

Under embargo until 2pm, Tuesday 30 March 2021

# English National Ballet 2021-2022 Season

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

- World premieres of *Creature* by Akram Khan and *Raymonda* by Tamara Rojo
- New performance dates for THE FORSYTHE EVENING
- *Nutcracker* returns for the festive season
- Celebratory Emerging Dancer event
- Maria Kochetkova returns to ENB, joining as Lead Principal
- ENB's new home to be named Mulryan Centre for Dance
- New ballet talent pipeline project and expansion of Dance Leaders of the Future

## **English National Ballet today announces plans for its 2021-2022 Season.**

Looking to the future with hope and optimism, English National Ballet's 2021-2022 Season is a celebration of dance and its power to invigorate, inspire, and bring people together. Embracing both exciting new creations and the tradition of great classical ballet, the Company presents world premieres alongside perennial favourites.

**English National Ballet's Artistic Director, Tamara Rojo CBE said:** *"The past year has shown the determination, resilience and innovativeness of our Company. It has demonstrated the importance of the arts in gathering us together as a society, to share stories and to develop an understanding of, and empathy for, ourselves and others. Whilst the impact of the pandemic will continue to be felt for some time, I am pleased that today we are able to look ahead with optimism at better times to come. I cannot wait to share a Season of live performances and to once again hear the sounds of an audience slowly filling the auditorium and feel the energy build as we wait for the curtain to rise."*

New dates for the eagerly awaited world premiere of ***Raymonda*** by English National Ballet's Artistic Director Tamara Rojo CBE, after Marius Petipa, are today announced. Rojo's version of the classic 19<sup>th</sup> century ballet will be performed at the **London Coliseum** from **13 - 23 January 2022**. Marking her debut in 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 company's repertoire.

Bringing the story into the setting of the Crimean war and drawing inspiration from the spirit and ground-breaking work of the women supporting the war effort, including Florence Nightingale, *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 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. I have truly enjoyed delving into the creative process of adapting and choreographing a large-scale ballet."*

*"Raymonda is a beautiful ballet – extraordinary music, exquisite and intricate original 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 have set Raymonda in a new historical context, adapting the narrative in order to bring something unique, relevant and inspiring to our audiences."*

*“This story is about many themes; duty, war, patriotism, culture, but at its centre are the nurse characters – inspired by Florence Nightingale’s vision, drive and passion. Reflecting on the last year, we have seen how nurses, and many others in the medical sector, sacrifice so much to take care of other people and I hope this, in some small way, pays homage to them.”*

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, adapted and edited by Gavin Sutherland and Lars Payne, will be performed live by English National Ballet Philharmonic. *Raymonda* is a Co-Production between English National Ballet and Finnish National Opera and Ballet.

As previously announced, the much-anticipated world premiere of **Creature** by Akram Khan will now take place at **Sadler’s Wells** from **23 September - 02 October 2021**, with its postponed international premiere taking place at **Chicago’s Joan W. and Irving B. Harris Theater** in **February 2022**. A Co-Production between English National Ballet and Opera Ballet Vlaanderen, this is Khan’s third collaboration with the Company. *Creature* is an unearthly tale of exploitation and human frontiers inspired by Georg Büchner’s expressionist classic *Woyzeck*, with shadows of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. Drawing on themes of abandonment, isolation and the fragility of the mind, *Creature* is the tale of an outsider and the search for belonging.

**Akram Khan said:** *“The COVID-19 pandemic hit the UK just weeks before Creature was due to premiere in London last April and the final stages of our creation and rehearsal process were brought to an abrupt halt as the country went into lockdown. On returning to the studio, I’ve brought the experiences of the last year with me, drawing on themes of isolation, mental health, and patriarchal systems...and within that, I am exploring our very destructive nature of wanting to control everything...man-made systems, nature, animals, fellow humans, our future, and even our past...we want to control it all. And what I am realising is that you can’t control a living thing, without destroying what’s alive about them.”*

Following a year in which COVID-19 restrictions meant English National Ballet was unable to present a live version of **Nutcracker** for the first time in its history, the family favourite makes a welcome return to the **London Coliseum** for **Christmas 2021 (16 December 2021 - 08 January 2022)**. The Company has performed a version of *Nutcracker* every year since it was founded in 1950 and this production by Wayne Eagling encapsulates all that is loved most about the festive ballet. Over 100 dancers and musicians bring to life the popular Tchaikovsky score featuring the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy and Waltz of the Flowers, performed live by English National Ballet Philharmonic.

**Tamara Rojo said:** *“The London Coliseum is an amazing theatre for ballet and has been the home of our Winter Season for many years. I think performing there this year will feel particularly special, for both the Company and our audiences.”*

Performances of **THE FORSYTHE EVENING** will now take place at **Sadler’s Wells** from **31 March - 10 April 2022**, replacing dates in April 2021. In 2018 English National Ballet premiered William Forsythe’s first creation for a UK ballet company in over 20 years, *Playlist (Track 1, 2)*. The Company’s relationship with the revered American choreographer continues with a triple bill that comprises of the UK premiere of **Blake Works I**, featuring 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 said:** *“William Forsythe is a genius of 20th century choreography. This triple bill exemplifies his ability to present classical vocabulary in a modern context in a way that speaks to audiences of all ages. In Approximate Sonata 2016 we see an intimate exploration of the relationships between women and men; Blake Works I is one of the most beautiful ballets I have seen in a long time; and I am thrilled we will see the Company return to Playlist with its combination of Forsythe’s unique choreographic style and exhilarating pop music – it’s an onstage party which is a complete joy to witness.”*

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen English National Ballet adapt and innovate, remaining committed to bringing world-class ballet to the widest possible audience. Although performing in

theatres hasn't been possible, the Company continued to bring dance to audiences through **ENB at Home**. The launch of the dedicated on-demand digital platform has given audiences at home the opportunity to rent full-length ballets and insightful documentaries through Ballet on Demand and engage in a wide range of ballet-based fitness classes through BalletActive.

Looking ahead, English National Ballet will continue to offer digital access to its work. Whilst an absence of live performance has made it impossible to select Emerging Dancer finalists and People's Choice Award winners this year, the Company continues to recognise the excellence of its Artists with **Emerging Dancer: A Celebration**. Performances from previous winners will be live streamed from the Holloway Production Studio in English National Ballet's east London home on **02 September 2021**.

**Tamara Rojo said:** *"Despite the challenges of the last year, I am proud that through our digital work we have continued to create and to engage with our audiences. Indeed, in sharing work online, we have reached more people than ever before, and I am so pleased that we will continue to do so."*

Due to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, English National Ballet's UK autumn tour and My First Ballet tour will not take place this Season. The Company looks forward to returning to partner venues and performing to audiences around the UK next year.

### **English National Ballet's new home to be named Mulryan Centre for Dance**

2019 saw English National Ballet enter a new chapter in its history when it moved into a purpose-built state-of-the-art home in a new east London neighbourhood, London City Island. Today, the Company announces that its award-winning building will be named **Mulryan Centre for Dance**, after the family of one of its major supporters, Sean Mulryan, Chairman and Group Chief Executive of major developer Ballymore.

**Tamara Rojo said:** *"On behalf of all of us at English National Ballet I want to thank Sean Mulryan and his family for this incredible generosity. This building has transformed the way we work, providing us with the scale and versatility to be more creative and ambitious than ever before. That has been particularly true this last year when, despite the huge challenges faced, it has allowed our dancers to safely rehearse, given us the space to innovate and create, and enabled us to continue connecting with our audiences and communities, near and far."*

**Sean Mulryan said:** *"The arts, culture and design are essential to our lives and to our wellbeing. We must appreciate the significance of the arts to our quality of life, in particular it is this that gives London its soul. English National Ballet is a treasured national asset, and we should all be grateful for what they and other artistic talents, bring to our society. I have been pleased to support them, and urge others to support the arts, especially at this very difficult time"*

### **The 2021-2022 Season sees Maria Kochetkova welcomed into the Company.**

International ballet star **Maria Kochetkova** returns to the Company, joining as a Lead Principal. Born in Moscow, Kochetkova trained at the Bolshoi Ballet School before dancing with companies including English National Ballet (2003 - 2007), The Royal Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Finnish National Ballet, the Mariinsky and Mikhailovsky Theatres, and American Ballet Theatre. She also danced as a Guest Artist with English National Ballet in performances of *Cinderella* in-the-round in 2019.

**Tamara Rojo said:** *"I am delighted that Maria has decided to join ENB as her home company. I have known and admired Maria for many years and I look forward to welcoming such a dedicated, intelligent, and versatile artist. I am sure our audiences will delight in her performances."*

### **English National Ballet announces a new ballet pipeline project.**

English National Ballet is to launch a new ballet talent pipeline project. The high-quality, early-stage, ballet training programme for children aged 8-12 years will run in association with five dance schools across England: West London School of Dance in collaboration with the Young Dancers Academy, Dupont Dance Stage School, Beckenham Ballet Academy, The Joanne Bond

School of Classical Ballet, and The Janet Lomas School of Dancing. The five year programme aims to contribute to and promote a diverse classical landscape by proactively encouraging and incentivising more dancers from traditionally underrepresented groups to participate in professional ballet training at the earliest possible point; in turn, impacting on 21st century work.

English National Ballet's senior leadership team will work with members of the Company's artistic staff as well as Company dancer, Sarah Kundi, who will help shape the programme and be a mentor to the children involved in the project.

**Tamara Rojo said:** *"I believe that there are spaces to be filled in the dance training system for young artists who are representative of the world we live in, the stories we want to tell, and the people who tell them. I am excited that by working with dance schools for children, this project will provide gifted and talented individuals with space to grow into their potential as young artists. I am delighted that, together with these schools, we will be enabling them to increase their natural aptitude, harness their confidence, and understand their artistic personality, and to helping them find their places in the dance world in the future."*

An initial 12-month pilot phase of the project will begin in July 2021. Further details will be announced soon.

### **Following a successful launch, English National Ballet's Dance Leaders of the Future programme is expanded.**

Launched in 2019, Dance Leaders of the Future is part of English National Ballet's commitment to the development of every individual and every aspect of the art form, including leadership. It offers Company dancers the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and gain experience and a greater understanding of the running of an arts organisation. The programme sees dancers selected for the programme attend key organisational meetings, carry out placements in administrative departments and learn more about the business model at English National Ballet.

Looking ahead, the programme expands to span two years. The first offers an induction to all company departments and core leadership training, whilst the second year investigates a specialist focus, and develops autonomy with the delivery of an independent-led project.

**Tamara Rojo said:** *"The expansion of the Dance Leaders of the Future program is another example of English National Ballet's commitment to consistently invest resources, time and effort into the development of our dancers, whether this is in the studio, on the stage or in other aspects of their career."*

### **English National Ballet's Engagement programme.**

English National Ballet's Engagement programme has continued throughout the pandemic, improving wellbeing through online adaptation of **ENB's Dance for Parkinson's** and **ENBEldersCo**, reducing inequalities in physical activity through free digital youth dance programming, and talent development initiative **ENBYouthCo-nnect**; and tackling loneliness through digital connection, **ENBTogether** befriending scheme.

The 2021-2022 Season reactivates **Dance Journeys Digital Works** film capture, **Digital Arts Award – Demi & Grand Pas packages** and **Ballet Explored** as a blended model for schools with packages for both *Creature* and *Raymonda*. ENBYouthCo returns to Mulryan Centre for Dance and **Dance for Dementia** galvanises partnerships with care homes including Barchester Care Homes PLC. Coming up is **Raymonda Reinvented** a creative cross arts project drawing on the themes of identity and female pioneers which leads to a mainstage performance by young people. A tour of blended virtual / in-person **ENBYouthCo Digital Roadshow** to youth and community centres across east London introduces young people to ballet and the Company, and proactively widens and diversifies local recruitment of underrepresented groups. ENB's Dance for Parkinson's inclusive engagement progresses SHAPER [Scaling-up Health-Arts Programmes: Implementation and Effectiveness Research] research programme, the world's largest study into impact and scalability of arts interventions on physical and mental health with King's College London and UCL.

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.

-ENDS-

For further information and images, please contact Alice Lawley, PR Manager, on [alice.lawley@ballet.org.uk](mailto:alice.lawley@ballet.org.uk) or 07946541703.

### **Notes to Editors**

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

NatWest is Principal Partner of English National Ballet.

Ballymore is Principal Building Partner of English National Ballet.

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 Opera and 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

### **On-sale information:**

Tickets for *Creature* by Akram Khan at Sadler's Wells are available now.

Priority booking for English National Ballet's Patrons and Friends will open for *Nutcracker* and *Raymonda* on Wednesday 14 April 2021. General booking for these performances will open on Wednesday 21 April 2021.

Booking opens for the live stream of *Emerging Dancer: A Celebration* in summer 2021 and for *THE FORSYTHE EVENING* in autumn 2021.

[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.

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

### **English National Ballet's 2021-2022 Season Listings:**

(note that web pages will go live Tuesday 30 March, 2pm)

#### **Emerging Dancer: A Celebration**

##### **LIVE STREAM**

02 September 2021

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

#### ***Creature* by Akram Khan WORLD PREMIERE**

**Sadler's Wells, London**

23 September – 02 October 2021

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

### ***Nutcracker***

#### **London Coliseum**

16 December 2021 – 08 January 2022

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

### ***Raymonda* WORLD PREMIERE**

#### **London Coliseum**

13 – 23 January 2022

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

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

#### **Harris Theater, Chicago, USA**

24 – 26 February 2022

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

### **THE FORSYTHE EVENING**

#### **Sadler's Wells, London**

31 March – 10 April 2022

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

Plans for English National Ballet's summer 2022 performances will be announced in due course.

To find out more about English National Ballet's digital work, visit [www.ballet.org.uk/enb-at-home](http://www.ballet.org.uk/enb-at-home)

### **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 live performances across the UK and on eminent international stages including The Bolshoi Theatre and Palais Garnier; its digital platforms Ballet on Demand and BalletActive; 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 when it moved into a purpose-built state-of-the-art home in east London, Mulryan Centre for Dance, bringing 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 agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in [Let's Create](#) that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high quality cultural experiences. We invest public money from Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision. [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

Following the Covid-19 crisis, the Arts Council developed a £160 million **Emergency Response Package**, with nearly 90% coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. We are also one of several bodies administering the Government's **Culture Recovery Fund** and unprecedented support package of £1.57 billion for the culture and heritage sector. Find out more at [www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19)

### **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 Ballymore, Principal Building Partner of English National Ballet**

Ballymore is a family-run property developer with a multi award-winning portfolio of some of Europe's largest and most transformative urban development projects. A privately-owned company, Ballymore was established by Chairman and Group Chief Executive Sean Mulryan and his wife Bernardine in Ballymore Eustace in 1982.

Ballymore's projects are defined by their originality and a commitment to quality. The company oversees every element of design, construction, and facilities management, constantly aiming to challenge industry norms. Driven by a desire to set new standards in architecture, development, partnerships and places, this commitment is evident in every detail.

We believe that 2021 will allow Ballymore to what we do best – identify opportunities, pursue challenging projects, and create remarkable places that deliver unparalleled living experiences – places with soul. Ballymore has significant land holdings across the UK, Ireland and Europe with around 10,000 homes currently under construction across the UK and Ireland. For more information please visit [www.ballymoregroup.com](http://www.ballymoregroup.com).

### **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 180 years of operation. 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. This investment is part of the company's ambitious plans for the future of Cunard globally and will be the first time since 1998 that Cunard will have four ships in simultaneous service. Cunard is based at Carnival House in Southampton and has been owned since 1998 by Carnival Corporation & plc (NYSE/LSE: CCL; NYSE:CUK). Cunard was awarded "Best World Cruise" in Porthole Cruise Magazine's 2019 Readers' Choice Awards