

18 January 2026 at 1.30pm
London Coliseum

This performance runs for
2 hours including one interval

This year marks the tenth anniversary of Akram Khan's *Giselle*. We hope this special performance challenges, surprises, or simply envelops you in the emotional force of this extraordinary work.

Discover more about this enchanting production through the videos, blogs and galleries on our website and social media. Visit ballet.org.uk or follow us online.

Direction and Choreography
Akram Khan

Visual and Costume Design
Tim Yip

Lighting Design
Mark Henderson

Dramaturgy
Ruth Little

Assistant Choreographer
Andrej Petrović

Repetiteur
Mavin Khoo

**Co-produced by Sadler's Wells
and Manchester International
Festival**

**Composition and Sound Design,
after the original score by Adolphe
Adam**

Vincenzo Lamagna

Orchestration
Gavin Sutherland

Sound Design
Yvonne Gilbert

**English National Ballet
Philharmonic**

Music Director and Conductor
Maria Seletskaja

Leader
Matthew Scrivener

Act I

Giselle
Fernanda Oliveira

Albrecht
Aitor Arrieta

Hilarion
Jose María Lorca Menchón

Landlord
Junor Souza

Bathilde
Isabelle Brouwers

Giselle's Friends
Georgia Bould
Jung ah Choi
Carolyne Galvao
Minju Kang

Act II

Myrtha, Queen of the Wilis
Sangeun Lee

Wilis
Artists of the Company

Today will be dancer Isabelle Brouwers' last performance with English National Ballet, and her retirement from the stage. After 11 amazing years with our Company, she is moving to an exciting new chapter in her career, as Artistic Director of Yorkshire Ballet Seminars. Please join us at the end of the show to celebrate Isabelle and thank her for her unforgettable performances and remarkable contributions over the years.

Celebrating Fernanda Oliveira's 25 years with English National Ballet

In 2000, Brazilian ballerina Fernanda Oliveira joined English National Ballet, rising through the ranks to become Lead Principal. Twenty-five years on, her journey stands as a testament to her artistry, dedication and lasting impact.

"I was happy to be working, and dancing so much", she remembers about her first year with us. "It was hard though – performing on tour every day, and I danced principal roles but was also in the corps de ballet. I grew so much as a performer, and it prepared me for the rest of my career."

Former Artistic Director, Derek Deane, cast Fernanda in her first principal role in *Swan Lake*. "From the very beginning one could see that she would go far and grow into a luminous ballerina."

Fernanda's journey to the UK began in the suburbs of Rio de Janeiro, where she grew up. Her dance teachers immediately noticed her potential and there was no looking back. When she was a teenager, the celebrated Brazilian dancer Cecilia Kerche and her husband Pedro Kraszczuk took her under their wing. "She was extremely focused and dedicated in class" says Kraszczuk, "she's always had a very gifted physique with many possibilities to be a standout dancer".

Fernanda really wanted to go to London. She left Latin America to join the third year of Royal Ballet School, with the hope of joining a UK company afterwards. At the end of her studies, she received a contract with English National Ballet.

Over the years she has performed many roles – Manon, La Sylphide, Odette/Odile, Clara and Sugar Plum Fairy, Juliet, Cinderella, Medora, Raymonda – and in works by many leading choreographers, such as Jyri Kylian, William Forsythe, Ben Stevenson, Russell Maliphant, Liam Scarlett, Akram Khan, Hans van Manen and more.

"I feel so grateful that I've been able to dance all the roles I wanted to", says Fernanda. She likes playing characters that "you can dig into, like Juliet or Manon, where you can put some of your own life or experience in your performance".

Giselle, in Akram Khan's version, is just that. Fernanda has performed it since 2016: "it's a role that keeps giving, really. The choreography is one that you can mould to your own body – you don't have to fit in a box, and that feels great. And emotionally, every time we perform this ballet, I find a new meaning".

When asked what makes Fernanda such a special performer, her colleagues – past and present – talked about her natural talent, her strong work ethic and attention to detail. They also shared stories of laughter, friendship and connection, describing her as a thoughtful, caring friend.

What's her advice for younger dancers? "There are no shortcuts. You can aim high, but you need to experience every role, no matter how small. They are the foundations of the ballets – each role on stage matters and completes the picture, otherwise the choreographer wouldn't have put it there. You have to go through it all so when you get to the top you know what that means, and you don't take it for granted."

Please join us in congratulating Fernanda for her incredible 25 years with English National Ballet!



Image by Isabella Turolla