

9 November 2020

English National Ballet winter update

Nutcracker Delights at the London Coliseum – Updated Performance Schedule.

English National Ballet is preparing to return to the stage this winter. Whilst planned performances of *Reunion: An Evening with English National Ballet* are unable to go ahead due to the November lockdown in England, the Company is looking forward to performing ***Nutcracker Delights*** at the London Coliseum, **now opening 17 December 2020 and running until 3 January 2021.**

Nutcracker Delights is a special 75-minute version of the Christmas classic that sees the Company perform a selection of the ballet's most popular moments and iconic scenes accompanied by Tchaikovsky's famous score played live by musicians from English National Ballet Philharmonic.

Ahead of these performances, new dancers are welcomed into the Company.

Natascha Mair joins as a Principal. Mair previously performed with Vienna State Opera Ballet (Wiener Staatsballett) where she rose through the ranks to Principal. She has danced with many companies around the world as a Guest Artist, including Slovenian National Ballet where she is a Guest Principal Dancer.

Natascha has received numerous awards including First Prize at Premio Roma Danza (2012), Special Prize at the International Contest of Ballet Schools in Beijing (2012) and the Sponsorship Award of the Ballett Club Wiener Staatsoper & Volksoper (2014).

On joining the Company, Natascha Mair said: *"I am excited for my new journey with English National Ballet and moving to this incredible city which has so many different people and cultures for me to learn from. I never want to stop growing as a person and artist and I feel like English National Ballet is the perfect place for me to do so."*

Matei Hadrian Holeleu joins as a 1st Year Artist of the Company following his success at the 2020 Prix de Lausanne competition. Holeleu trained at Balletschule Theater Basel, Switzerland and Octavian Stroia Highschool of Choreography and Drama, Romania.

Eric Snyder joins as an Artist (Extra) from English National Ballet School. He has previously performed with English National Ballet in their 70th Anniversary Gala, *Nutcracker*, *Cinderella* and *My First Ballet: Sleeping Beauty*.

English National Ballet's Artistic Director, Tamara Rojo CBE said: *"I'm so pleased to be able to welcome Natascha, Matei and Eric to the Company as we prepare to return to live performances soon, and I can't wait to see them develop their artistry with ENB."*

Principal casting for *Nutcracker Delights* is also announced today.

Performing in the iconic roles of Clara and Sugar Plum Fairy are Lead Principals Erina Takahashi and Fernanda Oliveira; Principals Shiori Kase and Natascha Mair; and First Soloists Emma Hawes and Katja Khaniukova. Lead Principals Joseph Caley, Jeffrey Cirio, Isaac Hernández and Francesco Gabriele Frola will perform the role of Prince, whilst First Soloist Junor Souza will dance both Prince and Nutcracker. First Soloist Aitor Arrieta, Soloist Skyler Martin and Artist of the Company Fernando Carratalá Coloma dance the role of Nutcracker. Nightly casting for *Nutcracker Delights* will be announced soon.

English National Ballet also welcomes new members to its Board of Trustees: Marilyn Berk, Lady Debbie Buffini, Kamara Gray, Chris Marks, Paul Pacifico and Dr. Shirley J. Thompson OBE.

English National Ballet today announces that Lead Principal Alina Cojocaru will be leaving the company as her contract with us comes to an end.

Cojocaru joined English National Ballet in 2013 as a Lead Principal Dancer. During her time with the Company Cojocaru has delighted audiences and critics alike, throughout the UK and internationally, with her performances in both classical and contemporary repertoire.

Acclaimed for both her technical ability and her dramatic interpretation, Cojocaru has received much admiration for her performances with the Company in classical roles including Juliet in both Rudolf Nureyev's and Derek Deane's versions of *Romeo & Juliet*, the title roles in *Giselle*, *Manon* and *Cinderella*; Medora in *Le Corsaire*, Princess Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*, Clara in *Nutcracker* and Odette/ Odile in *Swan Lake*.

Cojocaru has also garnered high praise for her artistry and on-stage presence in performances in contemporary works whilst with the Company: *Approximate Sonata 2016*, *In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated, Spring and Fall, No Man's Land, Second Breath* and Akram Khan's *Giselle* in which she performed the title role in the 2016 world premiere.

Whilst dancing with English National Ballet, Cojocaru has twice been awarded the Critic's Circle National Dance Award for Outstanding Female Performance (Classical), in 2017 for her portrayal of the title role in Akram Khan's *Giselle* and in 2018 for her performance as Princess Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*, and Danza & Danza Dancer of the Year 2019.

Whilst Cojocaru's last on-stage performance with the Company was in January 2020 as Clara in *Nutcracker* at the London Coliseum, her performances continued to enchant audiences around the world through English National Ballet's recent series of Wednesday Watch Parties in which she appeared in *Manon*, *Cinderella* and Nureyev's *Romeo & Juliet*.

English National Ballet's Artistic Director, Tamara Rojo CBE said: "It has been an absolute privilege to have an artist of Alina's calibre as part of the English National Ballet family. I am so thankful for her immense contribution to the company over the past 7 years, and I hope to welcome her back as a guest in the future."

-ENDS-

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

English National Ballet is grateful for the generous grant it has been awarded through the Government's Culture Recovery Fund, which allows it to continue to create, perform and serve its audiences.

NatWest is Principal Partner of English National Ballet.

For further information please contact Alice Lawley, PR Manager, on alice.lawley@ballet.org.uk or 07946541703

Listings

Nutcracker Delights

London Coliseum

Thursday 17 December 2020 – Sunday 03 January 2021

www.ballet.org.uk/nutcracker-delights

Priority On-sale: Opens 10 November

General on-sale: 13 November

This performance runs for approximately 75 minutes with no interval

Presented by English National Ballet Enterprises Ltd

Notes to Editors



Natascha Mair was born in Vienna, Austria. She received her education from the age of seven at the Vienna State Opera, where she was taught by Gabriele Haslinger, Karen Henry, Galina Skuratova and Evelyn Téri, among others.

In 2012 she graduated from high school and passed her ballet diploma exam with seventeen. From the 2012/13 season to 2020 she was engaged with the Vienna State Ballet, in 2014 she was promoted to demi-soloist and in 2016 to soloist.

In December 2018, Vienna State Ballet Director Manuel Legris promoted Mair to Principal following a performance of Rudolf Nureyev's *The Nutcracker* at the Vienna State Opera House. Since 2020 she is a Guest Principal Dancer at the Slovenian National Ballet.

Natascha has made several television appearances including in the broadcasts of the New Year's Concert of the Vienna Philharmonic and the opening of the Vienna Opera Ball. She appeared as a guest dancer in many European countries and overseas.



Matei Hadrian Holeleu started ballroom dancing as a child, before taking up ballet at the age of 13. He trained at Balletschule Theater Basel, Switzerland (2017-2020) and Octavian Stroia Highschool of Choreography and Drama, Romania (2014-2017). At the 2020 Prix de Lausanne, Holeleu was a prize winner and also received the Best Swiss Candidate Award. Other awards

include 1st place contemporary at the European Ballet grand Prix 2017 where he was also a classical ballet finalist; 1st place contemporary and 3rd place classical ballet at the 2016 Young Stars Ballet Competition, Romania and 1st place classical ballet at the Romanian National Ballet Olympics (April 2015-2017).



Eric Snyder began his dance training at the age of 9 with the Yuma Ballet Academy in Yuma, Arizona. Upon competing in the 2018 Prix de Lausanne as a finalist, he was offered a full-tuition scholarship to join English National Ballet School as a second-year student. He has previously performed with English National Ballet in their 70th Anniversary Gala, *Nutcracker*, *Cinderella* and *My First Ballet: Sleeping Beauty*.



Marilyn Berk led an internationally renowned luxury cashmere retailing business for over 30 years before retiring in 2014. She has extensive commercial and branding experience combining contemporary design with traditional craftsmanship having also steered the company to its digital platform. She has championed the preservation and promotion of the historic heritage of her flagship shop in the Burlington Arcade.

She was appointed a trustee of the Wallace Collection in 2016 sitting on the audit and investment committees. She has worked with The Prince's Trust advising on their retail outlet and successfully mentored many of the Trust's young companies through the retail process. Her other voluntary commitments include chairing educational appeal panels and helping young victims through the criminal court system.



Lady Debbie Buffini chairs the Buffini Chao Foundation, a family philanthropic foundation which she and her husband Sir Damon established in 2005 to support education and opportunities for

children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Debbie enjoys liaising closely with the chosen charities and enjoys visiting the projects in action. Charities supported include those which seek to raise aspiration in education and those that open the door to music, dance, theatre and sport.

Debbie is also on the Board of Eastside Young Leaders Academy, a charity based in Newham, East London, which nurtures and develops the leadership potential of BAME girls and boys including those at risk of exclusion from school.

Prior to this, Debbie practised as a solicitor in shipping finance, working in London and the US, having qualified both in England and at the New York State Bar.



Kamara Gray is the Founder and Artistic Director of Artistry Youth Dance, a vibrant youth dance company that showcases and celebrates aspiring dancers of African and Caribbean descent, aged 12 to 19 years.

She is an experienced dance teacher and choreographer, and has worked extensively in the UK, Australia and Kuwait. Kamara is based in London, and has taught at numerous schools, colleges, and universities including: Urdang Academy, Buckinghamshire New University, City and Islington College, Irie Dance Theatre, the Royal Academy of Dance school, and the British Academy of International Arts (Kuwait).

Her choreography includes performances for: *Live Vibe: Two's a Company* at The Place Theatre; *The Soldier's Tale*, an opera for the Wimbledon International Music Festival; the 'Sheer Chemistry' product launch; Move It; and Big Dance. As a performer, her credits include film, television and live events including the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games Opening Ceremony as a Lead Tap dancer, the MTV Europe Awards, and *L'Heure Espagnole* with the Royal Opera.



Chris Marks has spent most of his career in banking. His most recent role was as the CEO of NatWest Markets PLC, NatWest Group's investment banking business. He was part of the team brought into NatWest / RBS to restructure the business after the global financial crisis. He is currently taking a career break before embarking on his next challenge.

A lifelong ballet fan, Chris was previously a member of the Finance and General Purposes Committee before joining the Board of Trustees. He now Chairs the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Chris studied Civil Engineering at Bristol University and is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.



Paul Pacifico is CEO of AIM, the Association of Independent Music which represents the UK's community of music entrepreneurs including independent labels, service companies and self-releasing artists amongst its 800 members.

For two years prior, Paul was CEO of the UK's Featured Artists Coalition ('FAC'), and founding President of the International Artist Organisation ('IAO'), which unites artist organisations in music from different countries to speak with one voice.

In his early career, Paul Pacifico spent almost 10 years in the City in banking and strategy consultancy before leaving to focus on Specific Music in 2005. Specific Music is an independent label and creative music consultancy which designs and delivers bespoke music for industry clients as well as brands and charities. Paul also set up The AllStars Collective, which is made up of 40 of the world's top session musicians.

Paul teaches at Berklee's campus in Valencia, Spain, where he delivers the 'Artist as a Startup' course on their international Masters programme in Contemporary Performance.

Paul also sits on the Boards of UK Music, Impala, the Music Advisory Board for London's Roundhouse and a member of the Strategic Advisory Board for the Creative Industries Federation.

Paul continues to perform and record as a harmonica player and work as an independent Creative Director on projects. He has worked with artists across genres including Quincy Jones, Nile Rodgers, High Contrast, KT Tunstall, Tom Middleton, Duane Eddie, Jimmy Cliff and Dr John.



Dr. Shirley J. Thompson OBE was born, brought up and still resides in east London (Newham). As well as being a leading British composer she is also an academic, and an artistic director that stages her own operatic productions.

The conceptual music of composer Shirley J. Thompson is performed and screened worldwide and often described as 'superbe' (Le Figaro) as well as 'powerful and striking' (Planet Hugill). A visionary artist and cultural activist, Thompson has pushed the boundaries of classical music composition and performance with ground-breaking productions that have attracted new audiences worldwide.

Thompson is the first woman in Europe to have composed and conducted a symphony within the last 40 years. New Nation Rising, A 21st Century Symphony performed and recorded by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra is an epic musical story celebrating London's thousand-year history. This extraordinary work was originally commissioned to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002 and the concept was latterly assumed as a framework for the 2012 Olympics Opening Ceremony.

She co-scored the ballet PUSH that toured to over 40 of the world's major opera houses, including The Marinsky Theatre, La Scala and Sydney Opera House. Her opera series, Heroines of Opera, encapsulates hidden narratives of iconic women in history and challenges the concept of the femme fatale, the usual portrayal of women in the operatic cannon. Thompson has consistently demonstrated in her creative and professional work, a strong belief in the transformative power of music, dance and the arts to affect social, cultural and political change.

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