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Romeo & Juliet: love is a battlefield

Graeme Murphy's tragic masterpiece tours Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth in 2012

Following its 2011 world premiere, Graeme Murphy's *Romeo & Juliet* is set to sweep audiences off their feet across Australia with seasons in Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth.

Experience what *The Daily Telegraph* called "a game-changing ballet that leaves you begging for more" in **Brisbane from 23 March, Adelaide from 25 May and Perth from 10 October.**

With his trademark dramatic style, Murphy has transformed the world's most famous love story into something entirely new yet timeless. Murphy's heart-soaring choreography delves to the emotional core of Shakespeare's tragic tale and doesn't hold back.

The artistic director of The Australian Ballet, David McAllister, says the production is pure enchantment on stage.

"A great big, dramatic story ballet, *Romeo & Juliet* is a lavish production that takes audiences on an unforgettable journey. Having blown audiences away in Melbourne and Sydney, we can't wait to share Murphy's magic with Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth in our 50th anniversary year. It will also be a special joy for some of our finest dancers to perform to their home town crowds," said McAllister.

The Australian Ballet's 50th anniversary is a milestone all Australians can be proud of. Presenting up to 180 performances and over 500 education events each year, the company is one of the world's most prolific and progressive arts organisations. In 2012, The Australian Ballet will reach many corners of Australia through extensive national and regional touring, and by visiting more schools nationwide with the popular *Out There* program.

About the production

The ever-imaginative Murphy has shaped a whole new world for the famous star-crossed lovers. The central characters remain – the passionate but ill-advised Romeo, innocent and wilful Juliet, the overbearing families of Capulet and Montague, alongside fiery Mercutio, handsome Paris and deadly Tybalt.

But the action is not restricted to fair Verona. This book-to-ballet adaptation refuses to be defined by a particular era – a nod to the story's global themes of love, war, greed and factionalism.

If Murphy's masterful storytelling isn't enough, costumes by celebrated fashion designer Akira Isogawa will also delight. With over 300 pieces – comprised of 5,000 metres of assorted fabrics, from saris to snake leather, 1,000 Swarovski crystals, 2,000 sequins and 580 pairs of pointe shoes – the scale of this opulent production becomes clear.

Meanwhile, set designer Gerard Manion has used a hyper-real, vivid lily – a flower symbolic of death – as the opening backdrop. Bursting with colour, this motif suggests both beauty and death, encapsulating the deeper themes of *Romeo & Juliet*.

This work has been dedicated to living dance legend Dame Margaret Scott, a key player in the development of The Australian Ballet. She was the founding artistic director of The Australian Ballet School and discovered a young Murphy, nurturing him throughout his career as he moved from dance to choreography.

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Intrinsic to the mood of menace and foreboding is Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev's enduring 1935 score. Originally commissioned by the Kirov Ballet, it is one of ballet's most evocative pieces of music.

As Romeo himself declares: *"these violent delights have violent ends"*, and there can be no happy ending for the young couple.

This is ballet on a grand scale, encompassing love, death, betrayal and spirituality, with Murphy's signature modern take.

What the critics had to say about *Romeo & Juliet*:

"Visually splendid"
Sunday Herald Sun, 2011

"A wild ride you won't forget in a hurry"
The Daily Telegraph, 2011

"Brilliant"
Arts Hub, 2011

"Lavish and spectacular"
Dance International, 2011

"Murphy doesn't just surprise, he delights"
Crikey's 'Curtain Call', 2011

DATES

Brisbane 23 – 28 March

(6 performances)
presented in association with QPAC Lyric Theatre, Queensland Performing Arts Centre
with Queensland Symphony Orchestra

Adelaide 25 – 30 May

(6 performances)
Festival Theatre, Adelaide Festival Centre
with Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

Perth 10 – 14 October

(7 performances)
Burswood Theatre, Perth
with live orchestra

CREDITS

ROMEO & JULIET (2011)

Choreography Graeme Murphy
Creative associate Janet Vernon
Music Sergei Prokofiev
Costume design Akira Isogawa
Set design Gerard Manion
Lighting design Damien Cooper

Bookings

www.australianballet.com.au or
1300 369 741

Brisbane and Adelaide tickets available now.

Perth tickets on sale 22 March.

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