

## State of the Arts

The Sunday Star-Times' weekly round-up of arts and entertainment.

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Auckland dancer Katherine Sonnekus is living in NSW, Australia and studying ballet fulltime.

### Giant steps

New Zealand dancer Katherine Sonnekus is making her mark in Australia. She is the only dancer from either country to have been invited to perform at the Prix de Lausanne in Switzerland and Youth America Grand Prix this year. Both events offer scholarship opportunities to some of the most prestigious ballet and dance companies in the world. "As cheesy as it sounds being able to dance everyday is all I would want to do," she says. "So being fulltime just feels natural to me." Sonnekus spent five years under the tutelage of Melinda Palmer at the Mt Eden Ballet Academy before winning a scholarship to attend the Tanya Pearson Classical Coaching Academy in Sydney. Her father, Neil, a journalist and fim-maker, is making a documentary on her progress.

### Crossing barriers

New Zealand feature film documentary Crossing Rachmaninoff has been selected in official competition in the 29th Festival International des Programmes Audiovisuels (FIPA) in France. FIPA, which runs from January 19-24, is one of Europe's most respected festivals. It screens around 130 films and programmes from a range of genres in both competition and out-of-competition. Crossing Rachmaninoff will screen in competition in the Performing Arts section. "FIPA has a strong tradition of

selecting high quality personal profile and arts-based documentaries, so I'm thrilled they selected Crossing Rachmaninoff for competition," says director/producer Rebecca Tansley, "And that more New Zealanders have the chance to see the film that is now being recognized internationally." The film will be released in New Zealand through a deal with Rialto Distribution on February 25.

### Doc has edge

The Documentary Edge International Film Festival (Doc Edge) has been selected by the Academy Awards as a qualifying festival for short documentaries. Commencing with the 2016 Festival, winners of the Doc Edge Best New Zealand Short and Best International Short Awards will be eligible for consideration in the Documentary Short Subject category of the Academy Awards without the standard theatrical run, provided the films otherwise comply with the Academy rules. "Throughout the last decade, Doc Edge has screened several short films that have gone on to be nominated or won an Oscar," says Doc Edge executive director Dan Shanan. "We are thrilled with this recognition which is a testimony to the strength of the--- festival's programming. This is a huge milestone for Doc Edge."

### Rhythm sways

Lance Ferguson, the founder and guitarist of Australian group the The Bamboos, has paid tribute to his grandfather Bill Wolfgramm on the The Double Sunrise. The Tongan-born Wolfgramm played Hawaiian-style steel guitar and released a slew of albums from the '50s to the '70s, including New Zealand's very first LP record release, South Sea Rhythm in 1957. "I never got to spend a lot of time with Bill as a kid, and he passed away before I was really active as a musician" says Ferguson, who has recorded the album under his other alias Lanu. "I have spent years collecting his original vinyl releases and digging up stories from the relatives. He was a hard-living, salt-of-the-earth kind of guy, but then had this infinitely virtuosic and delicate thing going on with the steel guitar. He was a man of many contradictions and someone who was key in propagating the 'Hawaiian Sound' into New Zealand during the 1950s."

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