



Media release

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NEW ZEALAND DANCER AND DIRECTOR RETURNS HOME TO LEAD ROYAL NEW ZEALAND BALLET

The Royal New Zealand Ballet (RNZB) has today announced the appointment of its new Artistic Director, New Zealander Ty King-Wall.

Born in Waihi, King-Wall moves from his current role of Dancers' Director on the Board of The Australian Ballet to the RNZB in November.

Trained at Tauranga's Dance Education Centre and as a Junior Associate with the New Zealand School of Dance, King-Wall won the 2002 PACANZ National Young Performer Award before leaving Aotearoa New Zealand to study at The Australian Ballet School, where he graduated Dux with Honours.

He won the silver medal at the 2005 Asia Pacific International Ballet Competition, was accepted into The Australian Ballet in 2006, won Australia's prestigious Telstra Ballet Dancer Award in 2010, and was promoted to Principal Artist with The Australian Ballet in 2013. His choreographic debut, *The Art of War*, was performed as part of The Australian Ballet's *Bodytorque* season in 2013.

RNZB Chair Dame Kerry Prendergast says, "The appointment of Ty alongside our recent announcement of Tobias Perkins as Executive Director completes and secures our senior leadership team. It is a ballet 'brains trust' of strong arts leaders who have industry virtuosity, global views but local understanding, and with the broad minds and big hearts to guide New Zealand's national ballet company in its forward trajectory and into the future."

On returning home to take up the top artistic job at Aotearoa New Zealand's national ballet company, King-Wall says, "It is such an honour to be the next Artistic Director of The Royal New Zealand Ballet, the company I grew up with and the company which first inspired me to become a dancer. I've always admired the Royal New Zealand Ballet's ability to defy expectations, to create beyond what seemed possible through their tenacity and aroha for the art form. There is so much possibility in front of us, and the prospect of building towards this together with Tobias is very exciting. I cannot wait to get into the studio and begin the mahi with the dancers, the artistic team, and the entire Royal New Zealand Ballet whānau. Ngā mihi nui kia koutou katoa."

He performed featured roles throughout his 17-year dance career, including Prince Désiré in *The Sleeping Beauty*, Prince in *The Nutcracker* and *Cinderella*, Franz in *Coppelia*, Pinkerton in *Madame Butterfly*, Lensky in *Onegin*, Prince Siegfried in *Swan Lake*, James in *La Sylphide*, Oberon in *The Dream*, Basilio in *Don Quixote*, Solor in *La Bayadere*, Jack/the Knave in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Danilo in *The Merry Widow*, Albrecht in *Giselle*, and Vronsky in *Anna Karenina*. He performed with The Australian Ballet in Paris, London, New York, Tokyo and Beijing; danced as Principal Guest Artist with the



Royal New Zealand Ballet as part of the RNZB's 60th anniversary celebrations in 2013; and with Houston Ballet. He retired from The Australian Ballet in 2022.

Currently a teacher with The Australian Ballet School, King-Wall has also taught for New Zealand School of Dance, National Theatre Ballet School, and the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, and is the Founding Director of Tailored Ballet Coaching, a Melbourne-based ballet coaching clinic.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts (Classical Studies/Psychology) through Massey University, and a Master of Arts and Cultural Management through the University of Melbourne, for which he conducted Minor Thesis research on the career demographics and retirement motivations of professional ballet dancers.

RNZB Acting Artistic Director David McAllister says, "Huge congratulations to Ty. He has always been a passionate New Zealander and a fantastic artist, teacher, and advocate for our artform. I am sure he will be a devoted and inspiring leader for the RNZB and, along with Executive Director Tobias Perkins, will usher in an exciting future for the company."

RNZB Executive Director Tobias Perkins says, "The vision and energy Ty will bring to this role is utterly compelling and I am confident that under his leadership the company can look forward to a sustained period of artistic excellence. I very much look forward to working in partnership with Ty to realise his artistic vision for the company to the benefit of audiences across Aotearoa New Zealand."

King-Wall will move from Melbourne to Wellington and commence the role in mid-November.

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Media contact

For more information, images and interviews, please contact Siobhan Waterhouse, Publicist, on 022 126 4149 or siobhan.waterhouse@rnzb.org.nz

The Royal New Zealand Ballet

The Royal New Zealand Ballet (RNZB), the national ballet company of Aotearoa, was founded in 1953 by Danish dancer Poul Gnatt, as a touring professional ballet company for all New Zealanders. Based in Wellington, the Royal New Zealand Ballet is an intrinsic part of New Zealand's national heritage, and has one of the largest followings of all New Zealand performing arts companies. The Royal New Zealand Ballet continues to invest in live music, performing wherever possible with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Wellington and the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra. The RNZB enjoys a reputation for strong and unique interpretations of full-length dramatic works. The company has an enviable track record in commissioning new works from New Zealand and international choreographers.

2023 marks twenty years of RNZB Education, a year-round programme of events for schools, young dancers, ballet schools, and including prisons, which, since it began, has been experienced by hundreds of thousands of Kiwis of all ages. In the last ten years alone, RNZB Education has presented more than 4,000 in-person events, almost all free or low-cost, with more than 30,000 people now participating every year. Digital events have added hugely to this number, with more than 36,000 primary school children, through more than 400 teachers, accessing the Step Online digital dance resource in the first six months of 2022.