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Andrew Killian, Amber Scott and Leanne Stojmenov step up

Ballet hat-trick as three dancers promoted to principal artist at The Australian Ballet

Audiences at the opening night of *British Liaisons* in Sydney experienced a triple treat tonight. It was revealed that a trio of dancers from The Australian Ballet had been promoted to the most senior rank of principal artist.

Artistic Director David McAllister made the surprise announcement onstage in front of a packed Sydney Opera House.

Senior Artists **Andrew Killian** (31, from Melbourne), **Amber Scott** (28, from Brisbane) and **Leanne Stojmenov** (30, from Perth) were completely unaware of their impending promotions until the good news was announced. The dancers were surrounded by colleagues as their families watched from the audience.

McAllister said the dancers would remember this night forever.

“Being promoted to principal artist is something most dancers dream about, and it’s been a joy to see how Andrew, Amber and Leanne have grown into beautiful and assured artists during their time with the company,” said McAllister.

“Their work is incredibly inspiring and they join an elite group of dancers whose collective and individual talents will carry us strongly into our 50th year in 2012.”

The announcement comes after three other dancers – Daniel Gaudiello, Kevin Jackson and Lana Jones – were promoted to principal artists in November 2010. Andrew, Amber and Leanne’s promotions come into effect immediately.

Audiences keen to catch a glimpse of the newest principal artists can do so throughout the remainder of the *British Liaisons*, which

runs in Sydney season until May 21.

Andrew is a dynamic and versatile dancer. In high demand by choreographers, he’s been cast in the majority of new works created in his time with the company. He is equally at home in the narrative story ballets with his dramatic portrayal of Lescault in 2008’s *Manon*, followed by the villainous Baron von Ochs in 2010’s *The Silver Rose*, demonstrating his impressive range.

Since winning the Telstra Ballet Dancer Award and People’s Choice Award double at just 21 years of age, Amber has matured into one of the company’s most admired ballerinas. Her heartbreaking interpretation of Odette in Graeme Murphy’s *Swan Lake* in 2004 showed that she was a dancer of great substance. The perfect combination of outward delicacy, combined with an inner emotional strength, has made her an audience favourite.

Leanne is a role model for all dancers, focused on perfecting every detail of her performance – a trait that translates into onstage magic. An innate intelligence and determination shines through in her memorable roles, such as the flamboyant Kitri in 2007’s *Don Quixote* and the playful Swanilda in last year’s *Coppélia*.

As the dancers celebrate this momentous occasion, The Australian Ballet prepares for a sensational second half of the year.

With the perennially popular production of *The Merry Widow* next on the calendar and a world premiere of Graeme Murphy’s *Romeo & Juliet* still to be unveiled, audiences can look forward to seeing these new principal artists in an array of exciting roles.

For all media enquiries, including interviews and images, please contact:

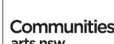
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ANDREW KILLIAN

"Immaculate and debonair"
Dance Australia

Melbourne-born Andrew, a student of The Australian Ballet School, joined The Australian Ballet in 2000 and was promoted to senior artist for the 2009 season. Andrew has been involved in the creation of many new works including Stephen Baynes' *Constant Variants* and Tim Harbour's *Wa*, and has performed in all of The Australian Ballet's *Bodytorque* seasons. In this creative process Andrew enjoys working closely with choreographers and offers a unique versatility that places him in high demand. Andrew has toured with The Australian Ballet to New Zealand, Japan, China, the UK and France. He was nominated for the Telstra Ballet Dancer Award in 2009.

AMBER SCOTT

"Amber is one of the most beautifully refined dancers to be seen on our stage"
Sunday Herald Sun

Amber was born in Brisbane and joined The Australian Ballet School at age eleven. Graduating as dux, Amber joined The Australian Ballet in 2001. A lyrical and musical dancer, Amber also relishes the virtuoso pieces with exacting technique, as well as contemporary ballets. Amber took home both the Telstra Ballet Dancer Award and People's Choice Award in 2004. Promoted to senior artist in 2008, Amber's career highlights so far include dancing with guest artist Robert Tewsley during the 2008 *Manon* season and performing *Odette* with Adam Bull in Europe in 2008.

LEANNE STOJMENOV

"Leanne whizzes around the stage in a whirl of intricate, delicate, razor-sharp footwork and the effect is blissful"
The Australian

Leanne was born and raised in Perth where she began her initial ballet training with Helen McKay. Her full-time training began at the Graduate College in 1993 and in 1999 she joined the West Australian Ballet. In 2001 Leanne left Perth to take up a position with The Australian Ballet. Receiving the New South Wales Friends of The Australian Ballet scholarship in 2004 enabled her to study throughout Europe. Leanne has impressed in a number of roles, to debuting as *Odette* in her hometown in 2009 to garnering rave reviews with her emotional portrayal of *Suzuki* in this year's *Madame Butterfly*. She was promoted to senior artist in 2009.

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