

THURSDAY 20 JULY 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

QL2 Dance set for a new chapter

After 25 years as Artistic Director of QL2 Dance, and a national career spanning five decades, Ruth Osborne – renowned Australian choreographer, director, mentor, and advocate of youth dance practice – is stepping down. A gradual transition/handover period is planned for the organisation across the next 12 months.

Celebrating 25 years in 2023, QL2 Dance (Ngunnawal and Ngambri Country/Canberra) grew from the Australian Choreographic Centre in the late 1990s. Acting Justice Richard Refshauge, Chair of the Board said, “Invited to Canberra by the Director of the Australian Choreographic Centre, the insightful Mark Gordon, Ruth Osborne, by her vision, extraordinary knowledge of and experience in dance and her hard work, created, nurtured and grew QL2 Dance. It has become a leader nationally and internationally in youth dance practice and a supportive hub for growing and strengthening contemporary dance in Canberra.”

Julie Dyson AM, has been connected to Ruth as a friend and colleague for many years: “Ruth Osborne has been a guiding light in dance for young people for as long as I can remember. Her extraordinary legacy lives on in the company’s impressive alumni, many of whom are now professional dance artists themselves, both in Australia and overseas.”

In Ruth’s words, “It’s going to take some time to find the right words to express my experience of working with so many young people over the past years. When I stop to reflect, I feel overwhelmed to think about the thousands of journeys of which I have been part – and how many of these young artists are now friends and colleagues, doing incredible things.”

Daniel Riley, Artistic Director of the Australian Dance Theatre, was a member of QL2 Dance in its earliest days: “I am very fortunate to be one of many, many practising Australian artists and arts workers who were introduced to the world of contemporary dance by Ruth. She opened our eyes and minds to it as an art form for communication, as a potential career path and most importantly, introduced many emerging young artists to the warm and supportive dance community, that many of us now work within. Her deep love for youth dance and her strong belief in the potential of young artists is unmatched in this country.”

Award-winning Canberran author Emma Batchelor was deeply involved with QL2 Dance as a young person, “Ruth, together with everyone who is and has been involved with QL2, is responsible for nurturing hundreds of successful artists. I will always be grateful for the creative spark she nurtured within me and the impact QL2’s programs have had on my career.”

Gorman Arts Centre
55 Ainslie Ave, Braddon ACT 2612
Canberra, Australia

TEL 02 62473103
EMAIL admin@QL2.org.au
ABN 78 745 535 672

OUR PATRONS
Rafael Bonachela
AD, Sydney Dance Company
Professor Shirley McKechnie AO

QL2.org.au

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Richard also shares, “Ruth’s legacy is the profile that she has given to youth dance and the alumni who have flourished under her. Many have become and contributed as leaders, choreographers and dancers of stature in dance in Australia and beyond or, if not, have had the opportunity to discover, explore and cherish their own creativity, which has made them better citizens.”

In recent years, QL2 Dance has expanded its reach to nurture and support the practice of independent artists. Today, QL2 Dance is the national centre for youth dance and a dance hub for the ACT, with a comprehensive program of productions, projects and residencies designed to nurture, support and connect young, emerging and professional artists.

Acknowledging this unique and increasing breadth of programming, the Board of QL2 Dance has deeply considered the future of the organisation and is pleased to announce Alice Lee Holland as the incoming Artistic Director.

After an early career immersed in youth dance practice in Western Australia, Alice has worked more recently with significant Australian arts companies including Dancenorth Australia, Circa Contemporary Circus and Chunky Move. “I am inspired by the strength of QL2 Dance – built by Ruth and her team over the past 25 years. I am truly thrilled at the opportunity to take the company into its next chapter,” Alice says.

Ruth is delighted that Alice has agreed to come on board. “The past 25 years have been incredibly fulfilling – and hard work! The Board and I are proud of the growth of the organisation and felt it was necessary to find the right person to continue this important work. We are confident that Alice’s knowledge, understanding and experience will allow her to find a fresh direction for QL2 Dance, while honouring its history.”

Looking to the future, Richard shares, “We hope that, on her transition, Ruth will remain a valued member of the QL2 family, making an amazing contribution in her own way.”

Daniel Riley’s gratitude is echoed by so many Australian artists whose lives have been changed by Ruth, “I am incredibly grateful for my relationship with Ruth, and to have been guided by her. I wish her well as she steps away from QL2, and onto her next adventure, surrounded by her family, and send her my deep thanks and respect.”

CONTACT:

Amélie Langevin, General Manager

amelie@langevin@ql2.org.au

(02) 6247 3103

