

English National Ballet

2023/2024 Season Announcement

- Artistic Director Designate Aaron S. Watkin's first season for English National Ballet
- Includes two world premieres, a UK premiere and a Company premiere
- New works from David Dawson, Andrea Miller and the UK premiere of Johan Inger's *Carmen*
- George Balanchine's *Theme and Variations* to be performed by English National Ballet for the first time
- Akram Khan's *Giselle* and Mary Skeaping's production performed in the same season
- Derek Deane's *Swan Lake* in-the-round returns to the Royal Albert Hall
- Ballet Futures: The Pipeline Project expands following a successful pilot

Today, **English National Ballet** is thrilled to announce its plans for the 2023/2024 season, the first programmed by Artistic Director Designate **Aaron S. Watkin**.

Featuring two world premieres, a UK premiere, a Company premiere and revivals of some of English National Ballet's most iconic works, the season represents the vast spectrum of ballet, forging innovation with ground-breaking new productions while continuing to honour the great tradition of large scale classical ballet.

Of his first season as Artistic Director of English National Ballet, Aaron S. Watkin said: *"Being entrusted to lead this brilliant organisation is a privilege. I am so grateful to be able to show audiences my vision for English National Ballet and share the immense talent and versatility this Company has to offer. By pairing works from some of the greatest classical choreographers with visceral new works by some of the most exciting artists working today. I believe we are showcasing the full potential of this brilliant artform for audiences across the country. I am proud to build on Tamara's legacy and will continue to forge innovation and embrace the great tradition of classical ballet. I am excited to bring the whole Company and our audiences on this journey, as we take English National Ballet into the next chapter in its rich history."*

Opening the season at **Sadler's Wells** (21 - 30 September) is a new triple bill, **Our Voices** featuring three ballets in three diverse styles: classical ballet, neo-classical ballet and contemporary dance, showcasing the strength and versatility of the Company.

Our Voices sees the World Premiere of a new interpretation of **Les Noces** by American choreographer **Andrea Miller** with artwork by renowned sculptor **Dame Phyllida Barlow**. Presented in its centenary year, *Les Noces* is a visceral piece that sees the dancers joined on stage by a live chorus from **Opera Holland Park**, accompanied by English National Ballet Philharmonic.

Returning to English National Ballet for the first time in 15 years, one of the world's leading neo-classical choreographers, **David Dawson** presents the World Premiere of his latest creation **Four Last Songs**. An uplifting and poignant work, *Four Last Songs* explores the beauty of humanity and the circle of life, set to the final score by Richard Strauss.

Of Four Last Songs, David Dawson said *"I was introduced to Four Last Songs at the age of 19 and it has been a constant presence in my life ever since - through all of my experiences, a true companion. It is an honour for me to be able to create this new ballet to a piece of music that is so close to my heart."*

Completing the programme for **Our Voices** is **Theme and Variations** by one of the most influential choreographers in ballet, **George Balanchine**. New to English National Ballet's repertoire, *Theme and Variations* sees 13 couples take to the stage in a beautiful showcase of virtuosity, featuring new set and designs for 2023 by **Roberta Guidi di Bagno**.

Having been seen by over 140,000 people in 10 countries and 16 cities around the world, **Akram Khan's Giselle** returns with performances on tour this autumn in **Manchester** (19 - 21 October) and

Bristol (26 - 28 October). In this acclaimed reimagining of the classic ballet, it tells the story of love, betrayal, and redemption, with an imposing set designed by Academy Award-winner Tim Yip.

Offering audiences the chance to see two versions of one of the great romantic ballets in the same season, **Mary Skeaping's** production of *Giselle* returns to the **London Coliseum** in January 2024. With its classical language, *Giselle* features some of ballet's most dramatic scenes and otherworldly images.

The magic of Christmas returns this festive season with ***Nutcracker*** on tour at the **Mayflower Theatre, Southampton** (30 November - 2 December) followed by performances at the **London Coliseum** this December. Continuing English National Ballet's tradition of presenting a version of *Nutcracker* every year since 1950, this production has already been seen by over 800,000 people, bringing joy to audiences young and old.

At Sadler's Wells in spring 2024 is the UK Premiere of **Johan Inger's** award-winning ***Carmen***. Originally created for Spain's Compañía Nacional de Danza, this two-act ballet tells the tragic love story of Carmen, Don Jose and the Toreador. Set to a score by Bizet and Shchedrin with new music from Spanish composer Marc Álvarez. *Carmen* offers audiences the chance to see a bold reimagining of this classic tragedy from Inger, whose work is rarely seen in the UK.

One of the biggest spectacles in ballet, Derek Deane's ***Swan Lake in-the-round*** returns to the **Royal Albert Hall** in summer 2024. Over 100 performers, including 60 dancing swans, bring the classic love story to life on one of the world's most famous stages. Featuring Tchaikovsky's glorious score, performed live by English National Ballet Philharmonic, *Swan Lake in-the-round* is perfect for both dedicated fans and first-time ballet goers.

For the first time since 2019 English National Ballet and **English National Ballet School** present ***My First Ballet: Swan Lake*** at the **Peacock Theatre** over Easter 2024. The perfect introduction to ballet, this specially adapted version of the world's most iconic ballet sees a narrator guide the audience along, making ballet accessible to audiences as young as three. The run will also include a relaxed performance as part of My First Inclusive Ballet outreach programme as well as a series of on-stage family workshops.

Returning in May, **Emerging Dancer** shines a light on talent throughout the Company. This special event sees the finalists showcase their artistry on stage. Alongside the Emerging Dancer Award, the evening will also see the winner of the People's Choice and Corps de Ballet Award announced.

Following a successful pilot last year, **Ballet Futures**, a talent pipeline project to incentivise young people from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds to participate in professional training, continues this year. Alongside schools in Birmingham, East London, Leicester, and West London, Ballet Futures expands to include the Adagio School of Dance in Brentwood, Essex. 2023 also marks the reimagining of **ENBYouthCo**, now in its 11th year and continuing to nurture talent and creativity through co-creation and performance opportunities.

English National Ballet is an industry leader in creative engagement practice, with pioneering programmes including **Dance for Parkinson's**, which this season will be delivered via six national hubs and as an online offer, and Dementia initiative **Mindful Movers**, delivered in care homes in East London. The season also sees **Ballet Explored**, our flagship project engaging pupils from secondary schools delivered in areas with low arts provision, and **Re-Play**, an annual community performance platform for English National Ballet's Engagement, Youth and Community dance groups from across East London.

Launched as a direct response to the pandemic, English National Ballet's online platforms – **Ballet Active** and **Ballet on Demand** – continue to expand the Company's reach, engaging more people in ballet. With over 200 classes and counting, Ballet Active gives people the chance to access a huge variety of dance classes, from ballet to contemporary, flamenco to South Asian dance, led by some of the leading names in dance including **Alleyn Dance**, **Jose Agudo** and **Sujata Banerjee**. Ballet on Demand allows people to revisit some of English National Ballet's iconic productions and specially commissioned films, available to rent or buy.

This season will also see the continued national and international distribution of ***Creature***, a collaboration between English National Ballet, Academy Award winning director **Asif Kapadia** and **Akram Khan**. Hailed as “a new frontier for cinema” (Little White Lies) *Creature* will also join Ballet on Demand on 22 May 2023.

Akram Khan's *Giselle*, *Nutcracker* and Mary Skeaping's *Giselle* open for priority booking to Friends from 10am on Thursday 2 March 2023, with general booking open from 10am on Wednesday 8 March 2023.

Our Voices, *Carmen*, *My First Ballet: Swan Lake* and *Swan Lake in-the-round* will open for booking later this year.

- Ends -

For further information, interview requests, and images, please contact Robert James, Communications Consultant on robert.james@ballet.org.uk or call 020 7590 2932

Listings information

Our Voices

Theme and Variations by Balanchine / *Four Last Songs* by Dawson / *Les Noces* by Miller

Sadler's Wells

21 – 30 September 2023

www.ballet.org.uk/production/our-voices

Akram Khan's *Giselle*

Manchester Palace Theatre

19 – 21 October 2023

www.ballet.org.uk/production/akram-khan-giselle

Akram Khan's *Giselle*

Bristol Hippodrome

26 – 28 October 2023

www.ballet.org.uk/production/akram-khan-giselle

Nutcracker

Mayflower Theatre, Southampton

30 November – 2 December 2023

www.ballet.org.uk/production/nutcracker

Nutcracker

London Coliseum

14 December 2023 – 7 January 2024

www.ballet.org.uk/production/nutcracker

Giselle by Mary Skeaping

London Coliseum

11 – 21 January 2024

www.ballet.org.uk/production/mary-skeaping-giselle

Carmen

Sadler's Wells

27 March – 6 April 2024

www.ballet.org.uk/production/carmen

My First Ballet: Swan Lake

Peacock Theatre, London

4 – 14 April 2024

www.ballet.org.uk/production/my-first-ballet-swan-lake

Emerging Dancer
Venue and dates to be confirmed
www.ballet.org.uk/production/emerging-dancer-2024

Swan Lake in-the-round
Royal Albert Hall
12 – 23 June 2024
<https://www.ballet.org.uk/production/swan-lake-round>

Notes to Editors

English National Ballet is a National Portfolio Organisation supported by Arts Council England. Ballymore is Principal Building Partner of English National Ballet. English National Ballet is an Associate Company of Sadler's Wells.

Swan Lake in-the-round is a co-production with the Royal Albert Hall

New Work this season is funded by Fatima and Mark Grizzelle and the New Work Fund supporters

Dance Health programmes are supported by Linbury Trust, Backstage Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation, City Bridge Trust, The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust and G & K Boyes Charitable Trust

ENBYouthCo is funded by Art Mentor Foundation Lucerne

Ballet Futures is supported by the Leverhulme Trust, Old Possum's Practical Trust, Eggardon Trust, and Alexis and Frances Prens.

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; its distinguished orchestra, English National Ballet Philharmonic; its digital platforms Ballet on Demand and BalletActive; being a UK leader in creative learning and engagement practice, building innovative partnerships to deliver flagship Dance Health interventions such as Dance for Parkinson's and Dance for Dementia, and through talent development initiatives including ENBYouthCo and Ballet Futures which looks to create a more diverse and inclusive future for the artform.

English National Ballet continues to add ground-breaking new works to its repertoire whilst celebrating the tradition of great classical ballet, gaining acclaim for artistic excellence and creativity. 2019 saw the Company enter a new chapter in its history with a move to a purpose-built state-of-the-art home in east London, allowing a renewed commitment to creativity, ambition, and connection to more people, near and far, than ever before.

About Ballymore

Ballymore: 40 years of forward thinking

Ballymore is a leading property developer with a multi award-winning portfolio of some of Europe's largest and most transformative urban development projects. Our projects are defined by their vision, originality and commitment to quality and we are driven to set new, lasting standards in design, creativity and architecture. Every place we create has a unique personality inspired by its location, history, people and culture, nurtured through strong relationships with our expert partners and those we develop with local communities. We enliven areas well before the first foundations are laid and we remain long after the last brick is in place to ensure our customers are well looked after and the communities continue to thrive. Our landmark developments in the UK span the breadth of Greater London, from our new riverside communities in Royal Wharf, London City Island and Embassy Gardens, where we have transformed underused land into lively new neighbourhoods, over to Brentford where we are reconnecting the High Street with the waterfront and revitalising the town

centre. In Ireland, we develop homes across a number of counties and have established Dublin Landings as a new commercial centre at North Wall Quay. We are also working in partnership with Diageo and CIE to design and deliver mixed-use developments at the Guinness brewery and Connolly Station in Dublin.