

## Press Release – 23/06/2004

# *S k e t a   O z   I n t e r n a t i o n a l   B a l l e t*

Week ending: Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2004, kicked off the first presentation of Dance Awards, in the series of many over the next 5 months for local ballet company owner – Ms. Selina Kucks, with a bid to increase national awareness over the importance of more communities standing behind state and regionally run dance competitions.

Now major sponsors of the Brisbane Eisteddfod Solo Awards and Lockyer District Dancing Festival, *Sketa Oz International Ballet* hopes to boost the love of classical ballet as a whole by offering the Queensland Region in particular, an additional (4) four perpetual trophies/cups. The perpetual awards support dance bursaries and prize monies in excess of \$20,000 Australian dollars. This is to be shared among the Brisbane Eisteddfod, Lockyer District Dancing Festival, Youth Ballet Theatre and the Royal Academy of Dance.

Ms. Kucks said yesterday, that there is a fifth and even more major Ballet competition to be offered to classical dancers - nationwide in the near future, but was not at liberty to divulge any information at this stage.

Brisbane Eisteddfod Perpetual Trophy Winners are:

**Gabriella Tudorin - *Sketa Oz Most Promising Senior Classical Dancer – 13 years & over***

**Ashley Rooney - *Sketa Oz Most Promising Junior Classical Dancer – 13 years & under***

Ashley is ten years old and has been studying classical ballet for the past three years. She started learning in Los Angeles under Marat Daukoyov a former principal dancer of the Russian Kirov Ballet Company. Since returning to Australia, she has learnt of Eva Kohout, former principal of the Czech State Ballet, at the Eva Kohout School of Dance in Nundah, Queensland. Ashley also has lessons from Andrew Lyons, formerly of the Australian Ballet Company. She has been classical champion at many Eisteddfods including Tropicana, Wynnum, Brisbane and Gatton. Ashley loves dancing and her dream is to pursue a career in classical ballet.

Ms. Kucks envisages, the additional opportunities for dancers to be acknowledged for their skills, together with more scholarship and bursary opportunities will hopefully improve the future outlook for talented dancers. Getting sufficient media exposure for more Australian ballet companies to sit-up and take notice of the local talent has always been an issue.

Our kids need greater opportunities to show off what they can do and showcasing our kids through the eisteddfod & competition arena, provides valuable stage experience and confidence boosting opportunities to help kids...on their way to success. Thousands of kids every year will start dancing by the time they turn six. But, by the time they reach 12~13 years of age, over 85% of those kids will have quit dancing altogether - due to a lack of career opportunities, social stigma and peer-group pressure. Dance has always been treated as a hobbyist sport and it is not taken seriously. There is so much media coverage and support eagerly given to Australian sport, but not for the arts. It's a crying shame!

Presently, Sketa Oz is accepting applications for company auditions to be held as part of the National Tour encompassing: Toowoomba, Brisbane, Gold coast - July 4<sup>th</sup>~25<sup>th</sup> 2004 & Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth – 1<sup>st</sup>~29<sup>th</sup> August 2004.

Individuals interested in auditioning should [auditions@sketaoz.com](mailto:auditions@sketaoz.com) or [www.seoulroyalballet.com](http://www.seoulroyalballet.com)

Applications for the 2005 Aspirant Programme and Professional finishing course are now available at [www.sketaoz.com](http://www.sketaoz.com) Alternatively interested individuals may contact: (07) 4637-8386