

**Under embargo until 2pm on Tuesday 28 January**

# English National Ballet

## 2020-2021 Season

[ballet.org.uk](http://ballet.org.uk)

- Tamara Rojo CBE to direct and choreograph her first ballet, *Raymonda*, after Marius Petipa
- *Raymonda* to receive world premiere in Manchester, before UK Tour
- Triple bill of works by William Forsythe to be performed at Sadler's Wells
- 2020 marks English National Ballet's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year
- 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of English National Ballet's Dance for Parkinson's programme

### **English National Ballet today announces plans for its 2020-2021 Season.**

**Tamara Rojo CBE**, Artistic Director of English National Ballet, will create a new version of the classic 19<sup>th</sup> century ballet, *Raymonda*, after Marius Petipa. Marking her first foray into choreography and direction, Rojo adapts the three-act production for today's audiences, revisiting this important but rarely performed work of the ballet canon which is not, in its entirety, in any other UK dance companies' repertoire.

Bringing the story into the setting of the Crimean war and drawing inspiration from the groundbreaking spirit and work of the women supporting the war effort, including Florence Nightingale in this her bicentennial year, *Raymonda* is recast as a young woman with a calling to become a nurse. With a new narrative and developed characterisation bringing women's voices to the fore, Rojo's *Raymonda* introduces a heroine in command of her own destiny.

**Tamara Rojo CBE said:** *"It continues to be a part of my vision for English National Ballet to look at classics with fresh eyes, to make them relevant, find new contexts, amplify new voices and ultimately evolve the art form."*

*"Raymonda is a beautiful ballet – extraordinary music, exquisite and intricate choreography – with a female lead who I felt deserved more of a voice, more agency in her own story. Working with my incredible creative team, I am setting Raymonda in a new context and adapting the narrative in order to bring something unique, relevant and inspiring to our audiences."*

*"I have truly enjoyed delving into the creative process of adapting and choreographing a large-scale ballet and have been inspired by Florence Nightingale's drive and passion."*

Rojo brings together a stellar production team for *Raymonda* with costume and set design by Antony McDonald, lighting design by Mark Henderson, dramaturgy by Lucinda Coxon, character dances by Vadim Sirotnin, and choreology research and advice on the Sergeyev notation by Doug Fullington. Alexander Glazunov's original score, with music arrangement by Gavin Sutherland, will be performed live by English National Ballet Philharmonic. *Raymonda* is a Co-Production between English National Ballet and Finnish National Ballet.

Furthering its commitment to UK touring, the **world premiere** of *Raymonda* will take place at **Manchester's Palace Theatre** (15 – 17 October) before performances at **Mayflower Theatre, Southampton** (21 – 24 October), **Milton Keynes Theatre** (28 – 31 October) and then at the **London Coliseum** (7 – 16 January).

Also touring this Season is ***Creature* by Akram Khan**. A Co-Production between English National Ballet and Opera Ballet Vlaanderen, this is Khan's second full length ballet and follows the success of *Giselle*, which, since it was first performed in 2016, has been seen live by over 109,000 people through tours to twelve cities, in the UK and internationally. Following the world premiere of *Creature* at **Sadler's Wells, London** in April 2020, further performances will be given by English National Ballet at the theatre in November (11 – 14) and at the **Bristol Hippodrome** (18 – 21 November).

As part of English National Ballet's commitment to taking the best of British ballet to audiences overseas, *Creature* will receive its **international premiere at Chicago's Harris Theater** in March 2021 during a tour which also sees performances of **Akram Khan's *Giselle***, presented by Danse Danse, at **Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Place de Arts in Montreal**. Opera Ballet Vlaanderen will go on to perform *Creature* in Autumn 2021. Summer 2021 will see further international touring for English National Ballet, additional information to follow in due course.

Completing English National Ballet's Autumn-Winter Season is ***Nutcracker*** which returns to the **London Coliseum** for the festive period (10 December 2020 – 3 January 2021). These performances mark English National Ballet's 70<sup>th</sup> year of performing a Nutcracker production, with the Company having done so since 1950 when it was founded. This version, by Wayne Eagling, has been seen by over 750,000 paid audience members, with 85,000 tickets sold for performances in London and Liverpool during Christmas 2019-20.

In 2018 English National Ballet premiered **William Forsythe's** first creation for a UK ballet company in over 20 years, *Playlist (Track 1, 2)*. April 2021 sees the Company's relationship with the revered American choreographer continue, with a triple bill of works to be performed at **Sadler's Wells, London** (15 – 24), **THE FORSYTHE EVENING**. The bill comprises of the UK premiere of ***Blake Works I***, which features the music of James Blake's album, *The Colour in Anything*; alongside ***Approximate Sonata 2016***, a series of deconstructed pas de deux first performed by English National Ballet in 2018; it will also present for the first time in the UK an extended version of *Playlist (Track 1, 2)*, ***Playlist (EP)***.

**Tamara Rojo CBE said:** "*William Forsythe is a genius of our time, a true renaissance man. It was my dream to bring him to work with English National Ballet and I am so grateful he chose to create Playlist (Track 1, 2) with us. In this triple bill, the combination of Forsythe's unique choreographic style and joyful pop music exemplifies how ballet can be for everyone to enjoy. I'm thrilled that we are now bringing Playlist (EP) and Blake Works I to UK audiences for the first time, alongside the brilliant Approximate Sonata 2016.*"

English National Ballet remains committed to developing and nurturing talent within the Company. **Emerging Dancer**, which returns in Spring 2021, recognises the excellence of the Company's artists through an annual celebration that sees six finalists mentored by their peers to perform in front of a panel of eminent judges. The winner of Emerging Dancer is announced alongside the People's Choice award and the Corps de Ballet award, introduced to recognise the hard work and dedication of an exceptional member of the corps.

Developing the ballet audience of tomorrow, English National Ballet and English National Ballet School's My First Ballet series takes a popular ballet title and adapts it in time and length, making it accessible to children as young as three. Since 2012, over 320,000 people have seen a ballet from the series. ***My First Ballet: Swan Lake*** will be performed on tour in the UK in Spring 2021.

Elsewhere, English National Ballet celebrates **10 years of its flagship Engagement programme, Dance for Parkinson's**. Inspired by Company repertoire, the programme provides high quality dance classes for people living with Parkinson's, their family, friends and carers. Since its launch in 2010, English National Ballet's Dance for Parkinson's has reached over 4700 people and has expanded to include five hubs across the UK. 2020 sees a collaboration with King's College London and UCL on one of the world's largest research studies addressing the impact and scalability of arts interventions on physical and mental health.

English National Ballet is a National Portfolio Organisation supported by Arts Council England. NatWest is Principal Partner of English National Ballet.

**-ENDS-**

**For further information, interview requests, and images please contact Alice Gibson, PR Manager on [alice.gibson@ballet.org.uk](mailto:alice.gibson@ballet.org.uk) or call 020 7590 2932.**

**Notes to Editors:**

English National Ballet is an Associate Company of Sadler's Wells.

*Raymonda* by Tamara Rojo, after Marius Petipa

A Co-Production between English National Ballet and Finnish National Ballet

Production Partner: Mayflower Theatre, Southampton

UK Production Sponsor: Cunard

*Creature* by Akram Khan

A Co-Production between English National Ballet and Opera Ballet Vlaanderen (OBV)

Co-Producer: Sadler's Wells, London Production Partner: The Joan W. and Irving B. Harris Theater

UK Production Sponsor: Cunard

English National Ballet's performances of Akram Khan's *Giselle* in Montreal are supported by the Beaverbrook Canadian Foundation.

**On sale information:**

Priority booking for English National Ballet's Patrons and Friends will open for *Raymonda*, *Creature* by Akram Khan (at the Bristol Hippodrome) and *Nutcracker* on Monday 3 February 2020. General booking for these performances will open on Wednesday 5 February 2020 (except for *Raymonda* at Mayflower Theatre, Southampton which will open on Thursday 6 February 2020).

Tickets for the November performances of *Creature* by Akram Khan at Sadler's Wells, London, will go on sale in Spring 2020.

THE FORSYTHE EVENING, *My First Ballet: Swan Lake* and Emerging Dancer will open for booking in Autumn 2020.

[Become a Friend today](#) to enjoy priority booking, access to exclusive events throughout the Season, and great discounts. [Sign up to our e-newsletter](#) to find out when booking is announced.

**English National Ballet's 2020-2021 Season Listings:**

(note that web pages will go live Tuesday 28 January, 2pm)

***Raymonda* WORLD PREMIERE**

**Palace Theatre, Manchester**

Thursday 15 – Saturday 17 October 2020

Box Office: 0844 871 3019 or [www.ballet.org.uk/raymonda](http://www.ballet.org.uk/raymonda)

***Raymonda***

**Mayflower Theatre, Southampton**

Wednesday 21 – Saturday 24 October 2020

Box Office: 02380 711811 or [www.ballet.org.uk/raymonda](http://www.ballet.org.uk/raymonda)

***Raymonda***

**Milton Keynes Theatre**

Wednesday 28 – Saturday 31 October 2020

Box Office: 0844 871 7652 or [www.ballet.org.uk/raymonda](http://www.ballet.org.uk/raymonda)

***Creature by Akram Khan***

**Sadler's Wells Theatre, London**

Wednesday 11 – Saturday 14 November 2020

Box Office: 020 7863 8000 or [www.ballet.org.uk/creature](http://www.ballet.org.uk/creature)

***Creature by Akram Khan***

**Bristol Hippodrome**

Wednesday 18 – Saturday 21 November 2020

Box Office: 0844 871 3012 or [www.ballet.org.uk/creature](http://www.ballet.org.uk/creature)

***Nutcracker***

**London Coliseum**

Thursday 10 December 2020 – Sunday 3 January 2021

Box Office: 020 7845 9300 or [www.ballet.org.uk/nutcracker](http://www.ballet.org.uk/nutcracker)

***Raymonda***

**London Coliseum**

Thursday 7 – Saturday 16 January 2021

Box Office: 020 7845 9300 or [www.ballet.org.uk/raymonda](http://www.ballet.org.uk/raymonda)

**Akram Khan's *Giselle***

**Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Place de Arts, Montreal, Canada**

Wednesday 10 – Saturday 13 March 2021

Box Office: 514 842-2112 or [www.ballet.org.uk/giselle](http://www.ballet.org.uk/giselle)

***Creature by Akram Khan* INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE**

**Harris Theater, Chicago, USA**

Thursday 18 – Saturday 20 March 2021

Box Office: 312.334.7777 or [www.ballet.org.uk/creature](http://www.ballet.org.uk/creature)

**THE FORSYTHE EVENING**

**Sadler's Wells Theatre, London**

Thursday 15 – Saturday 24 April 2021

Box Office: 020 7863 8000 or [www.ballet.org.uk/forysthe](http://www.ballet.org.uk/forysthe)

***My First Ballet: Swan Lake***

**The Peacock, London plus UK Tour**

*Further information to follow*

**Emerging Dancer**

*Further information to follow*

*Performance details are subject to change. Please see [www.ballet.org.uk](http://www.ballet.org.uk) for latest information.*

### **About English National Ballet**

English National Ballet has a long and distinguished history. Founded in 1950 as London Festival Ballet by the great English Dancers Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin, it has been at the forefront of ballet's growth and evolution ever since.

English National Ballet brings world class ballet to the widest possible audience through performances across the UK and on eminent international stages including The Bolshoi Theatre and Palais Garnier; its distinguished orchestra, English National Ballet Philharmonic; and being a UK leader in creative learning and engagement practice, building innovative partnerships to deliver flagship programmes such as English National Ballet's Dance for Parkinson's.

Under the artistic directorship of Tamara Rojo CBE, English National Ballet has introduced groundbreaking new works to the Company's repertoire whilst continuing to honour the tradition of great classical ballet, gaining acclaim for artistic excellence and creativity. 2019 saw English National Ballet enter a new chapter in its history with a move into a purpose-built state-of-the-art home in East London which brings a renewed commitment to, and freedom for, creativity, ambition, and connection to more people, near and far, than ever before. [www.ballet.org.uk](http://www.ballet.org.uk)

### **About Arts Council England**

Arts Council England is the national development body for arts and culture across England, working to enrich people's lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to visual art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2018 and 2022, we will invest £1.45 billion of public money from government and an estimated £860 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

### **About NatWest, Principal Partner of English National Ballet**

NatWest serves customers in England and Wales, supporting them with their personal, private, and business banking needs. NatWest helps customers at all stages in their lives, from opening student accounts, to buying their first home, setting up a business, and saving for retirement. Alongside a wide range of banking services, NatWest offers businesses specialist sector knowledge in areas such as manufacturing and technology, as well as access to specialist entrepreneurial support.

### **About Cunard**

Cunard is a luxury British cruise line, renowned for creating unforgettable experiences around the world. Cunard has been a leading operator of passenger ships on the North Atlantic, since 1840, celebrating an incredible 175 years of operation in 2015. A pioneer in transatlantic journeys for generations, Cunard is world class. The Cunard experience is built on fine dining, hand-selected entertainment and outstanding service. From five-star restaurants and in-suite dining to inspiring guest speakers, the library and film screenings, every detail has been meticulously crafted to make the experience unforgettable. There are currently three Cunard ships, Queen Mary 2, Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria with destinations including Europe, the Caribbean, the Far East and Australia. In 2017, Cunard announced plans to add a fourth ship to its fleet that will be launched in 2022. This investment is part of the company's ambitious plans for the future of Cunard globally and will be the first time since 2000 that Cunard will have four ships in simultaneous service. Cunard is based at Carnival House in Southampton and has been owned by Carnival Corporation since 1998.