

For immediate release Tuesday 14 October 2014

Ballet spectacular: International ballet stars and Bollywood drama for the Sydney premiere of *La Bayadère*

Ill-fated love, opium dreams and vengeful gods – the Australian premiere of Stanton Welch’s ballet blockbuster *La Bayadère* is bursting with passion and Bollywood drama.

Set in a romanticised vision of India, this spectacular re-imagining of a 19th century classic makes its Sydney debut at the Sydney Opera House from **Thursday 6 to Saturday 22 November** following an acclaimed and sell-out season in Melbourne.

Joining the company onstage for *La Bayadère* will be some of the biggest international names in ballet today. Star of American Ballet Theatre **Gillian Murphy** takes to the stage in the lead role for two performances in the week commencing **Monday 17 November**. The company will also perform alongside two of Houston Ballet’s finest principal dancers, **Karina González** and **Connor Walsh**, currently scheduled to perform on **Monday 17 and Friday 21 November**. An exchange with Houston Ballet will see The Australian Ballet principal artists Leanne Stojmenov and Daniel Gaudiello travelling to the USA in December 2014 to perform with the company.

Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet David McAllister said of the visiting artists, “This is a rare opportunity to see one of American Ballet Theatre’s biggest stars on Australian soil.

“It is also a thrill to have Karina González and Connor Walsh who created the roles of Nikiya and Solor in their home production of *La Bayadère* with Houston Ballet. It will be wonderful to see them dancing alongside The Australian Ballet.”

Resident Choreographer of The Australian Ballet and Artistic Director of Houston Ballet Stanton Welch brings this dramatic story to life

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with opulent sets and colourful costumes by acclaimed English designer Peter Farmer.

In this epic tale, Nikiya, a temple dancer, falls in love with the warrior Solor. *La Bayadère* traces their fight for love, and the vengeance that keeps them apart.

The third act features one of the most infamous and beautiful scenes in ballet today – the Kingdom of the Shades. Showcasing 24 female dancers in white tutus, executing 38 synchronised and seamless arabesques while descending onto the stage, it demands absolute precision and control from the corps de ballet.

La Bayadère was originally conceived by Marius Petipa and premiered on 4 February 1877 at the Bolshoi Theatre in St Petersburg. Welch’s production was created in 2010 to mark the 40th anniversary of Houston Ballet.

What the critics had to say:

“ensemble work of the highest order – a ballerina’s dream and an audience’s delight”
Herald Sun

(four stars) *The Age*

“reveals a company at the peak of its dance powers” *The Australian*

CREDITS

***La Bayadère* (2010)**

Choreography Stanton Welch

Music Ludwig Minkus

Arranged by John Lanchbery

Costume and set designs Peter Farmer

Lighting design Francis Croese

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BLOCH



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DATES**Sydney (19 performances)****6 – 22 November**Joan Sutherland Theatre, Sydney Opera House
with Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra**Bookings**
australianballet.com.au or 1300 369 741
sydneyoperahouse.com or 02 9250 7777
#TABbayadere**STANTON WELCH**

Stanton Welch is well known to Australian audiences for his previous full-length works for The Australian Ballet, such as *Madame Butterfly* (1995), *Cinderella* (1997) and *The Sleeping Beauty* (2005). Now the artistic director of Houston Ballet and resident choreographer at The Australian Ballet, Welch spent his younger years in Melbourne as a dancer before making his full-length choreographic debut aged 25. He is one of the most sought after choreographers of his generation, having created works for such companies as San Francisco Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Birmingham Royal Ballet, and Royal Danish Ballet.

KARINA GONZÁLEZ

Karina González is a native of Caracas, Venezuela. She trained at the Gustavo Franklin Ballet School in Caracas, and has danced professionally with Ballet National of Caracas and Tulsa Ballet. She joined Houston Ballet as a soloist in 2010 and was promoted to principal in 2013. Karina has been a guest artist at the Gala International Colombia in 2006, New York International Ballet Competition Gala in 2009, and the International Ballet Gala in Malaysia. She has also guested with Ballet Estable del Teatro Colon in Argentina, and Michele Wiles and Charles Askegard's company Ballet Next. She has been featured on the cover of *Pointe Magazine*, *Dance Magazine* and *A+C Houston Magazine*.

GILLIAN MURPHY

Gillian Murphy joined American Ballet Theatre as a member of the corps de ballet in August 1996, was promoted to soloist in 1999 and principal dancer in 2002. She has appeared as a guest artist around the world, including in Japan, Mexico, Chile, Greece, Germany, Italy, Canada and throughout the United States. She made her debut with the Mariinsky Ballet in March 2008, dancing Odette/Odile in *Swan Lake*. In 2012, Murphy became principal guest artist at the Royal New Zealand Ballet.

CONNOR WALSH

Connor Walsh was born in Fairfax, Virginia and began his training at the age of seven under the direction of his mother, Constance Walsh. He joined Houston Ballet in 2004 and was promoted to principal in 2007. Over the last five years, he has been in demand as a guest star, making appearances in Argentina, Australia and The Philippines as well as appearing in galas in New York City, Mexico and Malaysia. Jorma Elo created the male lead in his ballet *ONE/end/ONE* in May 2011 for Connor, and Stanton Welch created the leading male roles of the Swedish Count Axel Fersen in the world premiere of his full-length work *Marie* in February 2009, and Solor in his new staging of *La Bayadère* in February 2010, especially for Connor.

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