

QueenslandBallet

Media Release

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Queensland Ballet announces new dancers for 2016

Queensland Ballet will next year welcome four new Company Dancers and seven new Young Artists as it looks forward to an exciting program of dance in the new year.

Artistic Director Li Cunxin said he was delighted to have four brand new dancers joining the Company along with a number of dancers who have been promoted through the Company's training programs.

"I'm very proud of our 2015 Young Artists David Power, Liam Geck and Georgia Swan who have been promoted to the rank of Company Dancer for next year," Mr Li said.

"These talented young dancers have consistently demonstrated their skill, talent and commitment during their time as Young Artists with the Company and I'm looking forward to seeing them grow even further as dancers next year.

"We will also be welcoming a new Company Dancer from the Liaoning Ballet in China, ZuQuan Kou. I first saw Kou dance at the Beijing International Ballet and Choreography Competition (BIBCC) that I was judging earlier this year.

"Kou won the gold medal at the competition and was certainly stood out as a remarkable dancer. I'm excited about the skill and talent that Kou will bring to Queensland Ballet."

Mr Li also announced seven new Jette Parker Young Artists joining the Company from both within the training programs and from external ballet schools.

"I'm so pleased to see great talent coming through from our Jette Parker Young Artist Program, an elite apprenticeship program that fosters young dancers at the start of their professional career," he said.

"It is always our hope that our training programs will develop dancers to a professional level so I'm delighted to see Harley Campbell, Zoe Doonar, Harry Davis and Samuel Packer graduate from our Pre Professional Program into Young Artists this year.

"I look forward to seeing them develop even more skill, artistry and technique as they dance with the Company next year."

Mr Li also announced three new dancers as Jette Parker Young Artists as part of the program's commitment to offering international dancers the opportunity to work with the Company.

"We will welcome Wu Ze, a young Chinese dancer who I first saw perform at the BIBCC this year. I was immediately impressed with his dancing, " he said.

"Yayoi Matches is a young New Zealand/Japanese dancer who stood out in our Brisbane auditions for the Company and she joins us from New Zealand School of Dance.

"Tim Neff, a German dancer from the Zurich Dance Academie will also join our Young Artists and comes with a considerable amount of experience for his years."

The Jette Parker Young Artists Program is enabled by the visionary support of the Oak Foundation, the Patricia MacDonald Foundation, the Frazer Family Foundation, and Lynne Harvey.



"Along with this wonderful news of new dancers joining the QB family, there are our inevitable farewells as some of our dancers move on to explore new opportunities.

"We are always sad to see any of our dancers leave but at the same time we celebrate their contribution to our Company and look forward with interest to see what their future achievements will be."

Principal Dancer Hao Bin will leave this year after four and a

half years with Queensland Ballet.

"Bin has been a key member of our Company since joining us as a Soloist in July 2011. His remarkable talent shone through straight away and he was quickly promoted to Principal by the end of that year.

"He has danced lead roles in all of our main stage productions since joining the Company and always brings such a high standard of dance to the stage. We wish him every success as he leaves to pursue other opportunities and hope he stays involved with Queensland Ballet for many years to come."

Company Dancers Sarah Thompson, Mia Thompson and Nathan Brook will also not return in 2016 as they seek opportunities to dance with other companies. Nathan Brook moves on to join The Australian Ballet in 2016.

"Sarah, Mia and Nathan are all wonderful dancers who have been a vital part of our Company and I know they'll be successful in whatever they do."

2015 Young Artists Phebe Murison, Ari Thompson and Atau Watanabe will leave the Company at the end of the 2015 season.

"I would like to thank all of our dancers for delivering such a successful season 2015. It has been a year of highlights as we've staged sold out productions, enjoyed a highly successful London tour and broken box office records.

"Our dancers are of course key to this success and always bring such a high level of dedication, professionalism, artistry and technique to all that we offer our audiences.

"We're thoroughly excited about what Season 2016 has to offer and I feel like our Company is in a strong position to deliver our best season yet."

Biographies of new dancers

Zuquan Kou

Kou began his training and career at Liaoning Ballet School in 2003. He has been a Soloist with Liaoning Ballet since 2009 and won the Classical Ballet Solo Best New Comer Award at the International Ballet and Choreography Competition (IBCC) in 2011 and the Gold Award in 2015.

Tim Neff

Tim trained at the State Ballet School of Berlin and has danced with Zurich Dance Academie since 2013. He has both classical and contemporary dance experience.

Yayoi Gabrielle Matches

Yayoi began her ballet training at Ponsonby School of Dance and has danced with New Zealand School of Dance since 2013. She has been part of the Royal New Zealand Ballet Trainee Program in 2015 and was a Youth America Grand Prix top 20 finalist this year.

Ze Wu

Ze has studied at the Shenyang Dance School in China since 2009. Ze received the second prize at the 11th Korean Ballet competition in 2014.

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Photography**

Principal Hao Bin in Ben Stevenson's *Cinderella* 2013. Photo David Kelly.

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