



MEDIA RELEASE

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Greystaynes' future ballet star set to follow in footsteps of his idol

Greystaynes resident, Daniel Savetta, was one of eight aspiring ballet stars from the McDonald's Sydney Eisteddfod to meet Royal Ballet Principal Artist, Stephen McRae, under a twilight sky at the Sydney Opera House last month.

In Australia to perform in *The Sleeping Beauty* with the Australian Ballet, McRae, 23, fondly remembers his roots as a young ballet hopeful from Plumpton in Sydney's West. The first male Australian dancer to become a Principal Artist with the Royal Ballet since Sir Robert Helpmann in 1933, McRae's journey from small town boy to international stage performer can be attributed in part to his involvement with the McDonald's Sydney Eisteddfod.

Having performed in the finals of the McDonald's Sydney Eisteddfod Ballet Scholarship in 2001 and 2002, McRae is an advocate of the program that gave him the confidence and discipline to launch his career.

Stephen is delighted to be named the first official Dance Ambassador of the McDonald's Sydney Eisteddfod, share some time with local aspiring stars and encourage students to register for the McDonald's Ballet Scholarship while he is in town.

"I am so proud and excited to be an official Dance Ambassador of the McDonald's Sydney Eisteddfod," said Stephen.

"My time spent at the competition over many years helped me gain a wealth of experience and I will always be grateful for the support McDonald's gives the competition.

"I would encourage all young dancers such as Daniel to have a go at the McDonald's Ballet Scholarship in 2010. The experience gained is priceless but, above all, it's great fun getting out there and performing," concluded Stephen.

Daniel is elated to have met this superstar of ballet as Stephen has inspired him to continue to strive for ballet success.

"It was such an honour to meet Stephen and get a few pointers from someone so talented," said Daniel.

"I hope to be just like him one day," concluded Daniel.



McDonald's Merrylands Licensee, Peter Zalfelds, is proud to sponsor and support the McDonald's Sydney Eisteddfod - a competition that supports Australia's performing arts and rewards local dancers such as Daniel.

"It brings me tremendous joy to sponsor such a rewarding competition," said Peter.

"McDonald's is proud to have partnered with the McDonald's Sydney Eisteddfod for 22 years. Without supporting such initiatives, fantastic programs like this would not provide the opportunity to showcase the phenomenal talent we have right here in Australia.

"I hope that more dancers in the area look to the McDonald's Sydney Eisteddfod as their starting platform and see Stephen as an example of how the program can assist young dancers," concluded Peter.

Registrations for the McDonald's Ballet Scholarship are currently open and close 22 March, 2010.

For more information or to register for the McDonald's Sydney Eisteddfod Ballet Scholarship, visit www.sydneyeisteddfod.com.au.

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Editors note:

- As part of their 22 year partnership with the McDonald's Sydney Eisteddfod, McDonald's also supports and sponsors the McDonald's Ballet Scholarship and the McDonald's Operatic Aria
- The overall winner of the McDonald's Ballet Scholarship receives \$18 000
- The best performer of the opposite sex to that of the overall winner receives \$12 000
- The McDonald's Ballet Scholarship is open to performers between the ages of 16 and 19