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## THE AUSTRALIAN DANCE AWARDS RETURN!

### Announcement of the 2018 and 2019 shortlisted nominees

Ausdance has pleasure in announcing the return of the Australian Dance Awards for the first time since 2018. In 2020 Ausdance National elected a new [board](#), fully committed to supporting the dance industry with political advocacy and representation to government, information and advice, and specialist industry products such as AON insurance. The board also committed to returning the Australian Dance Awards to the annual dance calendar.

The Australian Dance Awards celebrate the rich diversity and uniqueness of dance in Australia with national companies, performers and collaborating artists, dedicated studio, school and tertiary teachers, regional and remote artists, independents and astounding youth and community dance groups. Ausdance has always championed the importance and visibility of cultural diversity in dance, and has continued to advocate for diverse voices, building on a strong commitment to an excellent and equal dance ecosystem.

The annual Awards recognise and honour professional Australian dance artists who have made outstanding achievements that raise the profile and prestige of dance in Australia. This year's Awards span these achievements across 2018 and 2019.

### Online event details

The Australian Online Dance Awards will be presented by Ausdance National to promote the art form, raise the profile of Australian artists and celebrate excellence on Tuesday, 8 December 2020 at 7.30 pm AEST (6.30 in Qld, 7pm in SA & NT, 4.30 pm in WA).

**Lifetime Achievement Awards for 2018 and 2019** will be announced on **26 November**

**SHORTLISTED NOMINEES:**

**2018 OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN COMMUNITY DANCE**

**Karma Dance for *Bent Hollywood***, a work that pushes the boundaries of classical Indian dance, capturing the depth and eloquence of its art and culture in this controversial work.

**RIPE Dance for *In a Different Space***, a work that challenges notions of ageism, fear of ageing and body image, and featuring seniors aged 60 to 101 years dancing their stories in places of significance to them.

**Emma Saunders for *Austinmer Dance Project***, an extraordinarily large-scale outdoor site-specific work of joy performed on New Year's Day 2018 on Austinmer Beach, NSW.

**Tracks Dance for *In Your Blood***, a joyous and exceptionally realised dance work performed in the Darwin Botanic Gardens as an exquisite celebration of tradition, family and the collective.

**2019 OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN COMMUNITY DANCE**

**Chunky Move, Yellow Wheel, and Tasdance for *SIMULCAST***, a work that was visually beautiful and aesthetically satisfying, as young, old, trained and untrained dancers worked together to create this murmuration in Melbourne and Bendigo.

**Dance My Story for *Dance My Story***, a work made by Rita Pryce with community members in a theatrical performance exploring issues of domestic violence and how the cycle can be broken.

**Fine Lines for *The Right***, an intergenerational mature dance collective that presented a serious work about sacrifice for the greater good, explored through the lens of contemporary politics.

**Transit Dance for *Hometown***, a work designed to bring contemporary dance to regional areas, following a 4 day-workshop and choreographic experience for young people.

**2018 OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN YOUTH DANCE**

**Ballet Theatre of Queensland for *The Little Mermaid***, an entertaining production choreographed by Timothy Brown, supported by outstanding set, costumes and lighting design.

**FLING Physical Theatre for *Body & Environment***, an ambitious and surprising new work showcasing a high level of performance skills in this group of young artists, demonstrating a sense of confidence and maturity.

**Merge Dance Theatre for *Dis/Connect***, an eye-opening and memorable performance that leaves audiences reflecting on the impact of technology and screen-time on our lives.

**Stompin for *Mirror Mirror***, a work that looks into young peoples' identity and sense of self through the filter of social media and self-reflection, and questions how often they see others in themselves.

## 2019 OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN YOUTH DANCE

**Brooke Leeder & Dancers for *RADAR***, a work of scale that brought together five independent dancers and 23 student dancers from John Curtin College of the Arts in a production that exemplified best-practice in mentoring the next generation.

**Emma Saunders for *Encounter South***, a work celebrating youth, diversity and inclusivity in a radical approach to youth dance-making that captured young dancers' stories to help us to see the familiar in unfamiliar ways.

**FLING Physical Theatre for *My Black Dog***, a powerful project designed to support the mental health of young people living in regional, rural and remote locations, seeking to break down stigma and generate conversation about the issue.

**QL2 Youth Dance for *Filling the Space***, an exceptionally mature performance that explored dimensions of space and its potent significance to the world of dance – physically, emotionally, and architecturally.

## 2018 AWARD FOR SERVICES TO DANCE EDUCATION

**Vicki Attard** for her work as a former principal with The Australian Ballet who has since devoted her life to passing on her extraordinary artistic and technical knowledge as a teacher.

**Meredith Blackburn** for commitment to the value of dance education, challenging students to push boundaries and inspiring generations of young dance artists.

**Karen Malek** for her inspirational work as a dance teacher for over 40 years, and as the President of the Australian Teachers of Dancing as a pivotal figure in dance education in Australia.

**Pepa Molina** for her work in bringing a real sense of Flamenco to Australia, making the art form accessible to Australians with her passionate and deep knowledge of the form.

## 2019 AWARD FOR SERVICES TO DANCE EDUCATION

**Sheru Bharadwaja** for raising the profile of street dance in Australia, promoting an understanding of vernacular styles to dance educators and delivering engaging programs for dancers with disabilities.

**Sue Fox** for her role as co-writer of state and national arts curriculum documents, including *The Australian Curriculum: The Arts*, as a founder of the Ausdance Educators Queensland group, and as a key member of the National Advocates for Arts Education.

**Katy McKeown** for her role as Head of The Australian Ballet's Education & Outreach Program, delivering high quality equitable dance experiences to children across the country and for the creation of the STEAMDANCE program.

**Wendy Smith** for her role as one of the pioneers of Skinner Release Technique, and for shaping dancers with a sense of anatomical awareness, so crucial for this pedagogy.

## 2018 AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN CHOREOGRAPHY

**Narelle Benjamin & Paul White for *Cella***, a defining and moving work in a stunning meditation on the wonders of the human body.

**Stephanie Lake for *Colossu***, an exhilarating and unforgettable contemporary dance work exploring relationships between the individual and the collective.

**Alice Topp for *Aurum***, a compelling and captivating work of choreographic scope and diversity, establishing a powerful connection with the audience, and a breathtaking performance by The Australian Ballet.

**Anouk Van Dijk for *Common Ground***, an intricate choreographic game of chess for two extraordinary performers, and evoking dualism, equality and betrayal.

## 2019 AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN CHOREOGRAPHY

**Rafael Bonachela for *Cinco*** a work that explores the musical texture of a Ginastera String Quartet with the gifted dancers of the Sydney Dance Company performing a technically complex and intricate work.

**Stephanie Lake for *Skeleton Tree***, a riveting, hypnotic dance work that explores relationships between the individual and the collective, solitary striving and joyous union through dance, music and theatre in an emotional and nuanced work.

**Garry Stewart for *South***, a theatrical work that evokes Mawson's tragic Antarctic expedition of 1912 performed by nine dancers with Stewart's virtuosic movement vocabulary and a challenging set of large moveable white cubes.

**Marina Tamayo and Aitor Hernandez Sanzano for *Emerald***, a work choreographed for two bravura dancers combining traditional flamenco in a contemporary format in a dance of intensity, intricacy, and passion.

## 2018 AWARD FOR SERVICES TO DANCE

**Erica Rose Jeffrey** for her work in establishing Dance for Parkinson's Australia in 2012 with over 40 class programs now existing around the nation.

**Valerie Lawson** for her work as a Walkley Award-winning journalist who has devoted much of her life advocating for, and writing about, dance in Australia.

**Marina Tamayo** for her work as a Spanish dance practitioner who creates opportunities for remote, urban and international community engagement in performance and education.

**Paul Wakelam** for his work in designing for Australian dance as a collaborator, curator, sponsor and passionate exponent of the boundless relationship between dance and architecture.

## 2019 AWARD FOR SERVICES TO DANCE

**Philippe Charluet** for over 30 years of filming Australian dance productions from some of the country's most outstanding companies and choreographers, in particular for his documentation of the work of Graeme Murphy and Janet Vernon in his *Heritage Collection*.

**Mark Dyson** for excellence in lighting design, working between the spaces of light, dark and movement, enabling the choreographer to tell powerful stories on stage.

**Sidney Saltner** for his outstanding contribution to dance over three decades, and for his leadership as a benchmark for other First Nations peoples, enabling enduring social and cultural benefits for young people.

#### 2018 AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN DANCE ON FILM OR NEW MEDIA

**Lisa Maris McDonell** for *Softly Softly*, a film based on journal entries by one of historic house Meroogal's former owners.

**Lucy Doherty** for *Reminiscence*, the third instalment of an ongoing short dance film series exploring and unravelling her experience with loss and grief after losing her mother Jane in 2014.

**Richard James Allen & Karen Pearlman** for *Digital Afterlives*, a witty and whimsical meditation on free will, identity and the afterlife made through the collision of dance, digital code, and Franz Liszt.

**RIPE Dance** for *In a Different Space*, an inspirational dance film combining beauty, humour, serenity, and cheekiness in equal measure.

#### 2019 AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN DANCE ON FILM OR NEW MEDIA

**Sophie Bender** for *Endo Girl*, a visually deluxe blend of dance and film, educating viewers on an important and unknown disease with beautiful scoring, colour grading and attention to detail in choreography that enhance the difficult commentary.

**Jen Brown** for *Sky Song*, capturing an extraordinary improvisational moment in a sensitive and evocative work at Mt Stromlo, where the burnt-out shell of the old observatory and moon map are integral to the dance and images.

**Claire Marshall** for *SHIFT*, an innovative film that is proof of her mastery of the art form, and for her ability to move an audience through choreography, direction, design and editing.

**Samaya Wives** for *Oten*, a film that speaks to an integral facet of human nature: our imperfections, yet the slow cadence and dreamy expressiveness of the text provide a moment of stillness, a chance to see the beauty in these so-called 'flaws.'

#### 2018 AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN COMMERCIAL DANCE, MUSICALS, OR PHYSICAL THEATRE

**Circa Contemporary Circus** for *En Masse*, a presentation of two visions of humanity at its extremes, conveying a powerful life and death struggle between group and victim.

**Circa Contemporary Circus** for *Circa's Peepshow*, an exhilarating ride into the bizarre recesses of the mind in a mesmerising acrobatic performance of teetering towers of bodies and precarious aerials.

**The Farm** for *The Tide*, a work that explores the impact of climate change with two outstanding performers, Gavin Webber and Joshua Thomson, transforming a tough reality into a place of optimism and compassion.

## 2019 AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN COMMERCIAL DANCE, MUSICALS, OR PHYSICAL THEATRE

**High Kix** for *Frou Frou to Fruition*, a colourful and energetic cabaret set in Lucky's Speakeasy, created, and choreographed by Kim Degenhart and Amy Orinan in collaboration with the cast.

**Opera Australia** for *West Side Story*, for bringing back to the stage this classic dance musical and making it seem as relevant today as it did when we first saw it in Australia in the 1960s.

**STRUT Dance** for *SUNSET*, a major commissioned event that took audiences on a magical and haunting journey through one of Perth's heritage listed buildings.

**The Farm** for *Throttle*, a piece created by Gavin Webber and Grayson Millwood that takes us on a tyre-squealing journey to a drive-in showground near you, complete with human road kill, the walking undead and zombies.

## 2018 AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN INDEPENDENT DANCE

**Anything is Valid Dance Theatre** for *Dust on the Shortbread*, a powerful and moving work that takes an intimate look at the impact of dementia on relationships.

**Clare Dyson** for *ALONE TOGETHER*, a work that focuses on themes of loneliness and being alone, placing the audience into moments of 'aloneness' to physically experience the work.

**Liz Lea** for *RED*, a brave and confronting work in a multi-media setting performed with strength, courage and clarity and showing the power of dance to transmit a very human message.

**Vicki Van Hout** for *plenty serious TALK TALK*, a work that explores the consultative process in Indigenous art making, inviting the audience to appreciate the full complexity of negotiating culture across disciplines, genres, and eras.

## 2019 AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN INDEPENDENT DANCE

**Australian Dance Party** for *From the Vault*, a powerfully danced production that was an immersive experience for the audience with exceptional creative input from the whole collaborative team, including dramaturgy, lighting, design, and music.

**Laura Boynes** for *Wonder Woman*, a work that draws attention to the potent presence of a solo female dancer whose less visible strengths and powers are celebrated in a staging of the 'severalness' of femininity.

**Scott Elstermann** for *Act 2 Scenes 1-4*, a wonderfully comic interpretation of Wes Anderson's 'Grand Budapest Hotel' and for its effective animation, capturing the cartoon-like nature of The Grand Budapest Hotel's many fight scenes.

**Lewis Major** for *Epilogue*, a hypnotic performance where modernity and tradition interact in perfect harmony in a meditation on classicism and the role that beauty has played in the shaping of the Western canon.



### 2018 AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE BY A FEMALE DANCER

**Narelle Benjamin for *Cella***, an extraordinarily moving and physically demanding performance with Paul White, in an exploration of how the human body can transform and evolve in the imagination.

**Anca Frankenhäuser for *MIST***, for a truly remarkable performance in a duet with violinist Kailin Yong in which gesture and facial expression joined forces with movement and sound to create a stunning and intimate comment on life.

**Carina Roberts for *Dracula*** by West Australian Ballet, for a role that was exceptionally well-performed in the dual roles of Mina and Elizabeth, bringing softness and strength to the roles.

**Charmene Yap for *Ab(Intra)*** with Sydney Dance Company, for an exemplary performance, and for her ability, with maturity and emotional investment, to allow the audience to be swept up in the power and the beauty of the moment.

### 2019 AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE BY A FEMALE DANCER

**Marlo Benjamin for *The Skeleton Tree*** with Stephanie Lake Co., for a performance that was powerful and heartfelt with a rare combination of incredible technical prowess and a depth of feeling, strength and bravery.

**Niharika Senapati for *Precipice*** by Rachel Arianne Ogle, for a performance in this challenging work that was dynamic and compelling, demonstrating her trademark mix of strength and fluidity.

**Alexa Tuzil for *Giselle*** by West Australian Ballet, for a performance that belied her youth in an emotionally charged and technically assured interpretation, especially in the 'mad scene' in which she oscillated between teary recollection and wild-eyed disbelief.

**Josephine Weise for *The Dinner Party*** by Australasian Dance Collective, for a role in which she danced with impressive strength, technique, and character as The Insecure Party Girl, in constant motion as her character gained confidence and control over the course of the work.

### 2018 AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE BY A MALE DANCER

**Victor Estevez for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*** by Queensland Ballet, a thrilling manifestation of Shakespeare's conniving King Oberon, commanding the stage and everyone on it through dazzling choreographic waves and cycles, and compelling acting.

**Matthew Lehmann for *Dracula*** with West Australian Ballet in an outstanding world premiere of flair, power and convincing personification of Young Count Dracula, revealing his inner turmoil, conflict and attempts to resist his dark urges.

**Oscar Valdes for *La Sylphide*** with West Australian Ballet, an elegant, authentic interpretation of the charming James in this 1836 classic tale of love and loss, filled with wonderfully crisp batterie and lofty allegro.

**Kimball Wong for *The Beginning of Nature*** with Australian Dance Theatre, for a brilliant demonstration of his innate ability to combine strength and technique with rich artistry and emotion in this symphony of overlapping rhythms of nature and life.

### 2019 AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE BY A MALE DANCER

**Tyrel Dulvarie for *30 years of 65,000*** by Bangarra Dance Theatre, in an outstanding performance celebrating Bangarra Dance Theatre's thirtieth anniversary, especially for his transfixing dancing in *Unaipon*, the opening work on this triple bill program.

**Harrison Elliott for *South*** with Australian Dance Theatre, an excellent performance in a challenging role as Antarctic explorer Douglas Mawson, demanding strength, dexterity in risky solos, alternately precise and explosive, expressing both strength and vulnerability.

**Ryan Pearson for *Stamping Ground*** with Bangarra Dance Theatre, a performance danced as if born to it, darting like a polymorphous creature, flick-flacking, or courting a female, his virtuosity, fluidity, and commanding presence were exhilarating.

**Andrew Searle for *The Line*** with Co:3 Australia, for outstanding artistry in a work echoing a racist and painful past, a riveting display of strength and conviction that suggests trauma is part of what drives people on.

### 2018 AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE BY A COMPANY

**Australian Dance Theatre for *The Beginning of Nature***, a work full of intense theatricality, danced to an evocative score by Brendan Woithe, and with exceptional Indigenous references to the Kurna language of the Adelaide Hills.

**Bangarra Dance Theatre for *Dark Emu***, a performance that is nothing short of virtuosic, beautifully fluid and exploring the vital life force of flora and fauna in a series of dance stories inspired by Bruce Pascoe's book of the same name.

**Marrugeku for *Le Dernier Appel***, an extraordinary dance-drama work of daring solos and cluster dances that pour out grief and frustration with alarming ferocity, a harrowing call for freedom in this divided paradise of Noumea.

**West Australian Ballet for *Milnjiya, Milky Way – River of Stars*** in association with Perth Festival, a collaboration between Gary Lang NT Dance Company, Miku Performing Arts, and also starring Deborah Cheetham in a performance that was delicate and inspiring.

### 2019 AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE BY A COMPANY

**Australian Dance Theatre for *South***, a work that was compelling and engrossing to watch, stunningly danced and brilliantly conceived: A major collaborative initiative using aspects of the Kurna language and culture, with an exceptional original score.

**Bangarra Dance Theatre for *30 Years of 65,000***, a work that celebrated the company's 30<sup>th</sup> birthday, immersing itself in magical choreography and the formidable challenge of Jiri Kylian's *Stamping Ground* in this unique homage to Indigenous culture.

**Restless Dance Theatre for *Zizanie***, a work by Meryl Tankard in which the artists of Restless Dance Theatre celebrate the beauty of difference, full of good spirit, lively imagination, warm heart and sweet hope.

**STRUT Dance for *SUNSET***, a work that took audiences on a magical and haunting journey through one of Perth's heritage listed buildings, with a sense of falling down a rabbit hole into a world of ghosts and memories.



**Presenters**

David McAllister AM, Artistic Director, The Australian Ballet

Wesley Enoch AM, Director of the Sydney Festival

Lucy Durack, star of musical theatre

Ella Havelka, dancer and choreographer, The Australian Ballet

**Selection Panel**

Ausdance thanks the ADAs [selection panel](#), made up of dance professionals from all states and territories representing educators, independent artists, dance companies, writers and critics, administrators, and youth and community dance specialists.

Enquiries: [Julie Dyson](#) (0412 211 513) or [Katy McKeown](#) (0481 956 091)

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