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Queensland **Ballet**

Media Release

Queensland Ballet brings childhood favourite to life

26 June - 11 July, Playhouse, QPAC



Queensland Ballet will bring one of the world's most loved childhood stories to life when its latest ballet, Peter Pan, opens on 26 June at the Playhouse, Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC).

This production of Peter Pan is choreographed by American Trey McIntyre who uses a wonderful mix of dance and theatre to tell the much-loved tale of the boy who never grew up.

Told from a child's perspective this ballet takes the audience into a magical world of fairies, mermaids, pirates, and of course the lost boys, with the promise of swashbuckling swordfights, breath-taking flying and fantastical puppets.

Queensland Ballet's Artistic Director Li Cunxin said it is a beautiful and imaginative version of Peter Pan that re-interprets JM Barrie's famous story with humour and energy.

"We are delighted to bring this classic tale to Brisbane audiences and to be able to inject new life and joy into the well known characters," Mr Li said.



“This is a story that has been told many times over the years but I’m confident that Trey McIntyre’s production of the ballet danced by our wonderful Queensland Ballet dancers, will bring something extra special to this fairytale.

“The combination of dance, theatre, delightful sets and dramatic music all come together to ensure a thoroughly engaging ballet experience.”

Award winning choreographer Trey McIntyre first mounted this production of Peter Pan in 2002 with Houston Ballet.

Queensland Ballet’s Technical Director, Thomas Boyd, was then working at Houston Ballet as their Director of Production and was approached by McIntyre to design the sets for Peter Pan. The two worked together with a team over a number of years to develop the production that Queensland Ballet will perform in Brisbane.

The imaginative sets transport the audience from reality to fantasy and convey the story through the eyes of a child.

Peter Pan is set to a score of music by English composer, Sir Edwards Elgar, and arranged by American Niel DePonte.

Exquisite costumes are designed by Jeanne Button and the Queensland Symphony Orchestra will accompany most performances with live music, with some recently added shows performed to recorded music.

Audiences will also be treated to a very special Neverland experience in the foyer of the Playhouse theatre prior to each performance with story-tellers in costume reading the story of Peter Pan.

“I invite audiences to join Queensland Ballet for a very special Peter Pan journey and to immerse themselves in this story of wonder, imagination and adventure,” Mr Li said.

Creatives

Choreographer Trey McIntyre

Composer Sir Edward Elgar, arranged by Niel DePonte

Music performed by Queensland Symphony Orchestra

Conductor Andrew Mogrelia

Stagers Dawn Scannell and James Payne

Set Designer Thomas Boyd

Costume Designer Jeanne Button

Brisbane season

Friday 6 June - 11 July

Venue

Playhouse, QPAC

Dates & times

Friday 26 June 7:30pm (sold out)

Saturday 27 June 1:30pm (sold out) | 7:30pm (sold out)

Wednesday 1 July 1.30pm | 7:30pm (performed to recorded music)

Thursday 2 July 7:30pm

Friday 3 July 1:30pm | 7:30pm (limited seats)

Saturday 4 July 1:30pm sold out | 7:30pm (limited seats)

Wednesday 8 July 1:30pm | 7:30pm

Thursday 9 July 7:30pm (performed to recorded music)

Friday 10 July 1:30pm | 7:30pm

Saturday 11 July 1:30pm sold out | 7:30pm (limited seats)

Tickets

Adult \$95

Concession \$80

30 yrs & under \$60

Child \$50

Family \$240 (2 adults, 2 children)

An additional transaction fee of \$6.20 applies.

Complimentary programs

Informative, keepsake programs are distributed free-of-charge at all performances.

The story

Act I - The Darling Home

When the Darling children were born, they were left in the care of nursemaids. From their tiny perspective, the nurses are vicious giants capable of horrible acts. But the four Darling children - Wendy, John, Michael and Peter - don't worry much, because fairies visit their nursery regularly, making them feel safe. Early in his life, young Peter Darling made the dreadful mistake of falling out of his carriage and was swept away with the garbage!

One evening, Mr and Mrs Darling come to bid Wendy, John and Michael goodnight. They are on their way to a party, leaving the children in the care of their new nursemaid, Liza. Wendy dreams that she is dancing among the shadows. Her dream turns into a nightmare, but Wendy is saved by a mysterious shadow that seems somehow familiar to her. She is awakened from her dream by a bright light that darts about the room and into her dresser. As she investigates, a wild boy with a mane of great red hair bursts into the room. He is the same age as Wendy, and introduces himself as Peter Pan. John and Michael wake up, and begin to play with Peter. The dresser drawer begins to rumble, and Peter explains that it is a tiny fairy named Tinkerbell. Then Peter and the three young Darling children set off for Neverland.

Act II – Neverland

Peter Pan returns to Neverland with Wendy and the boys in tow. The Lost Boys beg Peter to recount his adventures, and he dazzles them with wild stories. They quickly welcome the Darling children into their tribe. They ask Wendy to be their mother, and she happily obliges. Neverland becomes the scene of a raucous, joyous celebration. Later in the evening, Captain Hook and his pirate crew plot to capture one of the enchanting mermaids. They capture the most beautiful mermaid, but her cries quickly awaken Peter and the others. A great battle ensues, with the Lost Boys ultimately prevailing.

The Lost Boys make their way into to their hideout and prepare for bed. Wendy reflects longingly on her home and the parents she has left behind. The Lost Boys decide they want to visit her homeland. Unable to understand why Wendy is unhappy, Peter becomes furious, and throws them all out. The pirates kidnap the Lost Boys and the Darling children, one by one, as they leave the hideout. Captain Hook personally greets Wendy and begs her sympathy by showing her a

film of his childhood, in which his awful schoolteacher beat him on the wrist every time he made a mistake. His hand eventually mangled into a hook shape. (This is actually not a film, but a play -- a ruse in which Hook has his own son, James, stand in for him!) Wendy is much too smart, however, to fall for Hook's ploy, and the pirates tie her up and bring her back to the ship. Hook then sends his son James to Peter Pan's hideout to tempt him into a game of hide and seek. James eventually succeeds in luring Peter from his hiding place.

Act III – Captain Hook's Ship

As the pirates dance wildly to celebrate their victory, James contemplates his nefarious deeds. Hook tries to lure the Darling children into joining his crusade, but they refuse. He ties them up and abuses them with tales of the horrible things he will do to them. Hook, who hates all children, even mistreats his own son James, as do the rest of the pirates. Hook becomes so distracted with his soliloquy that he doesn't notice when Peter sneaks on board.

A battle begins, and the Lost Boys quickly gain the upper hand. Sensing the possibility of defeat, Hook tries to escape with Wendy, but Peter intervenes and challenges him to a duel. Hook fights arrogantly, making a great show of his ease, but Peter ultimately triumphs over him - with some unexpected assistance.

The Darling children go home and reunite with their parents. Although Peter returns to try to lure Wendy back to Neverland, she refuses. She takes her place in her mother's rocking chair, reflecting on her adventures with Peter as she grows older and has children and a family of her own.

The choreographer

Trey McIntyre trained at North Carolina School of the Arts and Houston Ballet Academy. In 1989, he was appointed Choreographic Apprentice at Houston Ballet, and in 1995 he became the company's Choreographic Associate. Trey has now worked for over 20 years as a freelance choreographer, producing close to one hundred dance pieces.

In 2005, Trey founded his dance company, Trey McIntyre Project (TMP), which first appeared at the Vail International Dance Festival. The company was initially a summer touring company, but its national and international success led Trey to establish the company year-round as of 2008, based in Boise, Idaho (USA). TMP has been featured in The New York Times, Dance Magazine, and on PBS NewsHour, and has earned coast-to-coast acclaim in the American media. In 2013, TMP expanded its artistic vision and undertook a crowd-sourced documentary film entitled Ma Maison.

Trey is the recipient of numerous awards, including a Choo San Goh Award for Choreography and a Lifetime Achievement Award from The National Society of Arts and Letters, as well as two grants for choreography from the National Endowment for the Arts. His works have been performed by companies such as Stuttgart Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Hubbard Street Dance (Chicago), New York City Ballet, The Washington Ballet, and Oregon Ballet Theatre.

The music

Peter Pan is set to a score of music by English composer, Sir Edward Elgar (1857 – 1934), arranged by American-born Niel DePonte.

Elgar was arguably the leading English composer of his generation, and a significant figure among late Romantic European musicians. Known for his ability to combine nobility and spirituality with a popular style, Elgar's canon includes large scale works and dozens of lighter pieces, each finely crafted and distinguished by melodic charm.

To create the score for Peter Pan, DePonte searched for compositions by Elgar that were beautiful and evocative, but not necessarily widely known. The final score features all or part of 22 pieces by Elgar, including Wand of Youth, Suites 1 & 2 for the opening scenes of Act I; and In the South Overture for Peter's victory over Captain Hook in Act III.

Speaking about his decision to avoid using the most familiar Elgar melodies, DePonte says, "You will not hear excerpts from either the Enigma Variations, or Pomp and Circumstance March. The reason for this is twofold. First, an audience might already associate this music with specific visual imagery, and I didn't want those associations to transfer over to Peter Pan. Second, I wanted an opportunity to introduce audiences to the 'other' Elgar – the one whose violin solo from the Crown of India Suite (heard during Peter and Wendy's 2nd Act pas de deux) is breathtakingly, achingly, beautiful."

The History

The story of Peter Pan is over 100 years old. Every child since its creation practically can tell you a version of the story from memory. The widely popular story, written by J.M. Barrie, has been represented by many art forms including movies, cartoons, television, ballet, musical theatre and fine art. In 1904, Barrie staged a children's play that was hugely successful. He donated the copyright and all of the proceeds to the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children so that generations of children could receive help and continue to grow. His original production is still performed to this day.

The ballet is relatively new and today, there are many versions of Peter Pan being performed. Many productions exist with entirely different music and choreography, but one thing remains the same – the story (with minor variations). The ballet is just as colourful and exciting as the story itself.

Media enquiries

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Behind the scenes at QB

If you're just getting to know QB, our fan pages on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest and Instagram are a great way to keep up-to-date with what the Company is doing, both behind the scenes and on the stage.

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Photography**

Queensland Ballet dancers Rian Thompson and Vito Bernasconi, photo by Georges Antoni

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