

English National Ballet and English National Ballet School present
My First Ballet: *Swan Lake*
Peacock Theatre, London

Thursday 4 - Saturday 13 April 2024

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

English National Ballet and English National Ballet School present My First Ballet: *Swan Lake*, a reimagined version of the iconic ballet created especially for children as young as three. Adapted to an hour in length and with a narrator to help young audiences follow the story, My First Ballet: *Swan Lake* is the perfect introduction to the magic of ballet. It will be performed at the Peacock Theatre, London, from Thursday 4 – Saturday 13 April 2023.



Campaign image for My First Ballet: Swan Lake © Illustration by Mark Ruffle

Featuring choreography by Antonio Castilla, English National Ballet's Répétiteur, and Dramaturgy by Lou Cope, this version follows the familiar story of *Swan Lake*, but told from a different point of view.

Antonio Castilla, Choreographer of My First Ballet: *Swan Lake*, said: *"I'm very excited to be working on this project, once again, and to be charged with telling our young audiences this wonderful story. This version of My First Ballet: Swan Lake, focusses on Odile, rather than Odette, with the narrative following her journey and the difficult decision she must make, allowing us to explore important themes of friendship, forgiveness and honesty."*

Since its creation in 2012, over 320,000 people have enjoyed English National Ballet's My First Ballet series.

Aaron S. Watkin, Artistic Director of English National Ballet, said: *"The My First Ballet series is English National Ballet's opportunity to introduce the magical experience of ballet to a new generation of audiences. It is our aim to provide a first introduction to the artform in a way that is accessible and welcoming, whilst maintaining high standards of artistry and production. My First Ballet is also a unique chance for the second-year students of English National Ballet School to tour a professional production and gain valuable industry insight and experience. I hope that My First Ballet: Swan Lake will cast its spell once again, and spark an ongoing love of live performance for tomorrow's ballet fans".*

The My First Ballet series is performed by students of English National Ballet School, providing them with valuable rehearsal and performance experience within a professional touring company. This year, artists from English National Ballet will be guesting in several performances.

Families can also experience the magic of My First Ballet: *Swan Lake* on stage at the Peacock Theatre in a series of creative ballet workshops, led by English National Ballet's Associate Dance Artists and accompanied by live musicians. Participants will also have the chance to get up close to the beautiful costumes and production scenery.

-ENDS-

For further information, and interview requests, please contact Ines Carvalho, Press Officer, on ines.carvalho@ballet.org.uk or call 020 7581 1245.

Listings:

English National Ballet
My First Ballet: Swan Lake
Peacock Theatre, London
Thursday 4 – Saturday 13 April 2024
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Press Performance: Thursday, 4 April 5.30pm

Credits:

Choreography: Antonio Castilla
Music: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Design: Peter Farmer
Dramaturgy: Lou Cope

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 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.

About English National Ballet School

English National Ballet School is a world-renowned specialist training centre for aspiring and highly talented young ballet dancers aged 16 to 19.

Founded in 1988 by English National Ballet, today the school exists as a separate entity but maintains strong links with its parent company, sharing its commitment to excellence and access. Its mission is to nurture and develop the next generation of world-class dance artists; artists who are confident and versatile, able to push boundaries and bring their creativity to the fore.

Students participate in a three-year programme, validated by Trinity College London, with graduates joining prestigious dance companies worldwide. Currently a third of the dancers at English National Ballet are graduates of the School. The School also offer weekly children's ballet classes, ENBS Juniors, for 3 – 10 year olds.

My First Ballet: *Swan Lake* - Symbol Resources

English National Ballet are delighted to once again be working in partnership with Widgit to create a range of symbol resources alongside My First Ballet: *Swan Lake*. These resources aim to make ballet more accessible to children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Widgit symbols support written text to make the meaning clearer and easier to understand. All of these resources are available to download for free (PDF format) and extra activities are printed in programmes. The My First Ballet: *Swan Lake* Symbol Resources are designed for use before, during and after performances.

My First Ballet: *Swan Lake* – Relaxed Performance

A Relaxed Performance is a less formal theatre experience for anyone who would benefit from a more relaxed atmosphere to enjoy a show. They support noise and movement within the auditorium during a show, re-entry when needed so house lights are left on throughout, and a separate chill-out space for anyone who might need it at any time during their visit. We also provide a Visual Story so people can familiarise themselves with the theatre and key details about the show in advance.