

## Marilyn Jones

Marilyn Jones studied dance with Tessa Maunder in her hometown of Newcastle and then with Lorraine Norton in Sydney before leaving Australia, the recipient of an *Australian Women's Weekly* scholarship, to study at the Royal Ballet School in London. Her first professional engagements were with companies in England and Europe. Returning to Australia she danced with Robert Pomie's short-lived company at Ballet Theatre Le Francais in Sydney in early 1959. She was billed on the Pomie program as 'presenting her debut as a prima ballerina'. She joined the Borovansky Ballet in that same year. It was there that her acclaimed partnership with Garth Welch began.

Jones joined the Australian Ballet as a principal dancer for the company's inaugural season of 1962 and danced all the major roles in the company's repertoire. She was artistic director of the Australian Ballet between 1979 and 1981 and during that time founded the Dancers Company. This company offers performing and touring experience to third year students at the Australian Ballet School and provides opportunities for younger dancers in the Australian Ballet to gain experience in principal roles.

In 1990 Jones was the recipient of a Creative Artists Fellowship from the Australian Government and during her tenure of that award set up the Australian Institute of Classical Dance, which aimed to establish an Australian teaching syllabus. She has taught and coached extensively and prior to her retirement in 2005 was lecturer in classical dance at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, Edith Cowan University, Perth.

Jones is regarded by many as Australia's finest ballerina. Her finely proportioned body was in the true classical mould and she excelled in the traditional classics. In addition to her outstanding partnership with Welch, to whom she was married for a number of years, in the 1970s she also established a highly regarded partnership with John Meehan.