



Press release

Tuesday 30 April 2024

Royal Ballet and Opera | 2024/25 Season announcement

- **World Premiere of Mark-Anthony Turnage's opera *Festen***
- **Eight new opera productions across two stages including: *Eugene Onegin*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *Die Walküre*, *Semele*, *The Sound Voice Project* and a Bernstein double bill**
- **European Premiere of Wayne McGregor's *MaddAddam***
- **Eight works new to The Royal Ballet by choreographers including Christopher Wheeldon, Joseph Toonga and Pam Tanowitz**
- **40 years of breaking down barriers with our pioneering learning programmes**
- **11 productions shown in 1,500 cinemas across the globe**
- **Tickets available from £3 - on sale from Wednesday 10 July**

The **Royal Ballet and Opera** today announces its 2024/25 Season. Opening on Monday 2 September 2024 under a new and combined organisational name, the Season features a programme of bold new productions, alongside returning audience favourites, thrilling debuts and bright new voices.

Alex Beard, Chief Executive of the Royal Ballet and Opera, said:

"Today we announce a Season of extraordinary breadth and ambition - to audiences old and new, in schools and cinemas across the UK, and through streaming and digital media, right across the world. Bringing ballet into our name is long overdue - The Royal Ballet and The Royal Opera have performed under the same roof since 1946 - and both companies now enjoy the prominence that they rightfully deserve. The whole of the Royal Ballet and Opera is far more than the sum of our parts. We may perform at the Royal Opera House, but three quarters of what we do is experienced by people outside this building and, as we mark 40 years of our Learning programme, the impact and influence of the Royal Ballet and Opera can be felt in every corner of the country."

The evolution of its name, the Royal Ballet and Opera, celebrates the institution in its entirety, recognising the whole, not just one of its parts. Together, the Royal Ballet and Opera will continue to perform at Covent Garden's Royal Opera House, with performances shown in cinemas around the world, marking an exciting new era for the two companies as they enter a thrilling 2024/25 Season.

The Royal Opera 2024/25 Season

In an ambitious Season, eight new productions spanning three centuries are spread across the Main Stage and the Linbury Theatre, including the world premiere of ***Festen***. Based on Academy Award-winning filmmaker **Thomas Vinterberg**'s 1998 cult film of the same name, ***Festen*** is composed by **Mark-Anthony Turnage** (***Greek, Anna Nicole, Coraline***) with a libretto by **Lee Hall** (***Billy Elliot***) and will be directed by **Richard Jones**. Previously a hit West End play, this darkest of comedy-dramas delves into the disturbing subject of abuse and generational trauma, with a cast including **Allan Clayton, Stéphane Degout, Gerald Finley, Eva-Maria Westbroek, Natalya Romaniw** and more, with **Edward Gardner** conducting.

Director of The Royal Opera, Oliver Mears, said:

“2024/25 is set to be a thrilling Season for opera here at the Royal Opera House. With the world premiere of *Festen*, a brand-new commission by Mark-Anthony Turnage, we reaffirm our commitment to new opera; some of the greatest singers of our time perform alongside the most exciting voices of the future; and phenomenal creative teams bring unforgettable stories to life with eight new productions across both our stages. And as ever, our world-class Orchestra and Chorus will offer exactly the kind of intense, rich experiences that audiences are craving.”

In a year that has seen **Leonard Bernstein** celebrated in mainstream cinema with the success of film biopic *Maestro*, his two major opera works will be staged at Covent Garden for the first time. The Linbury Theatre opera season opens with two of his semi-autobiographical operatic masterpieces, ***Trouble in Tahiti*** and ***A Quiet Place***, directed by Oliver Mears and conducted by **Nicholas Chalmers**.

In the autumn, **Ted Huffman** (***4.48: Psychosis***) will make his Main Stage debut directing a new staging of **Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin**. **Henrik Nánási** conducts **Gordon Bintner** in the title role, with **Kristina Mkhitaryan** (Tatyana), **Liparit Avetisyan** (Lensky), and **Avery Amereau** (Olga). After the success of ***Cavalleria rusticana/Pagliacci*** and ***Carmen***, **Damiano Michieletto** returns to Covent Garden to direct **Offenbach's** last and greatest work, ***The Tales of Hoffmann***. Conducted by **Antonello Manacorda, Juan Diego Flórez** and **Leonardo Caimi** share the title role and are joined by **Alex Esposito, Julie Boulianne** and **Olga Pudova, Marina Costa-Jackson, and Ermonela Jaho** in the three soprano roles.

Following the glittering triumph of *Das Rheingold*, **Barrie Kosky** delves back into **Wagner's** mythic universe with the second instalment of the *Ring cycle*, *Die Walküre*. With **Antonio Pappano** leading from the podium, **Christopher Maltman** reprises the role of Wotan, alongside **Elisabet Strid** (Brünnhilde), **Lise Davidsen** (Sieglinde), and **Stanislas de Barbeyrac** (Siegmund).

Premiered in 1774, *Semele* is the latest in our **Handel** series of operas and oratorios that were first performed at Covent Garden. Darkly satirical, this new production from Oliver Mears considers class, privilege and degradation. Handel specialist **Christian Curnyn** conducts as **Pretty Yende** marks her return to Covent Garden in the title role, with **Ben Bliss** making his House debut as Jupiter.

Between Antonio Pappano's departure as Music Director of The Royal Opera and **Jakub Hruša's** arrival in September 2025, this Season hosts them both. Hruša conducts **Corinne Winters**, **Karita Mattila**, **Thomas Atkins** and **Nicky Spence** in the revival of **Claus Guth's** Olivier Award-winning production of *Jenůfa*. Other unmissable returning favourites include the first revivals of **Tobias Kratzer's** *Fidelio* conducted by **Alexander Soddy** and **Adele Thomas' Il trovatore** conducted by **Giacomo Sagripanti** and **Carlo Rizzi**. **Aigul Akhmetshina** reprises the role of Carmen alongside **Freddie De Tommaso**, conducted by **Mark Elder**. **Ariane Matiakh** conducts the second cast.

Commemorating the centenary of **Puccini's** death, **Speranza Scappucci**, Principal Guest Conductor Designate, leads her first Covent Garden stage production, Richard Jones' *La bohème*. Also returning is **Jonathan Kent's** *Tosca* starring **Sonya Yoncheva**, **SeokJong Baek** and **Bryn Terfel**, conducted by **Eun Sun Kim** in her House debut. **Andrei Șerban's** *Turandot* is conducted by **Rafael Payare** and **Francesco Ivan Ciampa** with **Sondra Radvanovsky** and **Ewa Piłonka** in the title role.

The Season opens with revivals of **Richard Eyre's** *La traviata* and **David McVicar's** *The Marriage of Figaro* which sees **Julia Jones** conducting rising stars **Ying Fang** and **Huw Montague Rendall** alongside **Jacquelyn Stucker** and **Luca Micheletti**. Completing the Season are David McVicar's *Faust* with **Stefan Pop**, **Erwin Schrott** and **Lisette Oropesa** in the main roles and **Robert Carsen's** *Aida*. For Christmas, **Antony McDonald's** story-book production of *Hansel and Gretel* is conducted by **Giedrė Šlekytė** who makes her House debut.

In the autumn, the Linbury Theatre will present *The Sound Voice Project*. With music by **Hannah Conway**, this internationally award-winning opera-video installation features a libretto by **Hazel Gould** and performances by **Roderick Williams** and **Lucy Crowe**, raising questions about how we make ourselves heard, how we listen, and which voices are invited to the stage.

Continuing our **Britten** odyssey, impassioned opera meets dreamlike dance in a Royal Ballet and Opera double production of ***Phaedra + Minotaur***, a collaboration with award-winning director **Deborah Warner** and choreographer **Kim Brandstrup**. Last performed as part of **4/4** (2020), the work sees **Christine Rice** reprise her Olivier award-nominated role - expertly harnessing Phaedra's eroticism and despair. The **Jette Parker Artists** programme welcomes seven talented newcomers who will perform on stage throughout the year, as well as bringing their talents to a lively new production of Telemann's ***Pimpinone*** in the Linbury Theatre.

In the summer, the award-winning, interactive, multi-sensory opera for toddlers and babies ***Catch a Sea Star***, will be staged in the **Clore Studio**. With music from **J.S. Bach**, children can step into an enchanting underworld realm of mermaids and sea monsters.

The Royal Ballet 2024/25 Season

In 2024/25 The Royal Ballet presents a diverse programme of works that celebrate the Company's rich heritage while featuring groundbreaking creations by some of the world's leading choreographers and creative teams.

Following the landmark success of *Woolf Works* and *The Dante Project*, **Wayne McGregor** returns with the European premiere of ***MaddAddam***. Combining forces of contemporary dance, music, fashion and literary worlds, **Margaret Atwood's** monumental trilogy of novels (*Oryx and Crake*, *The Year of the Flood* and *MaddAddam*) comes alive in this thrilling visceral three-act ballet. With a specially commissioned score by celebrated composer **Max Richter** and costume design by **Gareth Pugh**, it promises to be a spectacular experience.

In October, **Encounters: Four Contemporary Ballets** features the work of four distinctive choreographers championed by The Royal Ballet on the Main Stage. Experience a spectrum of human emotion beginning with **Kyle Abraham's** gentle meditation on love, loss and memory in ***The Weathering***. Four characters battle for control in **Crystal Pite's** gripping boardroom drama ***The Statement***. Expanding ***Dispatch Duet***, which received critical acclaim on its premiere in 2022, **Pam Tanowitz** employs her trademark style to turn the conventions of dance inside out. **Joseph Toonga** presents his second Main Stage work for the Company where the idioms of classical ballet and hip-hop converge.

Masses of dancers move as a mesmerising whole in **Crystal Pite's** ***Light of Passage*** which receives its first revival in February. Grappling with themes of safe passage, displacement, community and mortality, this award-winning work is set to **Gorecki's** affecting *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* – a reminder of the power of human connection in our turbulent times.

Wonderland becomes wondrously real as the ballet Season opens with two Technicolor adaptations of **Lewis Carroll's** popular children's story, ***Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*** – both of which will be part of our **Schools' Matinee** roster. On the Main Stage, The Royal

Ballet's Artistic Associate **Christopher Wheeldon**'s interpretation partners with magical music by composer **Joby Talbot** and whimsical designs by **Bob Crowley**. Powerhouse storytellers **ZooNation: The Kate Prince Company** return to the Linbury Theatre with ***The Mad Hatter's Tea Party***, transforming Carroll's Wonderland into a dysfunctional institution in this energetic hip-hop show featuring original music and family-friendly storytelling.

Christopher Wheeldon's versatility as a choreographer is showcased in a new mixed programme - **Ballet to Broadway** - where sensuous contemporary ballet meets the energy of musical theatre. Luminescent and shimmering, ***Fool's Paradise*** marked the first of his many collaborations with composer Joby Talbot. Three works follow, new to The Royal Ballet. Recognising Wheeldon's extraordinary success in musical theatre, the Company performs the ballet from his Tony Award-winning musical ***An American in Paris***, set to **Gershwin's** jazzy melodies. Its zesty spirit is contrasted with two duets of intimacy and yearning. The wistful songs of **Joni Mitchell** set the scene for ***The Two of Us***, while the music of **Keaton Henson** is used in the tender duet from ***Us*** that Wheeldon created for **BalletBoyz** in 2017.

When **George Balanchine** arrived on the shores of America, he changed the landscape of 20th-century ballet. Pushing the boundaries of the art form with extreme speed, dynamism and athleticism, he defined the American neoclassical style. With **Balanchine: Three Signature Works**, The Royal Ballet present a triptych of distinctive pieces in one programme. ***Serenade*** was the first ballet he created in America, and its ethereal beauty is contrasted with the avant-garde ***Prodigal Son***, a parable of sin and redemption. ***Symphony in C*** with its symmetrical formations and crystalline placements will bring this programme to a majestic and exhilarating close.

The Royal Ballet brings Shakespeare's young lovers vividly to life with the return of **Kenneth MacMillan's *Romeo and Juliet***, a modern classic that celebrates its 60th anniversary. **Prokofiev's** glorious score feeds this epic tragedy, sweeping the ballet towards its inevitable and devastating conclusion.

Also marking 60 years since its creation, **John Cranko's** 1965 take on **Pushkin's** novel ***Onegin*** returns to the Main Stage. Set to an arrangement of **Tchaikovsky's** heartbreaking score, Cranko's expressive choreography results in a sumptuous period ballet.

For Christmas, ***Cinderella*** continues to cast its spell. This enchanting work by The Royal Ballet's Founding Choreographer Frederick Ashton, with evocative music by Prokofiev and some spectacular stagecraft, is a rich theatrical experience not to be missed. In the Linbury Theatre, nothing says Christmas like a Greek tragedy: **Ben Duke** and **Lost Dog's** electric and darkly hilarious work of dance theatre set to live music, ***Ruinaton***, returns, turning the classic Greek myth of Medea on its head.

In the Linbury Theatre, the Company continues its commitment to honing new and diverse choreographic and performing talent. In October, First Soloist of The Royal Ballet **Joseph Sissens** is the driving force behind **Legacy**, a celebration of Black and Brown dancers from all over the world. In the spring, **International Draft Works** returns, gathering burgeoning choreographers from all over the world, revealing how the art form is ever changing and evolving. Closing the Season, celebrating both national and international talent, the **Next Generation Festival** is a showcase for the diversity and range of global performing talent presented by a selection of junior companies and dance schools.

Across the Season, the Linbury Theatre welcomes returning guest companies including **Northern Ballet**, **Acosta Danza** and **Ballet Black**. The **Ballet Black: Heroes** mixed programme will include a new work, **If at First**, by Choreographer-in-Residence at Scottish Ballet **Sophie Laplane**, that explores the complexity of humanity, heroism and self-acceptance.

Director of The Royal Ballet, Kevin O’Hare, said:

“An electrifying Season lies ahead as we stage thrilling works new to the Company, crafted by creatives at the forefront of choreographic innovation. The breadth of the Company’s artistry is highlighted in revivals of rich repertory favourites alongside a Linbury Season that welcomes guest collaborators and bright burgeoning talents. As ever, audiences will have the chance to witness world-class performances by our remarkable dancers. There really is something for everyone.”

Inspiring creativity across the UK

- **40 years at the forefront of arts education**
- **Reaching more than 45,000 students across the UK**
- **Seven Schools’ Matinees**

In 2025, the Royal Ballet and Opera celebrates 40 years of pioneering learning programming as it unveils its biggest year of learning initiatives to date. Over the past year the schools programme has grown from 1,575 schools to 2,710, working with more than 46,000 students, 1500 teachers and 700 schools to inspire creativity and open access to the arts across the UK.

These programmes sit alongside on-going projects in communities up and down the country including regional partnerships with Bradford 2025, UK City of Culture, Rotherham, Children’s Capital of Culture 2025 and a new focused initiatives in the east of England.

Jillian Barker, Director of Learning and Participation, Royal Ballet and Opera explains:

“Our vision is to work towards creativity for every child. At a time when arts education in schools is squeezed and specialist teachers are in decline, it is more important than ever to strive to reach more children and young people. We are redoubling efforts to offer high quality opportunities to any primary school in the country, inspiring children and building the creative confidence of teachers and opening the opportunity to discover ballet and opera. We are working to diversify young dancers and singers. And we want ROH to be a place of creative adventure, welcoming to all, particularly families.”

This Season, the Royal Ballet and Opera will continue to offer a range of programmes to enhance arts education, spark creativity, and improve access to the arts for all. These learning and community-based initiatives include:

- Extending its flagship programme to reach more schools nationwide, offering free resources to help teachers and students be creatively confident in the classroom. This Season will also introduce new live streamed lessons into schools from the Companies and artists of the Royal Ballet and Opera.
- The return of Create Day, a large single national school event, held in partnership with UNICEF RRSA UK (Rights Respecting Schools Alliance), bringing together 30,000 children in person and virtually in a celebration of everything they have learned.
- Hosting seven Schools’ Matinees across the Season, giving children from across the UK the chance to experience a live production at the Royal Opera House with heavily discounted tickets and travel grants.
- The Creative Exchange programme - partnerships with commonly underrepresented groups in the arts to create a collaborative performance piece representing different life experiences.
- Growing the reach of its Chance to Dance programme, where the Royal Ballet and Opera partner with local dance and primary schools in areas with limited artistic provision to introduce young people to ballet.
- The Youth Opera Company, where over 100 state school children have the chance to work with Royal Ballet and Opera artists, performing on the Main Stage in productions including *Carmen* and *Hansel and Gretel*.

The Royal Ballet and Opera also continues to invest in future talent and professional development through initiatives such as the specialist apprenticeship programme, which will see the number of participants double this Season. Remaining one of the largest employers of artistic professionals in the UK, the apprentices join 1,044 full or part time staff, 2,060 contractors who are consistently employed, and freelancers or commissioned staff.

The fostering of talent and diversity is also seen in our second **Overture** cohort in partnership with **Black Lives in Music**, beginning in Autumn 2024. The year-long mentorship by players in the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House is available to young musicians aged 18-25 from the global majority or other underrepresented backgrounds. The scheme provides support tailored to the participants' individual needs, enhancing skill sets, insight and training in the classical music field.

The Royal Ballet and Opera also present 11 productions in 1500 cinemas across the globe next Season, including such beloved classics as *Cinderella*, *The Nutcracker* and *The Marriage of Figaro* and exciting new productions of *The Tales of Hoffmann* and *Die Walküre*.

The 2024/2025 Season's ambitious work contributes to the enduring influence of the Royal Ballet and Opera, with a recent study finding it has one of the largest economic impacts on the ACE's National Portfolio. Whether it is welcoming audiences from across the globe to experience magic on its stages or inspiring creativity in classrooms across the UK, the Royal Ballet and Opera celebrates everything that the arts bring to UK society, looking boldly ahead to a new and exciting Season of world-class productions.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

- Watch the trailer [here](#)
- Opera imagery can be downloaded [here](#)
- Ballet imagery can be downloaded [here](#)
- Opera and Ballet Seasons in full can be found [here](#)

PRESS CONTACTS

- [Chloe Westwood](#), Head of Communications and External Affairs
- [Katya Hamilton-Smith](#), Senior Public Affairs and Communications Manager
- [Ashley Woodfield](#), Head of Ballet Press
- [Ruth Haines](#), Head of Opera Press

About The Royal Opera

The Royal Opera, under the artistic direction of Director of Opera, Oliver Mears and Music Director Designate, Jakub Hrůša, is one of the world's leading opera companies. Based at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, it brings together the greatest singers of our time alongside the most exciting voices of the future; the Royal Opera Chorus, a world-class orchestra and leading conductors, directors and creative teams to share inspiring theatrical

experiences with diverse audiences worldwide. Across the Main Stage and the Linbury Theatre, the Company is renowned for both its award-winning performances of repertory works and for commissioning new works by today's leading opera composers, such as George Benjamin, Mark-Anthony Turnage, Thomas Adès and the late Kaija Saariaho.

About The Royal Ballet

Under the directorship of Kevin O'Hare, The Royal Ballet unites tradition and innovation in world-class performances and is a driving force in the development of ballet as an art form. Based at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, it brings together today's most dynamic and versatile dancers with a world-class orchestra and leading choreographers, composers, conductors, directors and creative teams to share awe-inspiring theatrical experiences with diverse audiences worldwide. The Company's extensive repertory embraces 19th-century classics, the singular legacy of works by Founder Choreographer Frederick Ashton and Principal Choreographer Kenneth MacMillan, a compelling new canon of work by choreographers today including Resident Choreographer Wayne McGregor and Artistic Associate Christopher Wheeldon plus the bold and complementary programming in the Linbury Theatre. Choreographers creating work for the Company have also included Kyle Abraham, Gemma Bond, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Jessica Lang, Cathy Marston, Mthuzuzeli November, Arthur Pita, Crystal Pite, Hofesh Shechter, Pam Tanowitz, Twyla Tharp, Joseph Toonga and Valentino Zucchetti.

About the Royal Ballet and Opera

At the Royal Ballet and Opera, we are making the extraordinary for everyone. Inspiring imagination and igniting emotion. We are a cultural powerhouse, bringing together two world-class performing companies in one of the UK's leading arts institutions. Based at the Royal Opera House in the heart of London's Covent Garden, our work is enjoyed by audiences in our two theatres and globally through our streaming platform, cinema Season and company tours. Our work in schools and communities up and down the country is driven by our curriculum linked programmes, specially designed to inspire creativity, broaden participation and diversify the future of opera and ballet. These sit alongside industry-leading talent development projects, regional partnerships, and a raft of daytime events, family activities, tours, exhibitions and concerts in our Covent Garden home. We are also expanding our audience through our flagship Young ROH scheme and are committed to reducing our impact on the environment and aim to achieve net zero emissions by 2035.