



ROYAL
OPERA
HOUSE

THE ROYAL BALLET

Director

KEVIN O'HARE CBE

Founder

DAME NINETTE DE VALOIS OM CH DBE

Founder Choreographer

SIR FREDERICK ASHTON OM CH CBE

Founder Music Director

CONSTANT LAMBERT

Prima Ballerina Assoluta

DAME MARGOT FONTEYN DBE

THE WINTER'S TALE

BALLET IN A PROLOGUE AND THREE ACTS

This Season's performances of *The Winter's Tale* mark the ballet's 10th anniversary

In loving memory of Peter Wheeldon, my dad, 1935-2014

Choreography **CHRISTOPHER WHEELDON**

Scenario **CHRISTOPHER WHEELDON AND JOBY TALBOT**

Music **JOBY TALBOT**

By arrangement with Chester Music Ltd

Designer **BOB CROWLEY**

Lighting Designer **NATASHA KATZ**

Projection Designer **DANIEL BRODIE**

Silk Effects Designer **BASIL TWIST**

Associate Designer **JAIMIE TODD**

Lighting Associate **SIMON BENNISON**

Staging **JACQUELIN BARRETT,**

CHRISTOPHER SAUNDERS

Répétiteurs **SIAN MURPHY, SAMIRA SAIDI**

Principal coaching **EDWARD WATSON,**

ZENAIDA YANOWSKY

Benesh Choreologist **GREGORY MISLIN**

Conductor **KOEN KESSELS**

ORCHESTRA OF THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

Concert Master **SERGEY LEVITIN**

Exceptional philanthropic support from

Royal Opera House Principals **JULIA AND HANS RAUSING**

Season Principal **ALINE FORIEL-DESTETZET**

Generous philanthropic support from **AUD JEBSEN,**

YLEANA ARCE FOUNDATION, MR AND MRS EDWARD

ATKIN CBE, JOHN AND SUSAN BURNS OBE, KENNETH

AND SUSAN GREEN, THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

ENDOWMENT FUND and **AN ANONYMOUS DONOR**

Artistic Associate Christopher Wheeldon generously

supported by **KENNETH AND SUSAN GREEN**

The role of Hermione Queen of Sicilia is generously

supported by **WHITNEY GORE AND PIERRE**

CHABOUSSANT

The 2023/24 Royal Ballet Season generously supported by

AUD JEBSEN

GENERAL REHEARSAL

FRIDAY 3 MAY 2024 AT 12.30PM

APPROXIMATE TIMINGS

This performance will last approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes, with two intervals.

ACT I 50 minutes

INTERVAL 30 minutes

ACT II 35 minutes

INTERVAL 25 minutes

ACT III 25 minutes

GUIDANCE

Parental guidance recommended. This performance includes stylized depictions of the death of a child.

CAST

Leontes **MATTHEW BALL**

King of Sicilia

Hermione **MARIANELA NUÑEZ**

Queen of Sicilia

Perdita **YASMINE NAGHDI**

Princess of Sicilia

Mamillius **RAFFERTY SMALE**

Prince of Sicilia

Paulina **MAYARA MAGRI**

Head of Queen Hermione's Household

Antigonus **HARRIS BELL**

Head of King Leontes' Household

Polixenes **LUKAS B. BRÆNDSRØD**

King of Bohemia

Florizel **WILLIAM BRACEWELL**

Prince of Bohemia

Steward **AIDEN O'BRIEN**

Head of King Polixenes' Household

Father Shepherd **GARY AVIS**

Brother Clown **LIAM BOSWELL**

Shepherd's Son

Young Shepherdess **MARIANNA TSEMBENHOI**

Students and Junior Associates of The Royal Ballet

School appear by kind permission of the Artistic Director

CHRISTOPHER POWNEY

SYNOPSIS

Prologue

Two kings separated as children are reunited in adulthood.

One king, Leontes of Sicilia, marries Hermione, giving her a beautiful emerald. They have a son, Mamillius, and are blissfully happy. The other king, Polixenes of Bohemia, visits the court of Leontes. He is delighted to be reunited with his old friend and stays for nine months. By the time of his departure, Hermione is soon to give birth to her second child.

Act I

The Court of Sicilia

It is the day of Polixenes' departure. The Bohemian court say goodbye to their Sicilian friends. At Hermione's request, Polixenes agrees to stay on another week. In a flash of jealousy, Leontes becomes convinced that his wife has been unfaithful and is

carrying Polixenes' child. Jealousy turns to rage and he attacks Polixenes, who flees back to Bohemia. Leontes publicly accuses Hermione of adultery and treason, then has her arrested. This so distresses Mamillius that he falls seriously ill.

In prison, Hermione has given birth to a daughter. The head of her household, Paulina, brings the newborn to Leontes, hoping to convince him that the baby is his daughter. Instead, Leontes violently rejects the child, then orders Paulina's husband Antigonus to abandon the baby in a remote place. Antigonus sets sail into a brewing storm with the baby and some treasure, including the emerald once given to Hermione by Leontes.

Hermione is brought to trial and pleads her innocence. Leontes, now quite mad, refuses to believe her. Dazed and feverish, Mamillius enters the courtroom and, upon witnessing the unfolding tragedy, he collapses and dies from distress. Seeing the death of her child, Hermione too collapses dead and is taken away. Only now does Leontes realize the disastrous consequences of his terrible mistake.

The Shores of Bohemia

Battling the storm, Antigonus struggles ashore to abandon the baby princess. As he leaves, he is pursued and killed by a wild bear. His ship, waiting at sea, is smashed to pieces on the rocks. As day breaks, a shepherd and his son Clown discover the baby girl and the treasure.

Interval

Act II

A hillside in Bohemia. Sixteen years later

Perdita, the abandoned daughter of King Leontes and Queen Hermione, has been raised by the shepherd who found her. She dances beneath the great tree with her love, Prince Florizel, the son of Polixenes, whom the other villagers know only as a shepherd boy.

The villagers arrive for the annual springtime festival. King Polixenes, who has heard that his son has been cavorting with a shepherdess, sends his steward to spy on the young prince. When the steward confirms his suspicions, Polixenes is enraged, and demands to see for himself.

At the festival, Perdita is to be crowned May Queen. In honour of the occasion, Father Shepherd presents her with the emerald necklace he found with her on the beach. Polixenes and his steward arrive in disguise, keen to see what Florizel is up to. On witnessing Florizel's engagement to a mere shepherdess, Polixenes reveals himself. He is furious with Florizel, and condemns Perdita and her family to death. They all flee by boat to Sicilia, pursued by Polixenes.

Interval

Act III

A clifftop in Sicilia

King Leontes mourns by the clifftop graves of his wife and son, watched over by Paulina. Perdita and Florizel's ship approaches Sicilia.

The palace in Sicilia

Perdita and Florizel appeal to Leontes to allow their

union, and to intercede with the enraged Polixenes on their behalf. Leontes is taken with the likeness of the Prince to Polixenes. He agrees to help the young couple, who remind him of his lost children. Polixenes arrives and Leontes tries to reason with him, but he violently handles Perdita, revealing the emerald. The long-lost Princess of Sicilia is miraculously alive and the two kings are reunited.

The Palace celebrates the wedding of Florizel and Perdita. As the festivities die down, Leontes is led by Paulina to see a new statue of Hermione. Deeply remorseful, he kneels at its base. Suddenly, the statue comes to life - it is Hermione, who is alive and has been kept in hiding by Paulina for 16 years. She embraces Leontes, and the family is reunited.

THE ROYAL BALLET

Director **KEVIN O'HARE** CBE

Music Director **KOEN KESSELS**

Resident Choreographer **WAYNE MCGREGOR** CBE

Artistic Associate **CHRISTOPHER WHEELDON** OBE

Administrative Director **HEATHER BAXTER**

Rehearsal Director **CHRISTOPHER SAUNDERS**

Clinical Director Ballet Healthcare **SHANE KELLY**

GUIDELINES

Photography and filming are prohibited during performances in any of our auditoriums. You are welcome to take pictures throughout the rest of the building and before performances and share them with us through social media. Commercial photography and filming must be agreed in advance with our press team.

Larger bags and backpacks need to be checked into our complimentary cloakrooms. Unattended bags may be removed. Please do not place any personal belongings on the ledges in front of you.

Only bottled water and ice cream purchased from the premises can be taken into the auditorium. If you arrive late to the auditorium or leave during a performance, you will not be allowed back to your seat until the interval or a suitable break.

Smoking and vaping are not permitted anywhere on the premises.

The safety of our visitors, staff and artists is still our priority. To help us provide a comfortable experience for everyone, please be mindful of others and their personal space.

Our staff are committed to treating everyone with dignity and respect and we ask that you show them and your fellow audience members respect too. We adopt a zero-tolerance approach in response to anyone who interacts with our staff or with fellow audience members in an intimidating, aggressive or threatening manner.

DIGITAL CAST SHEETS

We are working hard on our commitment towards becoming more sustainable and are striving for our net zero goal of 2035. By using digital rather than printed cast sheets, we have reduced our paper consumption by over five tonnes per year. You can view our digital cast sheets on a computer, tablet or smartphone by scanning the QR codes displayed around the building using your smartphone's camera app. They are also displayed on screens outside the auditoria. Cast sheets are generously supported by the Royal Opera House Endowment Fund.