



17 April 2018

Sadler's Wells Partners with the BBC to present *DanceWorks* on BBC Four

In a new partnership, the BBC and Sadler's Wells have curated and commissioned ***DanceWorks***, four 30-minute artist-led films for broadcast on BBC Four this May as part of their forthcoming dance season, which was announced at a press conference at Sadler's Wells this morning.

Co-produced with Islington-based production company **ClearStory**, each film in the *DanceWorks* series introduces the audience to a different artist: Zenaïda Yanowsky, Dickson Mbi, Carlos Pons Guerra and Shobana Jeyasingh. Following them as they create new work and gaining behind-the-scenes access to the creative process, these films allow viewers a unique insight into the world of dance in Britain today.

The films will be broadcast on **BBC Four** from **Monday 7 - Thursday 10 May at 7.30pm** in the following order.

- ***The Dying Swan*** follows former Principal dancer **Zenaïda Yanowsky** as she overcomes knee surgery and fights her body back to fitness to prepare for one of her final public performances following an acclaimed classical ballet career.
- For ***Street to Stage*** dancer and choreographer **Dickson Mbi** is followed as he transitions from his street dance roots to the contemporary dance limelight under the guidance of his mentor, Akram Khan's producer, Farooq Chaudhry.
- The artistic process behind **Shobana Jeyasingh's** new work, *Contagion*, an evocation of the 1918 flu epidemic, is revealed in ***Choreographing History***.
- ***Prejudice and Passion*** follows **Carlos Pons Guerra** as he begins choreographing a new children's production, the true story of two male penguins raising a baby penguin.

Alistair Spalding, Artistic Director and Chief Executive at Sadler's Wells said: *"At Sadler's Wells, we're always looking for ways to introduce the experience of high quality dance to the widest possible audience. Beyond the stage we also want people to be able to experience dance through different media. I'm delighted that our partnership with the BBC and ClearStory has enabled us to present these films on BBC Four, which will give viewers an opportunity to go behind the scenes with some of today's most exciting artists and discover how they create dance."*

The **BBC Four Dance Season** launches on Sunday 6 May and lifts the curtain on today's thriving dance scene, featuring some of today's most exciting dance makers and the enduring legacy of others whilst shining a light on a broad range of dance styles from ballet and contemporary to tap and hip-hop.

The Dying Swan: Using the lyrical and elegant metaphor of a ballet classic about death, this film explores how a dancer fights age, the deterioration of the body over time and fear of retirement. Former Royal Ballet Principal Zenaïda Yanowsky plans to overcome knee surgery and fight her body back to fitness so as to perform a swansong, one of ballet's best-known of solos, *The Dying Swan*. For Yanowsky, this is one of her last public performances before drawing the curtains on an acclaimed classical ballet career. The film also features an encounter between Zenaïda Yanowsky and a current rising star of The Royal Ballet, Russian dancer Natalia Osipova, as they exchange reflections on *The Dying Swan* routine.

Street to Stage: Dickson Mbi is at a critical breakthrough point in his career as he transitions from his street dance roots to the contemporary dance limelight. This film follows him as he wins the UK heat of the international street dance competition Keep on Dancing (KOD). This is nothing, however, compared to the challenge that now faces him as he starts to choreograph and perform his first contemporary dance solo under the watchful eyes of Akram Khan's producer, Farooq Chaudhry.

Prejudice and Passion: Audacious and funny, Leeds-based Carlos Pons Guerra creates darkly humorous, highly theatrical and vigorously physical work that often explores questions of gender and sexual identity. Now, he wants to bring his avant-garde style and preoccupations to a broader audience. This film follows Carlos Pons Guerra as he begins choreographing a new children's production at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, which tells a true story of two male penguins raising a chick. This work is about using dance to set an agenda - can he bring the fight for acceptance that has defined him into the mainstream and win over family audiences?

Choreographing History: Experimental and highly original, Shobana Jeyasingh's new work *Contagion* will, through dance, evoke the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic, which killed over 50 million people. This film offers a unique insight into a choreographer's artistic process and their sources of inspiration as Jeyasingh researches the pandemic and attempts to translate what she finds into movement, working closely with dancers on the stage.

Jonty Claypole, Director of BBC Arts said: *"Dance has the power to bring together different communities and generations in a shared love of creative expression, and you only have to look at the extraordinary diversity of dance talent and audiences right across the UK to realise how successfully it fulfils this promise. As part of our forthcoming Dance Season we're delighted to be partnering with Sadler's Wells for the first time to present these four fascinating DanceWorks films, placing the spotlight on some of the UK's most exciting dancers."*

ClearStory Executive Producers Molly Milton and Russell Barnes said: *"This has been a creatively exciting partnership with Sadler's Wells. Through working so closely and intimately with leading dancers and choreographers, ClearStory has been able to push the boundaries of what a dance film can be, threading performance through an observational narrative. We hope viewers come away with a fresh perspective and insight into the world behind the stage curtain."*

Production Company:	Sadler's Wells & ClearStory
Director:	Glen Milner
Producer:	Bia Oliveira
Executive Producers:	Russell Barnes, Molly Milton, Alistair Spalding
Exec Producer for BBC:	Emma Cahusac

For press enquiries contact Sadler's Wells' Head of Media Relations, Abigail Desch:
Abigail.Desch@sadlerswells.com / 020 7863 8119

Notes to Editors:

Contagion is co-commissioned by Shobana Jeyasingh Dance and 14-18 NOW, the UK's arts programme for the First World War centenary, with support from the National Lottery through Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund, and from the Department for Culture Media and Sport.

Supported by The Deborah Loeb Brice Donor Advised Fund at CAF America, Garcia Family Foundation, Dr Michael and Anna Brynberg Charitable Foundation, Oak Foundation and Wellcome.

Sadler's Wells' other broadcast and digital projects in 2018

In addition to the *Danceworks* films with the BBC, Sadler's Wells' other broadcast and digital projects in 2018 include a partnership 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 Motion 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 previewed it at the theatre's *Sampled* festival on 2 & 3 February 2018. *Celestial Motion* is available to [view on Daydream](#) and will be available on Google Cardboard and YouTube 360 video later this year. Download The Guardian's new VR app from the [Apple App Store](#) or the [Google Play Store](#).

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, it is the place where artists come together to create dance, and where people of all backgrounds come to experience it – to take part, learn, experiment and be inspired.

Audiences of over half a million come to its London theatres each year, with many more enjoying its touring productions at venues across the UK and around the world, and accessing its content through digital channels.

Sadler's Wells commissions, produces 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 160 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 research and development, running the National Youth Dance Company and a range of programmes including Wild Card, New Wave Associates, Open Art Surgery and Summer University. Sadler's Wells' learning and engagement activities reach over 25,000 annually through programmes that take dance out into the community and invite communities into the theatre. Projects include community productions and the renowned Company of Elders, its resident over-60s performance group, while events range from pre and post-show talks with dance artists to classes, workshops and assisted performances.

Located in Islington, north London, the current building is the sixth to have stood on site since entrepreneur Richard Sadler first established the theatre 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.

About ClearStory

ClearStory (www.clearstory.co.uk) is run by the BAFTA and Grierson Award-winning Executive Producers Molly Milton and Russell Barnes. The company has built a reputation for its dynamic and diverse creative output. ClearStory productions released in 2017 include a humorous biography of Damien Hirst, *Passions: Damien Hirst by Harry Hill*, for Sky Arts, *The Great Village Green Crusade*, a feature-length science documentary about renewable energy, and *Utopia: In Search of the Dream*, a three-part series about visions of a better future, for BBC4. ClearStory is currently in production with three major new BBC projects due to broadcast in 2018.

About BBC Arts

The BBC is the biggest creator of arts content and is Britain's creative partner – a stage for the nation to experience the very best arts; when they want, how they want.

- The nation's stage: access to arts and culture programming for all through the licence fee – we create and showcase more arts and culture than any other broadcaster
- An Innovator: constantly finding new ways to bring the best quality culture to audiences; working with the arts sector as partner and acting as a hot house for new talent
- Britain's creative partner: a bold force in the UK creative sector as creator and commissioner, also a platform for new talent
- An investor in quality: we only present the highest quality arts and culture programming, crafted by skilled production teams and shared with all audiences
- Bringing the nation together: like no other we create and amplify moments in arts and culture, cutting through with a broad audience