

English National Ballet

Autumn 2020 Announcement

- English National Ballet to launch dedicated ENB at Home video-on-demand platform
- Emerging Dancer will be streamed live from ENB's own production studio at London City Island
- A digital season of works for camera in development for Autumn 2020
- Nine new commissions
- UK premieres of Tamara Rojo's *Raymonda* and *Creature* by Akram Khan postponed
- Announcement of promotions within the Company and thanks given to those leaving



Photo caption: The Emerging Dancer 2020 finalists (c) Photography by Laurent Liotardo, post production by Nik Pate

English National Ballet today announces its revised plans for Autumn 2020, as the Company's previously scheduled performances have been cancelled due to the continuing impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

An exciting new **digital season** of short works for camera from choreographers including **Russell Maliphant**, **Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui**, **Yuri Possokhov**, **Arielle Smith** and

ENB Associate Choreographer **Stina Quagebeur** will be created, rehearsed, and performed by Company dancers in English National Ballet's studios within COVID secure guidelines. This marks the first time Cherkaoui and Smith have created work for ENB's main Company, and the first time Possokhov has created work for a UK Company.

Shown in a series of mixed bills, these new works will be available to rent via ENB at Home, a new video-on-demand service from English National Ballet. ENB's digital season is currently in rehearsal and will premiere in November and December 2020.

Tamara Rojo, Artistic Director of English National Ballet said: *"It is testament to the talent of our dancers and the spirit and reputation of our Company that we have such incredible choreographers working with us on our digital season. I'm thrilled that not only will we have new pieces by renowned choreographers to share with our audiences, but that even in these challenging times we are also continuing to support young talent too. I can't wait to see what they create."*

Following the cancellation of performances at Southbank Centre, English National Ballet will now perform and stream its 11th annual **Emerging Dancer** competition from its own production studio at London City Island. Celebrating the bright future of ballet and the excellence of the Company's Artists, Emerging Dancer will see this year's finalists Ivana Bueno, Carlyne Galvao, Miguel Angel Maidana, Victor Prigent, Emily Suzuki and William Yamada perform a classical pas de deux followed by contemporary pieces choreographed by ENB Lead Principal Jeffrey Cirio, ENB Associate Choreographer Stina Quagebeur and Mthuthuzeli November. We will also see performances by last year's winners Julia Conway and Rhys Antoni Yeomans who will be dancing a new creation by Arielle Smith. Emerging Dancer is produced by First Soloist James Streeter as part of ENB's new dancer development programme, Dance Leaders of the Future.

The Emerging Dancer finalists are now back in the studio, being mentored by their peers and preparing to perform in front of a panel of eminent judges including Edward Watson, Kerry Nicholls and Kenneth Tindall, **on 22 September**. Audiences around the world will be able to pay to watch this live streamed event for a fee of £5 and for the first time, will also be invited to cast their own votes by text and select a People's Choice winner.

In all, English National Ballet will present nine new commissions this Autumn Season.

The new ENB at Home on demand platform will not only host filmed performances of new works and events, but will also be a home for additional high-quality on-demand ballet content beyond the stage, such as performances including *Le Corsaire* and Akram Khan's *Giselle*, both of which were recorded specifically for screen, and selections from the archives following the success of English National Ballet's recent Wednesday Watch Parties.

Building on the popular series of classes which ENB made available online during lockdown, the ENB at Home platform will continue to give people the opportunity to actively engage with ballet-based exercise from home with a subscription-based class programme. Opting for either a monthly or annual subscription, users will gain access to over 100 hours of material including ballet classes, yoga, and fitness sessions. The launch date for the ENB at Home digital platform will be announced shortly.

English National Ballet's planned UK premieres this Autumn of ***Creature*** by Akram Khan and the Company's new version of ***Raymonda***, choreographed by Tamara Rojo after Marius Petipa, have been postponed owing to the closure of venues, and the difficulty in achieving the original timeline for the creation of these two new large-scale ballets under lockdown. *Creature* will now have its premiere in September 2021 at Sadler's Wells, whilst *Raymonda*'s premiere date is to be announced.

Plans for English National Ballet's Winter Season 2020/2021 will be confirmed in due course. With changes in government guidance related to the COVID-19 pandemic now allowing indoor performances with socially distanced audiences, English National Ballet is exploring options with partner venues.

Tamara Rojo commented: *"Our artform is vital to the millions of people whose lives are enriched by the performing arts. No matter how difficult the situation, I truly believe ballet can bring people together and be a part of the solution to this crisis. Whilst it is with great sadness that we have had to delay some of our planned Season, I'm so pleased that through our new digital season and ENB at Home service we have found a way to continue to create, challenge, and inspire our audiences and, we hope, go some way in boosting the morale of the country."*

Patrick Harrison, Executive Director of English National Ballet continued: *"Like so many of our colleagues around the country, we have experienced a devastating effect of the coronavirus crisis on our operations, losing over two-thirds of our income. The continued closure of the theatres in which we perform, cancellations of national and international tours and the ongoing uncertainty about when we may be able to return to full performance or vital commercial activity means we have to scale back our organisation to protect it for the longer term. We continue to create where we can and are investing in the areas which will be key to the post-crisis recovery."*

We have furloughed over 85% of our colleagues through the UK Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and have introduced pay restraint across the organisation, whilst protecting the salaries of lower earners. I want to sincerely thank everyone in the organisation for their ongoing dedication and the sacrifices they are making during this time."

ENB was successful in its application for a grant from the Arts Council of England's Emergency Fund, which secures our survival through September. Despite this and in the face of continued uncertainty, we must reduce the scale of our activity and organisation in order to see our way through the current crisis."

English National Ballet also today announces promotions and changes within the Company. Our 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 seasons have been greatly affected by the unexpected advent of the global pandemic. Our repertoire has been reduced, and our costs must be reduced as well. The Company are delighted to acknowledge members of the company with promotions this year, but sadly say goodbye to others who following discussions have chosen to leave English National Ballet to pursue other projects.

Francisco Bosch, 8th Year Artist, after 17 years with the Company

Fernando Bufala, First Soloist, after 7 years with the Company

Barry Drummond, First Artist, after 10 years with the Company

Shevelle Dynott, 8th Year Artist, after 15 years with the Company

James Forbat, First Soloist, after 15 years with the Company

Daniel Kraus, Junior Soloist, after 16 years and 11 months with the Company

Adela Ramirez, First Soloist, after 22 years with the Company

Maria Jose Sales, 8th Year Artist, after 6 years with the Company

Jia Zhang, First Artist, after 11 years with the Company

Earlier this year, ENB also said goodbye to First Soloist Crystal Costa and 8th Year Artist Joshua McSherry-Gray after 12 and 11 years with the company respectively. Jane Haworth, who joined us as a dancer in 1983 and then became Character Artist and Artistic Coordinator, retired in June. Artist of the Company Maeve Nolan also leaves at the end of the current Season.

Tamara Rojo said: *"I want to offer heartfelt thanks to these dancers for their contribution and dedication to the Company. Their talent and artistry will be missed by all, colleagues and audiences alike. I wish them all the best for the future."*

Lead Principal Jurgita Dronina, who previously split her time between ENB and National Ballet of Canada, will not return to ENB next Season. Jurgita will continue to dance in Canada. Tamara Rojo notes that *"we certainly hope to work with Jurgita again in the future."*

Jurgita Dronina said: *"During my time with English National Ballet, I have shared some of my best performances, and been able to witness and be part of the historical change and accomplishments the Company has achieved so far. I wish English National Ballet the best possible future in these difficult times, and I am looking forward to hopefully finding a different way to continue my association with the Company when times are more certain."*

ENB also announces the following promotions which have been made within the Company: **Gabriele Francesco Frola** has been promoted to Lead Principal.

Daniel McCormick has been promoted to Soloist.

Precious Adams, Julia Conway, Anjuli Hudson and **Erik Woolhouse** have been promoted to Junior Soloist.

Emily Suzuki has been promoted to 8th Year Artist of the Company.

Matthew Astley, Noam Durand, Rhys Antoni Yeomans, Victor Prigent and Miguel Angel Maidana have been promoted to 6th Year Artist of the Company.

Carolyn Galvao and Rentaro Nakaaki have been promoted to 5th Year Artist of the Company.

Tamara Rojo said: *"Congratulations to all of our promoted dancers, this recognition is well-deserved and I'm looking forward to seeing them all continue to develop and flourish in the Seasons to come."*

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors

English National Ballet is a National Portfolio Organisation supported by Arts Council England.

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The following English National Ballet performances have been cancelled this Autumn due to the impact of COVID-19. Ticket buyers will be contacted by the relevant box offices.

Emerging Dancer 2020 – Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southbank Centre (22 Sept 2020).
Replaced by live stream.

Creature by Akram Khan – Sadler's Wells, London (11-14 Nov 2020); Bristol Hippodrome (18-21 Nov 2020).

Raymonda - Palace Theatre, Manchester (15-17 Oct 2020); Mayflower Theatre, Southampton (21-24 Oct 2020); Milton Keynes Theatre (28-31 Oct 2020)

Amended listings for English National Ballet's Autumn 2020 Season:

Emerging Dancer

7pm, 22 September 2020

www.ballet.org.uk/emerging

Details remain subject to change. For the latest information, please visit www.ballet.org.uk

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 ground-breaking 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

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

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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.