

DON QUIXOTE

BIOGRAPHIES – The Creatives

Lucette Aldous – Choreographer (after Marius Petipa)

New Zealand-born Lucette Aldous trained in Brisbane and Sydney before entering the Royal Ballet School in 1955 on a Royal Academy of Dancing scholarship. In 1957 she began her professional career with Ballet Rambert. Following her time with Rambert she danced with London Festival Ballet and then with the Royal Ballet. During her time in England she danced the lead in many of the traditional classics, such as *Giselle*, *Coppelia* and *La Sylphide*, and appeared in many contemporary ballets including Antony Tudor's *Lilac Garden*. She first worked with Rudolf Nureyev during her time at the Royal Ballet, partnering him in *Nutcracker* during a European tour.

On her return to Australia in 1970 Aldous made her debut with the Australian Ballet as a guest artist, and the following year, 1971, was appointed a resident principal dancer. Her partnership with Nureyev developed at this time when Nureyev asked her to partner him in his production of *Don Quixote* for the Australian Ballet, which premiered in Adelaide on 28 March 1970. The role of Kitri particularly suited the vivacious, effervescent and technically accomplished Aldous and in 1973 she repeated her stage success as Kitri and as Nureyev's partner when the Australian Ballet filmed the Nureyev production of *Don Quixote*. Another milestone in her career occurred in 1975 when Ronald Hynd created the role of Valencienne on her in his production of *The Merry Widow* for the Australian Ballet. During the 1970s Aldous continued to guest with companies in England, America and Europe and had a featured role with Fernando Bujones in the film *The Turning Point*.

After retiring from full-time performing in the mid 1970s Aldous taught at the Australian Ballet School and then in 1982 joined the faculty of the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), Edith Cowan University, Perth. She and husband Alan Alder also spent a number of months in St Petersburg studying the teaching methods and philosophy behind the Vaganova system of training as espoused by the Kirov ballet school. Aldous has also been an advocate of Boris Kniazeff's floor barre as a system of training.

Now retired from full-time work at WAAPA, Aldous continues to live in Perth and to coach, adjudicate and teach. She received the award for services to dance at the 2001 Australian Dance Awards and in 2009 was honoured with the award for lifetime achievement. Lucette received an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from Edith Cowan University in 1999, and in 2008 she was made a Dame of the Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem.

Marius Petipa

Marius Petipa was born in Marseilles in 1822. His father Jean Antoine Petipa was a dancer, choreographer and teacher who brought up both Marius and his elder brother Lucien to be dancers.

In 1838 Marius Petipa became a principal dancer and studied with Auguste Vestris in Bordeaux. There he appeared as principal dancer in many ballets including *Giselle*, *la Fille mal Gardee* and *La Peri*. It was in Bordeaux that Petipa, still a teenager, began also to choreograph his own work. He spent the next four years in Spain as a dancer, and while there studied Spanish dance.

In 1847 he went to St. Petersburg where he was offered a contract for one year as a principal dancer. For his debut he helped mount Joseph Maziller's *Paquita* on the imperial stage.

Petipa learnt a great deal about the craft of choreography from Jules Perrot who came to St Petersburg in 1848 and was a choreographer of international stature. Petipa assisted him for many years in producing new ballets, and in 1858, at the age of 40, he began to make his name as a choreographer. Petipa was promoted to take charge of the Maryinsky Company in 1869, the year, which saw the premiere of his ballet *Don Quixote*.

Petipa produced ballets that were grand and luxurious spectacles, and often his ballets were linked to current events of fashions. For example *La Bayadere* was influenced by the widely reported journey of the Prince of Wales to India. Petipa's ballets contained a number of different thematic and choreographic elements: massed crowd scenes, character dances, classical dances that usually interrupted the storyline, dramatic and mimed encounters between the principal characters. Petipa often employed a mixture of mime and dancing.

Petipa spent 56 years with the one ballet company. He retired to southern Russia in 1907 and died in 1910.

Allan Lees – Sets & Costume Designer

Allan Lees' career has spanned a period of over fifty years as a designer for opera, ballet, theatre and musicals, and as a teacher and theatre consultant. His designs have been staged throughout Australia and in New Zealand, United States of America, England, Germany and Austria. Allan was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 2013 for his services to the performing arts.

Born in Dunedin, New Zealand, he was commissioned to design *Swan Lake* for the Royal Ballet's prima ballerina Svetlana Beriosova and invited to join the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust in Sydney. He was appointed Resident Designer of the Old Tote Theatre Company, fore-runner to the Sydney Theatre Company and later Head of Design for the National Institute of Dramatic Art. Awarded an Australia Council Artist Development Grant for further studies in Europe, he spent time at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden working with the esteemed opera director, John Copley. As an Associate Consultant he assisted in theatre consultancy with venues including the Adelaide Festival Centre, the Victorian Arts Centre in Melbourne and the Queensland Performing Arts Centre in Brisbane. Allan was also Consultant and General Manager of The State Opera House in Wellington.

Allan's recent designs include *Bierhalle*, choreographed by Ethan Stiefel for the Royal New Zealand Ballet, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Madama Butterfly*, and *Carmen* in New Zealand. In 2010 he designed the set and costumes for *Don Quixote* at His Majesty's Theatre in Perth for West Australian Ballet and in 2011 designed the set and costumes for *Who Killed Mario Lanza* at Riverside Parramatta and West Australian Ballet's new production of *Cinderella*.

A selection of Allan's costume designs were chosen for the international exhibition *Costume at the Turn of the Century 1990 – 2015* at the Bakhrushin State Central Theatre Museum, which took place from June to August 2015 in Moscow.

In 2015 Allan designed the costumes and backdrop for *Who Cares?*, part of the triple bill *Embraceable You – A Celebration of Balanchine* at West Australian Ballet and the New Zealand production of *Phantom of the Opera* continues its national tour with seasons in Christchurch, Invercargill, Dunedin and Auckland in 2016. He was also the costume designer for *Romeo and Juliet* with The Richmond Ballet, Virginia USA in February 2016.

Jon Buswell – Lighting Designer

Jon Buswell has designed lighting for well over one hundred productions in the United Kingdom, Europe and Australia. A graduate of Croydon School of Art in the UK, Jon worked initially for the Royal Shakespeare Company before becoming a freelance designer in 1997, working across all disciplines of the performing arts.

Jon was the Technical Director of West Australian Ballet from 2008 – 2015 and has recently taken up the position of Technical Director at The Australian Ballet.

Recent Australasian engagements include *Love Song*, and *The 39 Steps* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Sydney Theatre Company); *The Glass*

Menagerie, Twelfth Night, Madagascar, Glengarry Glen Ross, Blithe Spirit and *The Seagull* (Black Swan State Theatre Company); *Così fan tutte*, and *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (Victorian Opera); *Coppélia* and *The Sleeping Beauty* (Queensland Ballet); *La Bohème, The Nutcracker, Giselle, Don Quixote, Cinderella, Neon Lights, La Sylphide, Pinocchio*, and *Coppélia* (West Australian Ballet); *Raymonda, Constant Variants, Symphonie Fantastique, Interplay* and *The Sleeping Beauty* (The Australian Ballet); and *Giselle, Swan Lake, Don Quixote, La Sylphide, Peter Pan*, and *The Sleeping Beauty* (Royal New Zealand Ballet).

Judith Yan – Conductor

Judith Yan is a Canadian conductor. Equally adept at conducting opera, ballet, and symphony, her career has taken her internationally, conducting for major companies in Germany, Poland, Italy, Hong Kong, South Korea, New Zealand, and the United States. She has held Staff Conductor positions at the San Francisco Opera, the Canadian Opera Company, and the National Ballet of Canada and is currently the Artistic Director of Guelph Symphony Orchestra and Music Director and Principal Conductor of Opera on the Avalon.

As a conductor of ballet, she has led over 90 performances for the National Ballet of Canada, conducting productions of Sir Peter Wright's *Giselle*, John Neumeier's *The Seagull*, John Cranko's *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Romeo and Juliet*, Balanchine's *Symphony in C* and *Don Quixote*, James Kudelka's *Cinderella, The Italian Straw Hat*, and *The Nutcracker*, Ronald Hynd's *The Merry Widow*, Jerome Robbins' *Glass Pieces* and *West Side Story*, Jiri Kylián's *Soldier's Mass*, Harald Lander's *Etudes*, and the world premiere of Peter Quanz's *Symphony in Colour*. Since 2010, she has had a close association with Hong Kong Ballet, conducting John Meehan's *Swan Lake*, and premiering the company's productions of Cynthia Harvey's *Sleeping Beauty*, Terence Koehler's *The Nutcracker*, and Nina Ananiashvili's *Don Quixote*. For Korean National Ballet, she has opened their last 3 seasons, conducting Yuri Grigorovich's *La Bayadère, Giselle*, and *Swan Lake*.

Recent and future performances includes debuts at Seattle Opera with a world-premiere of Jack Perla's *An American Dream*, National Arts Centre in Ottawa for *Sleeping Beauty*, and Teatr Wielki for *The Taming of the Shrew*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Brahms's *Symphony No. 1*, and a Gala performance for Guelph Symphony Orchestra, *Paquita* for Oakville Ballet, *Le Corsaire* for Hong Kong Ballet, a return to Korean National Ballet for performances of *La Bayadère*, a world-premiere of John Estacio's opera, *Ours*, with Opera on the Avalon, where she returns for her sixth season as Principle Conductor.

J. Lanchbery – Arranger

John Lanchbery was born in London and took violin lessons from the age of eight, when he started composing. A scholarship took him to the Royal Academy of Music. This was interrupted by the Second World War. He returned to studies and took part-time work with a music publisher, the Anglo Soviet Music Press. They suggested that he audition for the post of conductor with the Metropolitan Ballet. He made his debut with them at Edinburgh in 1948. Two years later the orchestra collapsed for lack of funds but by then he had learned his craft. Working with choreographer Celia Franca, Lanchbery wrote *The Eve of St Agnes* (the story was based on John Keats' poem of the same name), one of the first commissioned ballets to be shown on BBC television.

He was taken on by Sadler's Wells company. The first professional ballet choreographed by Kenneth MacMillan was *Somnambulism* in 1953, with music by Stan Kenton orchestrated by Lanchbery. They also did *House of Birds* in 1955 (to original music by Federico Mompou). To choreography by Frederick Ashton he arranged *La Fille Mal Gardée* (original music by Ferdinand Hérold and others) for the Royal Ballet in 1960. This work includes the famous *Clog Dance* used for many years as a theme tune for *Home This Afternoon* on BBC radio. Other conductors earn revenues for recordings but for Lanchbery this option barely existed. Instead his income was supplemented by the copyright he earned from his orchestral arrangements, used by ballet companies all over the world. He effectively re-wrote Ludwig Minkus's *Don Quixote* for Rudolf Nureyev in 1966. Arguably, *Don Quixote* was not a satisfactory ballet score until Lanchbery re-arranged it, although Minkus's original version has twice been recorded complete in recent years. He did the same for Natalia Makarova in Minkus's *La Bayadère* for the American Ballet Theatre in 1980. Boldest of all was Macmillan's *Mayerling* (1978) where Lanchbery arranged more than 30 pieces by Franz Liszt.

Ludwig Minkus – Composer

Ludwig Minkus [Léon Fyodorovich Minkus] (1826-1917) was born in the District of Vienna, then capital of the Austrian Empire. His father, Theodor Johann Minkus, ran a restaurant, which had its own small orchestra. Minkus, possibly influenced by this, studied violin as a child and started composing while still a student. In 1853 Minkus was invited to St. Petersburg to be conductor for Prince Nikolai Yusupov's serf orchestra. From 1856 to 1861 he was principal violinist at the Moscow Imperial Bolshoi Theatre as well as serving as conductor and principal violinist of the Imperial Italian Opera. By 1864 he was appointed

Inspector of the Imperial Theatre Orchestras in Moscow. In 1866 Minkus composed the music for two acts of the ballet *La Source* (the other two were by Léo Delibes) working with the great ballet master Arthur Saint-Léon. Minkus went on to produce music for a number of full-length ballets. As a result he became *Ballet Composer of the St. Petersburg Imperial Theatres* in 1871. Minkus retired from the Imperial Theatres in November 1886. Subsequently he and his wife Maria left Russia in 1891, never to return. Minkus died in Vienna on 7 December 1917 at the age of 91.

Biography written by Alan Dodge