



WEST AUSTRALIAN
BALLET

Patron:
The Honourable Kim Beazley AC
Governor of Western Australia

Artistic Director:
Aurélien Scannella

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 26 November 2019

BENDAT AND BURT BUILD FUTURE FOR WEST AUSTRALIAN BALLET

Major gifts from the Bendat Family Foundation and the Wright Burt Foundation will create long-term opportunities for the next generation of ballet dancers and become the founding gifts of West Australian Ballet's newly established Endowment.

The Bendat Family Foundation led by Jack Bendat AM, a supporter of the Company's Young Artist Scholarships since 2009, has committed a significant seed gift of \$1.6 million as the establishing gift of the Endowment, with the interest to provide funds for a Young Artist Scholarship in perpetuity.

A legendary philanthropist and great supporter of countless Western Australian causes, in a 2016 interview Jack Bendat said "I made my money here and I want to put it back here."

A statement from the Bendat Foundation highlights their continued support of young West Australians; "The Foundation recognised this as an amazing opportunity to encourage young people in the arts to pursue their occupation, passion and grow their dreams. This endowment gift by the Bendat Family Foundation reflects the strong commitment to give back to the community and provide ongoing support to the youth of Western Australia."

Since the establishment of West Australian Ballet's Young Artist Scholarships in 2008, the Company has engaged 54 young dancers from Australia and New Zealand, with 16 subsequently promoted into the Company. The Young Artist Scholarships aim to create pathways for young graduates who aspire to a future career as a professional dancer.

Long-term supporter of arts in WA and West Australian Ballet's Patron of Private Giving, Alexandra Burt and husband Julian Burt have confirmed the Company's largest ever private donation, with an immediate \$500,000 committed to the new Endowment Fund and a further \$2 million pledged as a matching gift, with a goal of commencing the Company's Endowment fund at more than \$6 million.

In a statement, Alexandra Burt pointed to the great contribution that arts make to society, and the inspiration and joy that West Australian Ballet brings to the people of Western Australia and beyond.

"Through the universal language of dance, West Australian Ballet has been a powerful force in our community for nearly 70 years. In each and every performance, engagement, tutorial and outreach, people feel a deep and emotional connection that transcends the everyday and unites us as West Australians. Our gift, combined with those already received from so many generous patrons, will enable the company to look forward to the future with confidence. What they give to us is extraordinary and they have earned every penny."



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West Australian Ballet's Artistic Director Aurélien Scannella says the capital gifts and establishment of the Endowment will drive the Company's future.

"The leadership shown by the Bendat Family Foundation and the Wright Burt Foundation is enormously inspiring" said Scannella, "They are creating opportunities which will enrich the lives of countless Western Australians."

The Endowment, launched by West Australian Ballet's Patron, The Honourable Kim Beazley AC Governor of Western Australia, at Government House on 25 November, prepares Australia's oldest professional Ballet Company for the prioritisation of financial sustainability.

The Endowment will see the investment of major capital gifts and all future bequests into a capital protected fund, with the interest and earnings to be used for specific projects and future seasons. Investment decisions will be made by a designated Investment Committee which will include Board Directors Ingrid Puzey and David Smith.

West Australian Ballet also extends its gratitude to a number of other private donors who have made founding commitments to the Endowment Fund, leading the way for Philanthropy in WA.

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