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Telstra Ballet in the Park comes to Canberra!

The Australian Ballet presents a free performance as part of its 50th anniversary

The Australian Ballet's 50th anniversary just wouldn't be complete without a visit to the nation's capital. Telstra Ballet in the Park will come to Canberra for one very special birthday party on **Friday 16 March 2012 at 7pm.**

This FREE performance will be held at Stage 88 at Commonwealth Park, with the beautiful vista of Lake Burley Griffin as the backdrop.

The evening will be a very special homecoming for Canberra-raised principal artists **Lana Jones** and **Rachel Rawlins**, set to wow audiences with the awe-inspiring dancing that has catapulted them to the top of the ballet ladder.

They'll be joined by Queanbeyan-born 2012 Telstra Ballet Dancer Award nominee, **Dimity Azoury** and the 2011 Telstra Ballet Dancer Award winner, **Chengwu Guo.**

A specially selected array of repertoire will be performed featuring many company highlights from throughout the decades, bound to thrill ballet fans of all ages.

Sumptuous divertissements from *La Favorita*, *Don Quixote*, *Giselle*, *The Nutcracker*, *Le Corsaire* and *Molto Vivace* will sit alongside an emotionally charged pas de trois from Graeme Murphy's 2002 masterpiece *Swan Lake*.

Finishing off the evening will be an excerpt from the Russian classic *La Bayadere*. Featuring twelve female dancers in a sea of white tutus, tiaras and tulle, *The Kingdom of the Shades* is a superb showcase of a strong corps de ballet with ensemble work that demands absolute precision.

Adding to the performance's ambience will be the outdoor setting of Commonwealth Park, a unique venue where the audience has the rare opportunity see the company's dancers up close.

The artistic director of The Australian Ballet, David McAllister, said it was important to visit as much of the country as possible in this milestone year.

"Over 50 years, we have cultivated a very loyal audience across the whole of Australia, so we wanted to ensure that we shared our anniversary celebrations far and wide," said McAllister.

"We have a long history of touring to Canberra, from our first visit in 1965 to recent visits from The Dancers Company. This free performance is our birthday present to our passionate Canberra supporters."

Principal Sponsor Telstra has sponsored the company's annual free outdoor performances since 2000, and has partnered with The Australian Ballet for a remarkable 28 years.

Telstra Country Wide Area General Manager, Capital South East, Chris Taylor, said they were proud to bring the company to Canberra.

"The Australian Ballet performances provide such inspiration, particularly for the many young aspiring dancers watching them in the audience. We hope that by making the performance free to the public we can encourage many more people to come see the company at their absolute best," said Mr Taylor.

Telstra Ballet in the Park will be a highlight of the 2012 Canberra Festival, a 17 day event (2-18 March) celebrating the city's 99th birthday and its culture and people through exhibitions, displays, sports, music, film, dance and theatre.

For media enquiries and interviews, please contact:

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In its 50th anniversary year, The Australian Ballet will also be touring to Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth, alongside seasons in Melbourne and Sydney and an international tour to New York in June.

It's estimated that over 270,000 will get to experience The Australian Ballet throughout the 50th anniversary year, proving that the art form is as vital and relevant as ever.

Event information

Telstra Ballet in the Park is a free event for everyone: bring family and friends and enjoy a spectacular evening of the very best that dance can offer. No tickets are required.

The performance will begin at **7pm sharp on Friday 16 March 2012.**

No glass, bottles, cans, audio and visual recording equipment can be brought into the venue. Food and beverages are available for purchase at the venue.

If the weather is inclement, please check australianballet.com.au at 3pm on Friday 16 March for updates.

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