

Press Release: Tuesday 07 November 2023

## English National Ballet announces appointment of Maria Seletskaja as new Music Director.

English National Ballet has today announced the appointment of **Maria Seletskaja** as Music Director.

Seletskaja started her career as a professional ballet dancer performing with leading companies around the world, before making the transition to conductor. She studied music theory, harmony, and orchestration at Berklee College of Music in Boston and during her final years as a dancer, was also an assistant conductor at Stuttgart Ballet where she made her conducting debut in April 2017. Since 2018, Seletskaja has dedicated herself to conducting, working with prestigious ballet companies including The National Ballet of Canada where she was Conductor-in-Residence, San Francisco Ballet, The Royal Danish Ballet and most recently, Paris Opera Ballet, where she conducted *Soirée Robbins*.

**Aaron S. Watkin, English National Ballet's Artistic Director, said:** *"Maria's innate understanding of the art form gives her a unique perspective, which, alongside her energy and intelligence, are a perfect fit for Music Director at English National Ballet. I am excited to work together and look forward to welcoming her to the Company."*

**Maria Seletskaja said:** *"Taking up the position of Music Director at English National Ballet marks the beginning of an exciting chapter in my professional life, which I am thrilled about. I am looking forward to working alongside English National Ballet's Artistic Director, Aaron Watkin, and sharing my love of music with the wonderful musicians of English National Ballet Philharmonic, the dancers, and of course, our audiences."*

Working closely with the Artistic Director, the role of Music Director will see Seletskaja oversee the creative direction and quality of music at English National Ballet and English National Ballet Philharmonic, as well as leadership of the Music Department.

Seletskaja will conduct with English National Ballet at performances of *Nutcracker* and *Swan Lake* in-the-round in January and June 2024 respectively, before starting her full-time role as Music Director at the beginning of the 2024-2025 Season.

Seletskaja takes over from previous Music Director, Gavin Sutherland, who continues to work with English National Ballet as Principal Guest Conductor.

-ENDS-

For further information, interview requests, and images, please contact Alice Lawley, Head of Press and Communications, on [alice.lawley@ballet.org.uk](mailto:alice.lawley@ballet.org.uk)

### 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.

### About Maria Seletskaja

Maria Seletskaja graduated from Tallinn Ballet School in 2002 and continued her studies at St. Petersburg Vaganova Ballet Academy. From 2003 to 2006, she studied choreography at Tallinn University. She has been a soloist with Estonian National Ballet, Staatsballett Berlin, Zurich Ballet and the Royal Ballet of Flanders and guested in many theatres around the world. While pursuing her career in dance, Maria studied both piano and violin. She studied music theory, harmony, and orchestration at

Berklee College of Music in Boston and conducted under James Tuggle's tutelage. During her final years as a dancer, she was also an assistant conductor at Stuttgart Ballet where she made her conducting debut in April 2017. Since 2018, Seletskaja has dedicated herself fully to conducting, working with prestigious ballet companies including The National Ballet of Canada where she was Conductor-in-Residence, San Francisco Ballet, The Royal Danish Ballet and most recently, Paris Opera Ballet, where she conducted *Soirée Robbins*. In 2022, she completed her Master's studies in orchestral conducting with Maestro Arvo Volmer at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre.

### **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 programmes such as Dance for Parkinson's; and through talent development initiatives including 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.