



RNZB dancer Laurynas Vėjalis, photograph by Ross Brown





## Tēnā koutou katoa,

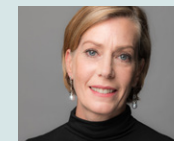
The Royal New Zealand Ballet has served the nation since it was founded in 1953; touring ballet productions and engaging with communities across Aotearoa for over 65 years. Creativity and innovation have always been features of the company's work, contributing to the development of the broader cultural landscape of Aotearoa as well as the dance sector itself during this time.

This strategic plan describes the key outcomes we aspire to deliver for New Zealanders, with nine priorities for 2020–24 to achieve these. It also outlines the practical steps we will take to realise them. The Royal New Zealand Ballet is supported by many stakeholders and this plan has been informed by stakeholder research undertaken in 2018. Through sharing our plans and responding to feedback we will continue the conversation over the next five years.

We are confident that the Royal New Zealand Ballet, with its talented and capable people sharing a strong desire to deliver for New Zealanders, will play a vital role in contributing to cultural outcomes which support the nation's wellbeing.



**Dame Kerry Prendergast**  
DNZM, CNZM  
Chair



**Patricia Barker**  
Artistic Director



**Lester McGrath**  
Executive Director

# Our purpose

To enrich New Zealand communities  
and express who we are through ballet



RNZB Artist Kirby Selchow as Gretel and Principal Paul Mathews as The Transformed Witch in *Hansel & Gretel*, 2019. Photograph by Stephen A'Court.



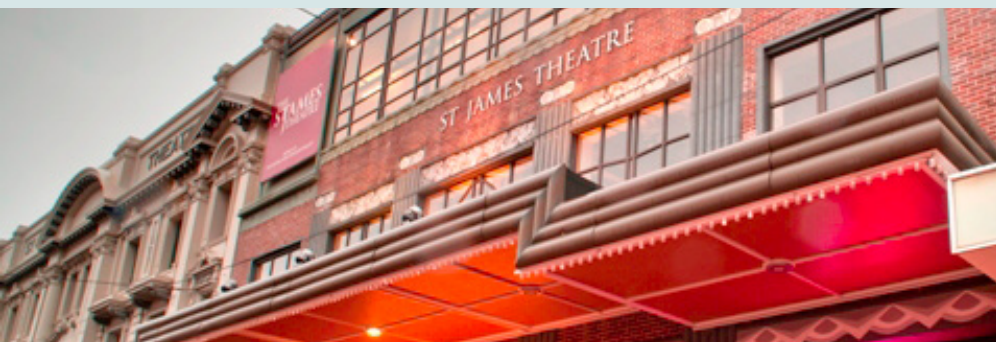
# Our Backdrop – what do we see?

## IN THE WORLD AROUND US:

- Digital disruption
- Growing social inequalities
- Changes in New Zealand's demographics
- Climate change
- Growing awareness and valuing of te ao Māori

## IN THE ARTS AND DANCE SECTOR:

- The Auckland region provides opportunities for growth and engagement
- A refurbished St James Theatre could be a game changer for Wellington
- Greater competition and a changing market
- Dance remains the second most popular after-school activity for New Zealand children
- The ballet audience is changing
- The artform of ballet is diversifying



The St James Theatre. Photograph courtesy of Venues Wellington.

# How do we respond?

## THE ROYAL NEW ZEALAND BALLET WILL:

- Be artistically led and audience focused
- Be forward looking, responsive and adaptable, with an eye on the major changes taking place in the world around us
- Invest in stakeholder relationships to tackle infrastructure challenges
- Advocate the value we build with the work that we do
- Open doors to new sources of funding for the company's activities
- Articulate the company's leadership role in the broader arts sector
- Attract talent which promotes innovation and brings diversity to the organisation



RNZB Principal Mayu Tanigaito with audience members after the Relaxed Performance at the Vodafone Manukau Events Centre in 2018. Photograph by Frank Sin.

# Investment Priorities

Investment over the next five years will be directed to the priorities identified in this plan. The specific deliverables provide focus as to how we will approach these priorities and form the basis for each annual plan over the next five years.

We are not able to achieve our goals in isolation and rely on the support of funders, stakeholders, industry partners, and individuals who share our commitment to delivering cultural outcomes which benefit all New Zealanders.

As we are essentially a 'people business', strong dynamic relationships are equally important to our success. We commit to being outwardly focused, collaborative and transparent in our dealings with all the people we come into contact with.

We recognise that our organisational culture is dynamic. We will continue to nurture the culture of the organisation as it develops over the next five years, recognising that we need to take our people with us on the journey ahead.



Former RNZB Dance Educator Lucy-Margaux Marinkovich in a workshop with students from Bulls School, 2018. Photograph by David Unwin.





RNZB Principal Nadia Yanowsky in *Remember, Mama*, part of the *Strength & Grace Suffrage 125* programme, 2018. Photograph by Stephen A'Court.

## Our Outcomes

The Royal New Zealand Ballet's focus is on delivering three key outcomes for New Zealanders:

### Creating Cultural Value

People's lives are enriched by high quality arts experiences

### Connecting Communities

People from all walks of life spend time with others in shared cultural experiences

### A Thriving Cultural Sector

New Zealanders value the cultural sector and its contribution to national wellbeing



RNZB dancers take class onstage as part of *Ballet in a Box* at the Theatre Royal, Nelson, in 2017. Photograph by Jose G Cano.

# Creating Cultural Value

*People's lives are enriched by high quality arts experiences*

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## Our Priorities

**Deliver inspiring performances which resonate with New Zealanders**

**Attract, develop and retain New Zealand creative talent**

**Give voice to New Zealand stories, identity and artistic expression**

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## Our Deliverables

- We will present outstanding ballet, drawing on the great classics and proven works by renowned choreographers
- We will engage high-performing artists to work with the company
- We will maintain the highest possible production standards
- We will promote the specific emotional and artistic qualities of each repertoire
- We will offer audiences and participants opportunities to deepen their appreciation of ballet

- We will partner with dance schools to promote ballet as a career
- We will facilitate pathways for talented dancers to pursue a career at the RNZB
- We will collaborate with the New Zealand School of Dance and other training providers
- We will provide pastoral care and services to ensure dancers perform to the best of their ability
- We will pursue initiatives which build sustainable careers for dancers and equip dancers with tools for career development

- We will promote the uniqueness of Aotearoa New Zealand as a point of difference with other ballet companies internationally
- We will engage New Zealand artists to create and design productions
- We will commission works which speak to New Zealand's unique identity and heritage
- We will collaborate with other New Zealand dance companies and independent dance makers





Audio describer Nicola Owen with a member of the audience during the audio-described performance and touch tour of *The Nutcracker* at the Opera House, Wellington, in November 2018. Photograph by Stephen A'Court.



# Connecting Communities

*People from all walks of life spend time with others in shared cultural experiences*

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## Our Priorities

### Grow and connect with audiences

### Unlock human potential through participation

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## Our Deliverables

- We will invest in strategies which make the ballet more accessible and welcoming
  - We will position the company as a youthful organisation that reflects the personality of its dancers
  - We will collaborate with venues, funders and other dance companies to grow audiences in key markets
  - We will build relationships with regional festivals and promoters of new work
  - We will develop sales strategies which incentivise repeat attendance, early bookings and group bookings
  - We will increase investment in the company's digital marketing and communications strategy
- We will collaborate with dance makers, teachers and educators from culturally diverse backgrounds
  - We will provide opportunities for targeted groups to actively engage with the live performance experience
  - We will invest in dance workshops which support the NCEA curriculum
  - We will invest in initiatives with marginalised or under-represented communities
  - We will offer or take part in celebratory events which are participatory, free or low cost

RNZB Artist Madeleine Graham in *Stand to Reason*, part of the *Strength & Grace Suffrage 125* programme, 2018. In the background, Soloist Kate Kadow. Photograph by Stephen A'Court.



RNZB Principals Abigail Boyle and Paul Mathews as Ada and Alastair Stewart in *The Piano: the ballet*, 2018. Photograph by Stephen A'Court.



# A Thriving Cultural Sector

*New Zealanders value the cultural sector and its contribution to national wellbeing*

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## Our Priorities

### Adapt to a changing world

### Enhance stakeholder support

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## Our Deliverables

- We will reflect Aotearoa New Zealand's bi-cultural foundation in our work practices and communications
  - We will invest in professional development opportunities for employees to drive innovation
  - We will embrace New Zealand's diversity in terms of decision making and how we operate
  - We will explore initiatives which reduce the organisation's impact on the environment
- We will leverage our offering to attract corporate partners interested in a mutually beneficial relationship
  - We will build our network of benefactors, private donors and friends
  - We will work with our alumni to build networks of support for ballet in New Zealand
  - We will work with ballet teachers across New Zealand to promote and grow appreciation for ballet as an artform



Women of the Royal New Zealand Ballet in *Hine*, part of the Choreographic Series, 2019. Photograph by Stephen A'Court.



# A Thriving Cultural Sector *\_\_continued*

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## Our Priorities

### Build resilience

### Grow capacity

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## Our Deliverables

- We will promote our production and costume facilities as centres of excellence to generate fee-paying contracts
  - We will build commercial revenue streams from RNZB assets which support the company's purpose
  - We will maintain reserves at a prudent level in order to withstand variable trading results in any given year
  - We will invest in smart systems and technology to improve our operational effectiveness
- We will seek international touring opportunities, where they build capacity and promote the RNZB's brand and uniqueness
  - We will investigate funding models which will deliver more live music at performances
  - We will support initiatives to build performing arts infrastructure in New Zealand's growing population centres
  - We will advocate the potential of the St James Theatre as a national home for dance and a flagship destination for live performance
  - We will collaborate with arts organisations on initiatives which grow audiences, strengthen the sector or extend the artform



RNZB Soloist Massimo Margaria and Principal Mayu Tanigaito in *Artifact II*, 2019. In the background (from left), Apprentice Calum Gray, Artist Kirby Selchow, Soloist Joseph Skelton and Apprentice Lara Flannery. Photograph by Stephen A'Court.