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Lucinda Dunn sets the barre with an Australian dance record

Principal artist celebrates 20 years en pointe with The Australian Ballet



Principal Artist Lucinda Dunn. Photograph James Braund.

This week, Principal Artist Lucinda Dunn celebrates an impressive milestone, notching up 20 consecutive years performing with The Australian Ballet. She now holds the record for the company's longest serving ballerina, an extraordinary achievement.

Lucinda joined the company on 29 July, 1991 at the age of 17, following years of classical training in London.

Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet David McAllister says Lucinda Dunn's career is history in the making.

"Lucinda has mesmerised audiences for two decades. Her talent, skill and strength on stage are just exceptional. She is an icon of Australian dance and a wonderful asset to the

ballet community," McAllister said.

Promoted to principal artist in 2002, Lucinda discovered a love of character roles that soon cemented her as a crowd favourite.

She has shone in a host of lead roles with The Australian Ballet both locally and abroad, including guest appearances with leading international ballet companies. Highlights of this period include creating Aurora in Stanton Welch's *The Sleeping Beauty* in 2005 and company tours to the UK, Europe and Japan. In 2005 Lucinda was awarded the Green Room Award for Best Female Dancer for her role in *Serenade* and *La Fille mal gardée*. In 2008 Lucinda won the Australian Dance Award for Outstanding Performance in *Nutcracker - The Story of Clara*.

In 2009, Lucinda and husband, Associate Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet, Danilo Radojevic, became proud parents of Lucinda's biggest fan – daughter Claudia.

2011 is a year of double celebration for Lucinda, who last month announced her second pregnancy. Lucinda will celebrate her milestone anniversary from side of stage as she prepares for the arrival of the newest addition to this growing ballet family. There is much for Lucinda to reflect on as well as excitement about the future.

"Being a ballerina and a mum is a challenge and a joy every day. I never imagined that I would have a career spanning 20 years to date. I'm so fortunate I have a job that fulfills and inspires me, with wonderful coaches, partners and audiences to share my journey," says Lucinda.

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Lucinda's most recent performance was as the Black Queen in *Checkmate* during the Sydney triple bill season *British Liaisons*. The Melbourne season of this program opens on 25 August at the Arts Centre.

Lucinda's 20th is just one of the major milestones The Australian Ballet will be celebrating. The company's 50th anniversary just around the corner in 2012.

LUCINDA DUNN

Lucinda received her early training in Sydney with Janece Graham and Tanya Pearson before going on to win a Prix de Lausanne scholarship to study at The Royal Ballet School, London. While in London she also performed with Birmingham Royal Ballet. In 1991 Lucinda joined The Australian Ballet and was promoted to principal artist in 2002.

She has also been awarded several scholarships to study overseas and has been partnered by many international guests of The Australian Ballet. A diverse and musical dancer with a strong technique, Lucinda excels in the pure classical ballets and enjoys portraying characters in story ballets, as well as the physicality of contemporary pieces.

REPERTOIRE HIGHLIGHTS

- Kitri in *Don Quixote*
- Aurora in Stanton Welch's *The Sleeping Beauty*
- Graeme Murphy's *Nutcracker - The Story of Clara*
- The Australian Ballet tours to London, Tokyo, Italy, Shanghai and New York.

GUEST APPEARANCES

- The Royal Danish Ballet
- Le Jeune Ballet de France

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- Birmingham Royal Ballet
- World Ballet Festival, Tokyo 2009, 2006
- Morphoses/The Wheeldon Company 2009

AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

- Helpmann Award nomination 2011, Best Female Dancer in a Dance or Physical Theatre Work for *Cinderella*
- Australian Dance Award for Outstanding Performance, 2008 for *Nutcracker - The Story of Clara*.
- Australian Dance Award for Outstanding Performance 2008
- Helpmann Award nomination for Dance Performer of the Year 2007 and 2004
- Green Room Award for Best Female Dancer, 2005 for *Serenade* and *La Fille mal gardée*
- Mo Award nomination for Dance Performer of the Year 2006, 2005 and 2001

WHAT THE CRITICS SAID

"Executing fiendish turning sequences with sparkling ease"

The Australian on *Peggy!*, June 2010

"Lucinda Dunn performs with the valiant sense of artistry we have come to expect."
 Sunday Herald Sun on *The Silver Rose, March* 2010

"Lucinda Dunn is a superstar."
 Sunday Herald Sun on *The Sleeping Beauty*, 2009

"Quite simply one of the most arresting dancers around"
 Daily Telegraph on *Les Sylphides*, 2009
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