

Case study

Tutus on Tour

Details

What:

Tutus on Tour was a program of three short ballet works developed by Queensland Ballet for smaller stages in rural and remote communities. The program comprised of a selection of three works, *Ershter Vals*, *Three Preludes* and *Verdi Variations*, designed to give audiences a taste of their state ballet company in a local setting.

arTour toured two separate parties of Queensland Ballet dancers, artistic staff and crew to present *Tutus on Tour*. One party toured to central and North Queensland while the other party covered outer-metropolitan and south-west areas of the state. Splitting the company ensured a greater number of communities received the production.

In addition to the performance, community engagement activities including dance classes for participants from the age of two years to secondary school age, pre-show storytelling and post-show Q&A sessions were offered.

When:

September and October 2016

Where:

Mackay, Townsville, Cairns, Hughenden, Mt Isa, Longreach, Capella, Redcliffe, Ipswich, Caloundra, Toowoomba, Gladstone, Esk, Chinchilla, Goondiwindi, Logan, Julia Creek, Cloncurry, Emerald, Dalby, Maryborough, Mountain Creek, Beerwah, Glass House Mountains, Roma



Dancers: Neneka Yoshida, Eleanor Freeman, Tamara Hanton and Teri Crilly, Creative Direction Designfront, Photographer Simon Lekias, Stylist Mark Vassallo, Makeup Nicole Thompson from MAC Cosmetics, Hair Richard Cavanagh

Key stats:

- 19 performances with 7,141 attendees
- 102 community engagement activities with 3641 participants
- 6 full-time positions and 63 volunteers

Arts Queensland contribution:

\$259,819– Playing Queensland Fund

Contact for further information:

Website: <http://www.artour.com.au/artists/tutus-on-tour>

Links:

Sneak Peak – Queensland Ballet's Tutus on Tour
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ViJXVwYfbE>

Backstage – Queensland Ballet's Tutus on Tour =
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XFV2twAmSs>

Outcomes

- Visited 17 communities around Queensland with at least 59 per cent having not accessed a Queensland Ballet presentation for at least five years or more.
- Large attendances were recorded at several of the performances. The Diggers Entertainment Centre in Hughenden had a record-breaking attendance for Tutus on Tour compared to any other events held at the centre. Chinchilla Arts Council also exceeded their expected audience numbers.
- The success of the tour has given the company the confidence to explore more flexible and geographically far-reaching options, which still present the artists and the art form at their best.
- Trained theatre professionals in the touring party including lighting technicians, audio technicians and mechanists provided training and professional development to volunteers at the unmanaged venues, who had never been exposed to a professional production before.



Dancer: Neneka Yoshida, Creative Direction Designfront, Photographer Simon Lekias, Stylist Mark Vassallo, Makeup Nicole Thompson from MAC Cosmetics, Hair Richard Cavanagh

Feedback

Thank you for making ballet accessible to all - Attendee

I thought it was fantastic that there were little kids up dancing in front of the stage.... Who knows, one of the kids dancing out the front just might be a member of the Queensland Ballet in twenty years. - Attendee

Workshops provided an unforgettable experience for the kids and an opportunity to develop their skills with professionals. Due to our remote location, access to this kind of opportunity is limited. – Mt Isa Civic Centre

Being able to access this type of performance, especially being family friendly, instils the great importance of art and culture to all members of our community and has many benefits to the wellbeing of our community, providing for many respite from trying economical times. – Flinders Council

Learnings and reflections

Queensland Ballet reflected on the value of community engagement:

it was clear that the community engagement activities enhanced the performance significantly. Future tours will be programmed as a combined package of performance and engagement activities and pitched to presenters as a fully integrated offering

Unplanned activities at different regional venues also deepened audience experience:

Three regional venues opened the house to the audience one hour prior to the show commencing. This allowed the audience to watch the company barre (dancers warming up) which gave them a unique insight into the hard work and skills of a professional dancer.

Technical challenges were experienced at many venues due to the size of venue or available resources. This led to adaptations of stages in some places by Queensland Ballet technicians. This will be considered in future tours.