

20 November 2020

English National Ballet's Digital Season

English National Ballet today announces the world premiere dates for its digital season, a series of five original dance films that will be made available to rent via Ballet on Demand, part of the company's new video platform, ENB at Home.

Opening the digital season on **23 November** is ***Take Five Blues*** choreographed by English National Ballet's own Associate Artist, Stina Quagebeur. Inspired by Nigel Kennedy's take on Bach's *Vivace* and Paul Desmond's jazz standard, *Take Five*, Quagebeur's piece sees eight dancers play with unexpected rhythms and melodies, feeding off each other's energy in a high spirited film, created in collaboration with filmmaker Shaun James Grant, that pushes past classical ballet's boundaries into new dream-like territories.

On **30 November** the second film in the series will be released, ***Senseless Kindness***, by world-renowned choreographer Yuri Possokhov, who works with a UK company for the first time. *Senseless Kindness* is based on Vasily Grossman's great novel, *Life and Fate*, about a Russian family caught in the Second World War and is set to Shostakovich's Piano Trio No1 recorded by musicians from English National Ballet Philharmonic. Filmmaker Thomas James collaborates to create this poetic, elegant film, using bold lighting and a stark, textured black and white approach.

The earth and the underworld intertwine and overlap in Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui's "torn apart" quartet, ***Laid in Earth***, which will be released on **7 December**. Interpreted for screen in director Thomas James' ethereal film, a surreal blending of fluid choreography and an eerie other-worldly aesthetic. *Laid in Earth* is set to Purcell's famous aria from *Dido and Aeneas* – arranged by Gavin Sutherland, recorded by musicians from English National Ballet Philharmonic and sung by mezzo soprano Flora McIntosh, as well as new electronic music by composer and multi-instrumentalist Olga Wojciechowska, a long-time collaborator of Cherkaoui's.

Russell Maliphant creates ever-shifting choreography and uses light as an integral partner in the creative process, as seen in ***Echoes***, which will be released **14 December**. Collaborating with video artist Panagiotis Tomaras, with commissioned sound design by Dana Fouras, costumes by Stevie Stewart, and brought to the screen by award-winning filmmakers Michael Nunn and William Trevitt, the result is mesmerising.

The final film in the digital season is ***Jolly Folly***, which will be released on **21 December**. Choreographer Arielle Smith has worked with filmmaker Amy Becker-Burnett to create this old Hollywood movie musical inspired dance film. Full of charm and nostalgia, and driven by the Klazz Brothers' Latin-infused covers of Tchaikovsky, Strauss and Mozart, *Jolly Folly* is fast-paced, surprising and full of uncontainable energy.

English National Ballet's Artistic Director, Tamara Rojo CBE, said: *"This is the first time English National Ballet has embarked on a digital project of this scale and it has been amazing to see everyone pull together with such dedication and resolve, to embrace a new process of creation and collaboration. The result is five very diverse and beautiful films that are testament to the resilience and ingenuity of the arts, even in such challenging times."*

Each short film is available to rent for 72hrs with an accompanying mini-documentary that gives an insight into the creative energy of each new work. All five films in English National Ballet's

Digital Season were filmed in the theatre-sized space of the Holloway Production Studio, under COVID-19 guidance.

View the trailer for English National Ballet's digital season [here](#).

ENB at Home gives audiences access to a wide range of exciting ballet content from the stage and beyond, from the comfort of their homes. Alongside the digital season, Ballet on Demand plays host to recordings of world class ballet productions from the Company's archives which are available to rent for 72hr periods, whilst BalletActive offers a variety of ballet-based classes, available by subscription.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors

Commissioned for English National Ballet by Tamara Rojo CBE.

Produced by OB Management (*Take Five Blues*, *Senseless Kindness*, *Laid in Earth*, *Jolly Folly*) and Manilla Productions (*Echoes* and accompanying documentaries).

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 #HereForCulture

NatWest is Principal Partner of English National Ballet.

Sarah and Dominic Murphy are Lead Supporters of the Short Digital Commissions.

Charles Holloway is Principal Supporter of *Take Five Blues* by Stina Quagebeur.

Executive Producers for English National Ballet's Digital Season: Heather Clark Charrington and Daniel Alicandro

Click [here](#) to find out more about the choreographers and filmmakers behind ENB's digital season.

To request access to English National Ballet's digital season for review purposes, please contact Alice Lawley, PR Manager, on alice.lawley@ballet.org.uk or 07946541703.

Listings

Release Dates for English National Ballet's Digital Season:

23 November: *Take Five Blues*

30 November: *Senseless Kindness*

7 December: *Laid in Earth*

14 December: *Echoes*

21 December: *Jolly Folly*

Available on Ballet on Demand, part of ENB at Home

72hr rentals for £3.49 (includes access to film and short accompanying documentary)
Stream to your favourite devices
<https://ondemand.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.

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