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ELLA

WORLD PREMIERE
MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

The first Indigenous Dancer to be accepted into
The Australian Ballet in its 50 year history

RONIN FILMS AND WILDBEAR ENTERTAINMENT IN ASSOCIATION WITH SCREEN AUSTRALIA AND SCREEN QUEENSLAND
AND MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL PREMIERE FUND PRESENTS "ELLA" MUSIC BY DAVID PAGE AND STEPHEN FRANCIS CINEMATOGRAPHY BY LUCAS TOMOANA
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER MICHAEL TEAR CO-PRODUCED BY DENA CURTIS AND LAWRENCE JOHNSTON FILM EDITING BY AXEL GRIGOR PRODUCED BY VERONICA FURY DIRECTED BY DOUGLAS WATKIN

General Exhibition

RONIN FILMS

wildbear entertainment

Premiere Fund

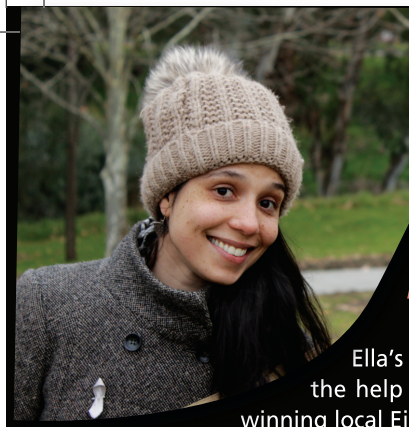
Victoria AUSTRALIA

screen queensland

Queensland Government

Australian Government

Screen Australia



Ella Havelka is the first Indigenous dancer to be invited into The Australian Ballet.

Ella's introduction to dance began at the Dubbo Ballet Studio and with the help of scholarships and hand-me-down tutus, she quickly started winning local Eisteddfods and was soon dancing six days a week.

In 2009, after four years of training in The Australian Ballet School in Melbourne, Ella joined Bangarra, the Sydney-based Indigenous dance company, where she learnt not only the very different rigours of contemporary dance, but began a powerful and moving journey of self-discovery into her Indigenous heritage.

It was not until 2012 when Bangarra did a joint performance with The Australian Ballet - Warumuk - in the dark night - that the call of the ballet was re-ignited within Ella. She accepted an offer to become the first Indigenous dancer to join The Australian Ballet in its 50 year history.

The film follows Ella as she faces the challenges of adapting back to being en pointe after four years of barefoot dancing with Bangarra, and we see her face fierce competition for roles. We also go with The Australian Ballet on tour to China where Ella dances in Graeme Murphy's celebrated interpretation of Swan Lake in Beijing.

Ultimately, we follow Ella as she finds her own unique form of expression through dance, choreographing her own work. Using a blend of Bangarra's contemporary Indigenous styles and traditional western ballet, Ella finally expresses herself in her own distinctive way.

ELLA was directed by Douglas Watkin, an exciting Indigenous filmmaker from Queensland making his first long-form documentary after 20 years in television.