Zealand Ballet in 2011 and toured the South Island in TOWER Tutus on Tour. Since then he has appeared in Stravinsky Selection, The Sleeping Beauty, NYC, Cinderella, and Giselle.

Inspirited by his parents, Skelton aims to be the best dancer he can be and finds his career both challenging and incredibly rewarding. In his spare time he enjoys surfing, playing guitar and piano, and listening to music.

**Harry Skinner, Dancer**

Born in Invercargill, Harry Skinner trained under Paula Hunt in Wellington and at The Australian Ballet School. He has performed in Sleeping Beauty, Swan Lake, Giselle, and Cinderella. He role which was praised by several reviewers: “A winsome pas de deux between Peter and his shadow (Harry Skinner) sets the standard for the dances to follow,” wrote Theatre review and “Harry Skinner is captivating,” said the NZ Listener. Skinner also performed the mischievous Fritz in The Nutcracker at the end of 2010 with great flair. 2011 saw him featured in Verdi Variations and as he role of Lampwick in Pinocchio.

Skinner is studying extramurally for a political science degree from Massey University.

**Mayu Tanigaito, Dancer**

Mayu Tanigaito was born in Tochigi, Japan, and made her first trip to New Zealand in 2011 to audition for Royal New Zealand Ballet. NYC will be Tanigaito’s first season with the company. Tanigaito started her dance training at the age of 6 at the Takashashi Wakako Ballet Studio, and continued her studies at Antwerp Royal Ballet School in Belgium, and The Rock School for Dance Education in the U.S. In 2007, she was a finalist in the Youth American Grand Prix, the world’s largest student ballet scholarship competition. Her professional career began in 2008 at North Carolina Dance Theatre II where she danced roles in Snow White, Othello, and The Nutcracker.

**Bryn Watkins, Dancer**

Bryn Watkins grew up in Orange, California, in the United States. She began her ballet training at the West Coast Conservatory of Ballet at age five. At age eleven, she began training at Ballet Pacifica with noted teachers Amanda McKerrow and John Gardner. In 2008, Watkins enrolled at the Maple Conservatory of Dance where she trained for five years under the direction of Charles Maple and others. She has attended summer intensives at Ballet West, Houston Ballet, and American Ballet Theatre, all on scholarship. Watkins was a Finalist in the Music Center Spotlight Awards, a Gold Level YoungArts Winner, and a Presidential Scholar in the Arts nominee. She joined American Ballet Theatre as an apprentice in September 2012, and was promoted to the corps de ballet in May 2013. She joined the Royal New Zealand Ballet at the end of 2013.

**Maree White, Dancer**

Maree White joined Royal New Zealand Ballet at the end of 2006 for the TOWER Season of Giselle, dancing the role of Queen of the Wilis. At 16, after being awarded her RAD Solo Seal, the Cairns native received a scholarship to study at the Wiener Staatsoper Ballet School and danced with the Wiener Staatsoper Ballet. White was also a soloist at the Deutsche Oper Am Rhein in Dusseldorf for six years. Since joining RNZB she has danced the role of Mercedes in The Meridian Season of Don Quixote, Queen Sylph in The Meridian Season of La Sylphide, and Carabosse in The Meridian Season of Sleeping Beauty. Her performance in Saltarello in 2009’s TOWER Tutus on Tour was described as “heart-stoppingly exquisite.”

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American Dance Festival (Durham, NC) americandancefestival.org
Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography (Tallahassee, FL) mancc.org
Tofte Lake Center (Ely, MN) toftelake.org

The 2012 McKnight Choreography Fellows have been granted residencies with our partners for the coming year:

Ananya Chatterjea, Tofte Lake Center, Ely, MN, August 2014
Photo courtesy of artist.

Carl Flink, American Dance Festival, June–July 2014
Photo © William Cameron.

Raneen and Aparna Ramaswamy, MANCC (Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography, Tallahassee, FL), Fall 2014
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