



Press Release
1 February 2018

SADLER'S WELLS INVITES THE WORLD'S LEADING CHOREOGRAPHERS TO MARK LANDMARK ANNIVERSARY

Sadler's Wells today announced 20 landmark commissions to mark the 20th anniversary of its iconic London theatre. **Natalia Osipova**, **Mark Morris**, **William Forsythe**, **Sharon Eyal** and **Akram Khan** are among the internationally acclaimed artists presenting new work, which will be produced or co-produced by Sadler's Wells in 2018.

Sadler's Wells' current theatre is the sixth building to have stood on the Islington site since Richard Sadler first established a theatre there in 1683. The venue has played a vital role in the history of theatre ever since, with The Royal Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet and English National Opera having all begun life at there. Since 2005 Sadler's Wells has brought more than 150 new works to the stage, and its productions have been seen by over 1.7 million people.

The 20 works to mark the anniversary year are:

- *Pure Dance*, a programme of work produced by Sadler's Wells for ballet superstar ballerina **Natalia Osipova** (12 – 16 September), including two new works commissioned for her by **Alexei Ratmansky** and **Iván Pérez**, and featuring special guest American Ballet Theatre Principal dancer **David Hallberg**.
- World renowned American choreographer **William Forsythe** presents *A Quite Evening of Dance* (4 – 6 October). Produced by Sadler's Wells, this is his first full evening presentation since he closed the Forsythe Company in 2015, and includes two new works.
- The UK premiere of *Layla and Majnun*, a collaboration between **Mark Morris**, **Howard Hodgkin** and **Yo-Yo Ma**'s Silk Road Ensemble which tells the story of the Middle Eastern Romeo and Juliet (mid-November).
- *Icon*, a new work by **Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui** with **Antony Gormley** that explores concepts of icon and iconoclasm, with a set made from 3.5 tonnes of clay (late November)
- *Dystopian Dream*, a theatrical realisation of **Nitin Sawhney**'s acclaimed 2015 album of the same name, co-devised with **Honji Wang** and **Sébastien Ramirez** (26 - 28 November)
- For **XENOS**, **Akram Khan** gives his final ever solo performances in a full-length work, telling the tale of an Indian colonial soldier in the First World War (29 May – 9 June),
- *Used To Be Blonde*, is the world premiere of a new commission by newly appointed Sadler's Wells Associate Artist **Sharon Eyal for the National Youth Dance Company** (7 April at Sadler's Wells, then touring)
- Renowned **Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan** presents Lin Hwai-min's new work *Formosa* (9 -12 May), the last full-length production by Hwai-min before he retires in 2019.

- **Jazz Refreshed** musicians will be part of a new dance commission for the theatre's annual international hip hop dance theatre festival **Breakin' Convention**, marking its 15th anniversary in 2018 (5 – 7 May)
- *Reckonings* features new work by **Julie Cunningham, Alesandra Seutin** and **Botis Seva**, and marks the anniversary week itself (12-14 October)
- Also in the anniversary week, a mixed bill by Sadler's Wells' newly appointed Young Associate artists **Anthony Matsena, Wilhelmina Ojanen, Ruby Portus** and **Christopher Thomas** (9-10 October) for the Lilian Baylis Studio
- Associate Artist **Jasmin Vardimon** presents a new work in October
- Company of Elders, Sadler's Wells' resident over 60s performance group, presents new work by **Holly Blakey, Adrienne Hart** and **Seeta Patel** (6 July)
- **balletLORENT** presents Liv Lorent's *Rumpelstiltskin*, retold by Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy, as part of Sadler's Wells' annual Family Weekend (30 & 31 March)
- Also during Family Weekend, *upsidedowninsideout*, by Melbourne-based company **One Step At A Time Like This**, will see families dive into secret spaces in Sadler's Wells not usually accessible to the public
- **Rambert2** presents a mixed bill in November, including Sharon Eyal's *Killer Pig*
- In the Lilian Baylis Studio **Mavin Khoo** presents *From Man to Monk- Part 1*
- New Wave Associate **Wilkie Branson** presents the film installation TOM
- **Jefta van Dinther** presents a new work
- **Eva Recacha** presents a new work, a duet for two women

Sadler's Wells Artistic Director and Chief Executive Alistair Spalding said:

"At Sadler's Wells we don't just present dance performances, we make dance happen. We embrace all forms of dance here, reflecting the dance traditions of the world at the same time as reflecting the way the world is today. It's a tradition of the *new*, whether that be ideas, ways of making dance, discovering dance, or creating new collaborations. So it's absolutely right that we celebrate our anniversary with "20 for 20": 20 commissions representing the finest talent from all over the world and artists at every stage of their career."

Other highlights in the 2018 season

As well as the new commission to mark the anniversary year, **William Forsythe** is the subject of a triple bill by Dresden-based **Semperoper Ballett** in June. Forsythe's choreography also features in Sadler's Wells Associate Company English National Ballet's *Voices of America* in April, for which he has created his first new ballet for a British Company in 20 years.

Also in June, the Lilian Baylis Studio presents **Portraits in Otherness**, a new platform initiated by Akram Khan and his producer Farooq Chaudhry, seeking to transfer the values and philosophy of Akram Khan Company to a new generation of talents. They invite four distinctive dance artists to present solo work: Joy Alpuerto Ritter, Ching-Ying Chien, Dickson Mbi and Maya Dong.

The 2018 season at Sadler's Wells features the UK premiere of **Carmen La Cubana** in August, a new musical mixing Bizet's classic score with Cuban styles, set against the turmoil of the Cuban Revolution, 1958. Inspired by Oscar Hammerstein II's Broadway hit *Carmen Jones*, Christopher Renshaw (*The King and I*) directs the production, with new orchestrations by Tony Award winner Alex Lacamoire (*Hamilton*), mixing opera with salsa, mambo, rumba and cha-cha-cha.

Sadler's Wells' West End venue The Peacock offers audiences two opportunities to experience the best of tap, with **The Tap Pack** in June - bringing a new, exhilarating energy

to a timeless style, inspired by the kings of swing: Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jr. In the autumn Dein Perry's multi award-winning **Tap Dogs** returns to the London stage, showcasing high voltage, rugged, raw talent.

The year ends with **Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake** at Christmas, returning with a fresh look for the 21st century. Retaining the iconic elements of the original, Sadler's Wells Associate Artist Matthew Bourne and award-winning designers Lez Brotherston (set and costumes) and Paule Constable (lighting) will create a re-imagining of the classic production, that has collected over 30 international accolades including an Olivier and three Tony Awards.

In 2018 Sadler's Wells will continue to extend the reach of its programme beyond the venue, reaching the widest possible audience, through touring, broadcast and digital projects.

This year, it will tour nine Sadler's Wells productions or co-productions to more than 35 different venues in the UK and abroad including *Dystopian Dream*, Acosta Danza's *Debut*, Michael Keegan Dolan's *Swan Lake* and *Sutra*.

In a unique partnership with the **BBC**, Sadler's Wells curates and creates four 30-minute artist-led films for broadcast on BBC Four this April as part of the channel's dance season. Each film introduces audiences to a different dance artist from diverse backgrounds and styles, taking us behind the scenes to observe them at different points in their career as they create new work or prepare for a new performance. Featuring **Zenaida Yanowsky, Dickson Mbi, Carlos Pons Guerra** and **Shobana Jeyasingh** and including extended sequences of performance, each film offers viewers a unique insight into the world of dance in Britain today.

Sadler's Wells is also partnering with **Channel 4's Random Acts** to commission three original films from **Julie Cunningham, Alesandra Seutin** and **Botis Seva** for broadcast later in the year. Linked to the new works the artists are creating for *Reckonings* in the 20th Anniversary week, the films will be creative entities in their own right, offering the three distinctive younger artists an opportunity to tell their stories in a different medium to a wider audience.

Celestial Bodies is a new virtual reality experience adapted from Alexander Whitley's production *8 Minutes*, which premiered at the theatre in June 2017 and was commissioned as part of the New Wave Associates programme. This is the first arts-inspired experience made by the **Guardian's** award-winning VR team, with the Alexander Whitley Dance Company in association with Sadler's Wells. It uses the latest 360 and motion capture technology to explore the human relationship with the Sun, enabling viewers to get closer to the dancers. Audiences can preview it at the theatre's *Sampled* festival on 2 & 3 February 2018 and it will be available soon on VR platforms (Daydream, Cardboard, YouTube 360, HTC Vive).

Plans for Sadler's Wells' new venue in east London are moving ahead

Sadler's Wells' is moving forward with its exciting plans for a new venue in east London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, together with other world-leading institutions including the V&A, University College London and UAL's London College of Fashion.

The Cultural and Education District will create a new powerhouse for innovation and creativity through a unique collaboration between the universities and arts organisations, opening up opportunities for all who visit, live and work in east London.

The new Sadler's Wells venue, designed by RIBA Gold Medal winners O'Donnell and Tuomey, will feature a theatre building set over 85,000 sq ft, comprising a 550-seat auditorium, five studios, a large rehearsal room and support facilities to be used for artist development and training, and for work at any stage in its development.

The new space will enable Sadler's Wells to present mid-scale work, and is part of the theatre's ongoing work to support the talent pipeline for the whole sector. It will enable the dance house to support regional companies coming to London that would benefit from showing their work in a mid-scale venue, and to produce new work that could tour outside the capital.

Sadler's Wells is developing joint programmes with its partners in the Park, and building relationships with local community and cultural organisations in the area. Ongoing partner projects include: a major new dance programme for young people run by East London Dance commissioned by Headstart Newham, and a pilot project with the new Mossbourne Riverside Academy, for which Sadler's Wells is leading weekly dance activities throughout this academic year, enabling every child in the school to access dance.

Alistair Spalding said:

“By working with our Cultural and Education District partners in the Park and other arts and educational organisations in east London, we're creating a larger, vibrant cultural hub that is responsive to its surroundings and communities. The alliances we're building with colleagues and partners in Stratford mean we can offer even more opportunities and experiences to the audiences we all serve.”

Press images can be downloaded from www.media.sadlerswells.com

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About Sadler's Wells

Sadler's Wells is a world-leading creative organisation dedicated to dance in all its forms. With over three centuries of theatrical heritage and a year-round programme of performances and learning activities, its goal is to motivate everyone to experience dance – to take part, learn, experiment and be inspired. Audiences of over half a million come to Sadler's Wells' London theatres each year, with many more enjoying its touring productions at partner venues across the UK and around the world, or accessing its content through digital channels.

Sadler's Wells commissions and presents more new dance work than any other theatre in the world, embracing the popular and the unknown. Since 2005, it has helped to bring over 140 new dance works to the stage, many of them involving its 16 Associate Artists, three Resident Companies and four Associate Companies – the most exciting talents working in dance today. It also nurtures the next generation of talent through its artist development initiatives, and reaches over 25,000 annually through its learning and engagement programmes

Located in Islington, north London, the current theatre is the sixth to have stood on the site since it was first built by entrepreneur Richard Sadler in 1683. The venue has played an illustrious role in the history of theatre ever since with The Royal Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet and English National Opera having all started at Sadler's Wells. Sadler's Wells is a charity and a National Portfolio Organisation, currently receiving 10% of its revenue from Arts Council England.

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SADLER'S WELLS MAKES COMMITMENT TO UNDER 25s IN PROGRAMME OF SUPPORT FOR ARTISTS ACROSS GENERATIONS

Sadler's Wells announced today the names of four young choreographers it is supporting as part of its new **Young Associates** programme for choreographers under the age of 25 who have just left formal education. **Anthony Matsena, Wilhelmina Ojanen, Ruby Portus** and **Christopher Thomas** will be supported by Sadler's Wells in a variety of ways including with production time in Sadler's Wells' studios and theatres, providing advice and networking opportunities. The Young Associates will present a mixed bill of work on 9-10 October 2018 in the Lilian Baylis Studio.

This commitment to supporting artists and new work which is central to the future of dance in this country is part of Alistair Spalding's core mission for Sadler's Wells.

In addition to the Young Associates, three **New Wave Associates**, choreographers at an early to mid-career stage are announced. **Julie Cunningham** recently launched Julie Cunningham & Company after 15 years of dancing with the iconic Merce Cunningham Dance Company and Michael Clark Company. Cunningham's work is concerned with gender identity, with an interest in text and movement.

Project O is a collaboration between London based artists Alexandrina Hemsley and Jamila Johnson-Small. They have both taken part in Sadler's Wells' Summer University programme and presented work in the theatre's Lilian Baylis Studio in 2013 for Sadler's Wells' inaugural Wild Card series, our series of artist-curated events, as well as their latest production *Voodoo* in May 2017, a Sadler's Wells commission. Their work explores the body as a site of politics, considering the impact of a colonial history in the UK today.

The third New Wave Associate is hip hop artist **L'atisse Rhoden**, who trained with hip hop dance companies Avant Garde Dance and Botis Seva's Far From the Norm. Introduced to Sadler's Wells by Breakin' Convention who presented her work in the festival in 2017 as well as recently in Back to the Lab and Open Arts Surgery, she is a solo artist and director of female collective XXV. Her work is inspired by future sounds and heavily influenced by surrealism.

The **New Wave Associates** are supported in a variety of ways, through a bespoke programme tailored to their needs. With practical production time in the theatre's studios and on its stages, advice and introductions alongside financial support, the aim is to provide an artistic home to these talented artists, offering on-going support, and enabling them to make and present ambitious new work commissioned by Sadler's Wells.

As well as support for young artists and those at consolidation stages of their career, the theatre also supports more established dance makers such as **Sharon Eyal**, who becomes a **Sadler's Wells Associate Artist**. Eyal launched her own company L-E-V in 2013, with

long-term collaborator and producer Gai Behar, with whom she has been making waves in the dance world since 2006. Their bold and innovative work is establishing L-E-V Dance Company among the most interesting dance companies today. To mark this event, Sadler's Wells presents four works by Eyal in 2018: a piece as part of Ballet British Columbia's triple bill in March, her premiere *Used To Be Blonde* for National Youth Dance Company at Easter, her newest work for L-E-V, *Love Chapter 2* in July, and her work *Killer Pig* for Rambert2.

Speaking about her appointment Sharon Eyal said:

"L-E-V's last two creations were co-produced with Sadler's Wells, which was a fantastic vote of confidence from the theatre. This year, as well as bringing *Love Chapter 2* here in July, another fortune has been bestowed on me by Sadler's Wells - working with the National Youth Dance Company. I'm known as an emotional person - but working with those young people brought me to a new level of emotion, fulfilment and a genuine sense of purpose. L-E-V means heart in Hebrew - and this project shows what a big heart Sadler's Wells has.

So it's with great honour and excitement that I receive this appointment of Associate Artist, for me Sadler's Wells was always one of the dance summits - now I'm privileged to reach and be part of it."

Sadler's Wells Artistic Director and Chief Executive, Alistair Spalding said:

"Artists are the lifeblood of Sadler's Wells. Our theatre wouldn't exist without them, and supporting them and their visions of the world is therefore at the very heart of what we do.

I'm delighted to welcome a new collection of artists to our stable today, marking our commitment to long-term investment in artists at every stage, from fledgling choreographer, to the emerging, mid-scale and the most established artists. It is absolutely fitting that in our 20th anniversary year, we look to the future with our Young Associates initiative, addressing the need for more support to be given to those at the very outset of their dance making careers."

Press images can be downloaded from www.media.sadlerswells.com – please contact the press office for login details

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About Associate Artist, Sharon Eyal

One of the most exciting female choreographers working today, **Sharon Eyal** was born in Jerusalem and danced with Batsheva Dance Company from 1990 until 2008. She served as Associate Artistic Director of the company from 2003-4 and House Choreographer of the company from 2005-12. In 2013, Eyal launched L-E-V with her long-time collaborator Gai Behar. L-E-V presented the UK Premiere of *OCD LOVE* at Sadler's Wells in 2016 and *Love Chapter 2* performs at the venue in July 2018. L-E-V has toured across the world, visiting cities including New York, Paris and Amsterdam. Ballet British Columbia will perform Eyal's piece *Bill* at Sadler's Wells and on a UK Tour in March this year. Her other choreographies include *Killer Pig* and *Corps de Walk* for Carte Blanche Dance of Norway, *Too Beaucoup* for Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, *Plafona* for Tanzcompagnie Oldenburg, Germany, *Sara* and *Salt Womb* for Nederlands Dans Theater, *Half-Life* for the Royal Swedish Ballet and *Untitled Black* for the Göteborg Opera. In addition to her work with NYDC, Eyal's *Killer Pig* will be

performed in the UK this autumn by Rambert2, the new ensemble from Rambert for the next generation of dance artists.

About the Young Associates

Anthony Matsena

Anthony is 23 years old. He performed at Sadler's Wells in 2015 as part of Apex Rising with National Youth Dance Wales, and is currently in his third year at London Contemporary Dance School. His dance background is in hip hop.

Wilhelmina Ojanen

Wilhelmina is 22 years old. She graduated from Laban in 2017 and is currently a member of Transitions (post-grad Company of Laban). She started her dance training in hip hop, before moving on to jazz, ballet and contemporary dance.

Ruby Portus

Ruby is 21 years old and an NYDC alumni. She graduated from London Contemporary Dance School in 2017, and performed in *Home Turf* and *Elixir Festival 2017* at Sadler's Wells. She is currently in Verve (the post-grad company of Northern School of Contemporary Dance).

Christopher Thomas

Christopher is 21 years old. He started his career as an actor before training as a dancer, graduating from Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance in 2017. He is currently working with Mark Bruce Company on its new production of *Macbeth*. His Awards include the Charlotte Kirkpatrick Award 2016 and Young Choreographer 2017, and he is co-founder of Retrospect Dance Theatre.

About the New Wave Associates

Julie Cunningham

Julie Cunningham has worked professionally as a dance artist for 15 years performing both nationally and internationally. After training at the Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance in London, Cunningham worked with Ballett der Stadt Theater Koblenz, Germany, Merce Cunningham Dance Company, and Michael Clark Company.

Cunningham has worked on projects with Boris Charmatz for Musée de la Danse and is a guest teacher at Trinity Laban and Zurich University of the Arts. In 2014 Cunningham was awarded "Outstanding Modern Performance" at the Critics Circle National Dance Awards for 'New Work' with Michael Clark Company, and was nominated for the emerging artist award for choreography in 2016.

Cunningham was the inaugural Leverhulme Choreography Fellow at Rambert and was part of the dance artist/curator mentorship program through Siobhan Davies Dance. Julie Cunningham & Company was launched in 2017 and became associate company of Rambert in 2018. Cunningham has created new work that has been performed at the Barbican, The Place, Dance Base Edinburgh, Tramway Glasgow, Siobhan Davies Studios, Wilderness Festival, National Theatre River Stage, V&A Museum, and Southbank Centre and Shoreditch Town Hall as part of Dance Umbrella Festival.

Project O

Project O make dances to dance themselves out of the desire for and expectation of an aesthetic assimilation that upholds a system of white supremacy that is at once subtle,

blatant and all pervasive. Project O is the performative fruits of conversations between the London-based duo, who look to the body as a site of politics, considering the tangible yet often ignored impact of a colonial history in the UK today, and the tendency towards fetishisation, exoticisation and fear of the other. The work intends to expose some of the structural workings of racism and misogyny and their impact on bodies, sparking debate and pushing for conversations about how to live with agency - and a sense of a future - amongst these painful and uncomfortable histories.

Tearing at the edges of contemporary dance since 2010, Project O have made dances for the stage (*O*), performative interventions in public spaces (*Be Your Black Girlfriend*), choreographies for bodies that are not their own (*SWAGGA*), a performance lecture (*Benz Punany*), a school (The New Empowering School) and a publication (*A Contemporary Struggle*). Alongside their current production *Voodoo*, presented in the Lilian Baylis Studio in Spring 2017, they are currently working on a series of site-responsive short works, *Native Instincts: Psychic Labours*.

Project O are residents at Somerset House Studios, London, Associate Artists at Dance Research Studios and were awarded the Artsadmin Artist Bursary in 2014. Project O have presented work at South Bank Centre, Somerset House, British Dance Edition, British Council Edinburgh Showcase 2015, Chisenhale Dance Space, The Yard and Chelsea Theatre, amongst others.

L'atisse Rhoden

A solo artist and director of female collective XXV, L'atisse Rhoden trained with dance companies Avant Garde Dance and Far From the Norm, before moving on to create her own theatre-based work for Sadler's Wells' Breakin' Convention festival and its artist development programmes Open Art Surgery and Back To The Lab.

Intensely physical, her work is inspired by future sounds and heavily influenced by surrealism. Her work goes beyond performance producing many fundraising events, for example Dance For Defoe. She explores dance as activism, working with groups of creative young women to find new approaches to improvisation.

She has featured in work including *A Harlem Dream*, curated by Ivan Blackstock and critically acclaimed TV series *Black Mirror*.

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