



For immediate release: Thursday 22 January 2026

Flora brings a landmark collaboration to life in a full-length world premiere from The Australian Ballet and Bangarra

A landmark partnership between The Australian Ballet and Bangarra Dance Theatre comes to life in *Flora*, a major new full-length work commissioned by The Australian Ballet and created by Mirning woman Frances Rings, Bangarra's Artistic Director and co-CEO.

Flora will make its world premiere at Melbourne's Regent Theatre from **12 to 21 March**, before opening at the Sydney Opera House's Joan Sutherland Theatre from **7 to 18 April**, featuring live music performed by **Orchestra Victoria and the Opera Australia Orchestra**.

This work marks the fourth major collaboration between the companies and the first under their current artistic directors. Building on nearly three decades of shared creative history, from *Rites* (1997) to *Warumuk – in the dark night* (2012), *Flora* signals a new era in the relationship between two of Australia's most influential cultural institutions.

With a combined ensemble of more than 35 artists across both companies, *Flora* blends two artistic and cultural lineages, broadening the expressive language of Australian dance and demonstrating what becomes possible when the traditions of the classical form and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander storytelling come together.

The Australian Ballet's Artistic Director David Hallberg said: "Flora reflects the strength and importance of our longstanding relationship with Bangarra. Coming together on a full-length work has deepened our artistic connection and reaffirmed how vital collaboration is to the evolution of Australian dance. This partnership honours our shared history while opening new pathways for the future."

"*Flora* celebrates the unique beauty and resilience of this continent's flora, woven into the fabric of the country and its people. The work explores connection, renewal and our shared future, inviting audiences to reflect on how culture, community and the natural world intertwine. It's a joyous and optimistic vision of what becomes possible when artists unite with a shared purpose, with this country's stunning indigenous flora as its thread," added Hallberg.

Bangarra Dance Theatre's Artistic Director and Co-CEO Frances Rings said: "As a First Nations arts company, our priority is to use our platform to give insight into, and promote understanding of, First Nations People, Communities and Country. For millennia, plants have been the foundation of our identity and connection to Country. The deep cultural, spiritual and

practical significance of flora represents a kinship that continues to guide us today. Plants and First Nations people have shared the deep disruption of colonisation and have been equally impacted by the wake of destruction that resonates through generations. Plants are messengers and indicators of the health of Country. As we head towards a climate emergency, we all have a responsibility to ensure the health of our unique native environments for future generations."

"Bringing Bangarra Dance Theatre and The Australian Ballet together has been an extraordinarily powerful experience. Together we share story, experiences, perspectives and cultures to create a whole new dialogue and language. Both David (Hallberg) and I are excited to bring our companies together to tell this story, and to share it with our communities and audiences," added Rings.

At its heart, *Flora* examines resilience, kinship and connection. Drawing on creation stories, First Nations ecological knowledge and the evolution of Australian flora across deep time, the work reflects the natural world as a living witness to Australia's unfolding history. From sleeping yams beneath the earth to the gums that stand guard over generations, *Flora* traces a journey of origin, disruption and renewal.

The work also reflects on profound environmental and historic shifts, including the arrival of introduced species that reshape the landscape. Through fire comes regeneration, a resilience that mirrors that of Australia's First Peoples, whose knowledge systems have cared for Country for millennia.

Audiences will experience a vibrant and richly crafted world shaped by both companies' creative forces. Artists from The Australian Ballet and Bangarra will share a unified movement language, drawn from 65,000 years of cultural storytelling.

The world of *Flora* is brought to life through Elizabeth Gadsby's set design, lighting design by Karen Norris, and the sculptural costumes of Meriam Samsep woman Grace Lillian Lee, transforming the stage through clay, canopy, rain and fire. Kalkadungu man and internationally renowned composer William Barton provides an original score performed live by Orchestra Victoria and the Opera Australia Orchestra. Cultural consultancy is led by Matthew Doyle, a descendant of the Muruwari nation, ensuring cultural integrity and authenticity in the storytelling.

Flora stands as an ambitious and important partnership representing a bold, intergenerational collaboration that expands the expressive possibilities of Australian dance theatre.

Flora is generously supported by Lady Potter AC CMRI and The David Hallberg Fund for Artistic Aspiration.

Tickets on sale now.

PERFORMANCE DETAILS

Melbourne

12 - 21 March

Regent Theatre

with Orchestra Victoria

Sydney

7 - 18 April

Sydney Opera House

Government
Partners



Lead
Partner



Principal
Partner



Joan Sutherland Theatre
with Opera Australia Orchestra

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Choreography: Frances Rings

Composer: William Barton

Costume design: Grace Lillian Lee

Costume Design Associate: Jennifer Irwin

Set design: Elizabeth Gadsby

Lighting design: Karen Norris

Cultural Consultant: Matthew Doyle

Research Consultant: Shane Carroll

World Premiere: 12 March 2026 at the Regent Theatre, Melbourne

For more information and to purchase tickets please

visit: <https://australianballet.com.au/performances/flora>

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