



ROYAL
BALLET

FEBRUARY 2015

PRESS RELEASE

HOFESH SHECHTER WORLD PREMIERE

The Four Temperaments / NEW Hofesh Shechter / Song of the Earth

Friday 27 March – Tuesday 14 April

Acclaimed choreographer **Hofesh Shechter**, renowned for his unique style of contemporary dance, creates his first ever work on a classical company for The Royal Ballet. This as yet untitled piece will be staged alongside **George Balanchine's** *The Four Temperaments* and **Kenneth MacMillan's** *Song of the Earth*.

Shechter's celebrated style of ensemble group performance is seen here as an exploration of tribal energy through 'an ocean' of dancers. Set to an original composition created by Shechter with his long-term collaborator **Nell Catchpole**, with designs by **Holly Waddington** and lighting by **Lee Curran**, this collaboration is hotly anticipated.

Kevin O'Hare, Director of The Royal Ballet, comments 'Having closely followed Hofesh's career and enjoyed his electrifying work for his own company for over a decade it is now very exciting to be able to welcome him to The Royal Ballet. I look forward to seeing how his unique choreography will combine with the talents of our dancers in this new work'.

Hofesh adds 'I'm grateful for Kevin O'Hare's leap of faith. When he said "Let's just do it", we dived into unknown territory and that's often the most exciting place to create new work. The idea of making a new work on new territory however doesn't mean that I leave my own politics (with a small p!) behind – it may be lurking in the shadows but it's always there.'

Shechter's past works for his own company include the Critics' Circle Award winning *In Your Rooms* (2007, The Place/Southbank Centre/Sadler's Wells), *Political Mother* (2010, Brighton Festival), *Survivor* (2012, an Antony Gormley collaboration at the Barbican), *Sun* (2013, Melbourne Festival) and *Two Boys* (2013, Metropolitan Opera New York).

The programme also features **George Balanchine's** *The Four Temperaments*. Performed in practice clothes on a bare stage it premiered in New York in 1946. Known for its fiercely challenging solos and ensembles, the ballet is a series of reflections around the medieval four humours (melancholic, sanguinic, choleric and phlegmatic) that were thought to make up the human body in the Middle Ages.

The work is set to **Paul Hindemith's** *Theme with Four Variations (According to the Four Temperaments)* which was specially commissioned by Balanchine. Not performed by The Royal Ballet since 2007, this Season's performances will feature debuts from Principal dancers **Sarah Lamb, Natalia Osipova, Matthew Golding, Steven McRae** and **Vadim Muntagirov**, Soloist **Eric Underwood** and Artist **Tierney Heap**.

This triple bill of one-act ballets is completed by **Kenneth MacMillan's** *Song of the Earth*, featuring debuts from Principal dancers **Steven McRae** and **Thiago Soares**. *Song of the Earth* is a meditation on the transience of human life danced by the three archetypal figures of Man, Woman and Death. MacMillan originally intended to create the work for The Royal Ballet, but when the board dismissed his music choice (Mahler's song-cycle *Das Lied von der Erde*) as unsuitable he created the piece on Stuttgart Ballet where it premiered to instant acclaim in 1965. It then went on to join The Royal Ballet repertory six months later. Also performing in *Song of the Earth* are mezzo soprano **Catherine Wyn-Rogers** and tenors **Samuel Sakker** and **Thomas Randle**.

-- ENDS --

27, 30 March, 8, 10, 14 April 2015 at 7.30pm

For further information and to book tickets please visit www.roh.org.uk or call the Royal Opera House box office on **020 7304 4000**.

Notes to Editors

THE FOUR TEMPERAMENTS

Choreography	George Balanchine
Music	Paul Hindemith
Lighting design	John B. Read

Orchestra of the Royal Opera House conducted by **Barry Wordsworth**.

NEW HOFESH SHECHTER

Choreography	Hofesh Shechter
Music	Hofesh Shechter and Nell Catchpole
Designs	Holly Waddington
Lighting design	Lee Curran

Orchestra of the Royal Opera House conducted by **Koen Kessels**.

SONG OF THE EARTH

Choreography	Kenneth MacMillan
Music	Gustav Mahler
Designs	Nicholas Georgiadis
Lighting design	John B Read

Orchestra of the Royal Opera House conducted by **Barry Wordsworth**.

Vocals from mezzo soprano **Catherine Wyn-Rogers** (all performances) and tenors **Samuel Sakker** (27 March, 8 April) and **Thomas Randle** (30 March, 10, 14 April).

CASTING

THE FOUR TEMPERAMENTS

27 March	Steven McRae*, Natalia Osipova*, Federico Bonelli*, Edward Watson Zenaida Yanowsky
30 March	Vadim Muntagirov*, Natalia Osipova Federico Bonelli, Eric Underwood* Tierney Heap*

8 / 10 April

Steven McRae, Sarah Lamb*
Matthew Golding*, Edward Watson
Zenaida Yanowsky

14 April

Vadim Muntagirov, Sarah Lamb
Matthew Golding, Eric Underwood
Tierney Heap

NEW HOFESH SHECHTER

27 / 30 March / 8 / 10 / 14 April

The Company

SONG OF THE EARTH

27 March / 8 / 10 April

Marianela Nuñez, Thiago Soares*,
Carlos Acosta

30 March / 14 April

Laura Morera, Nehemiah Kish
Steven McRae*

*Role Debut

Song of the Earth: generous philanthropic support from Richard and Delia Baker and Lindsay and Sarah Tomlinson.

New Hofesh Shechter: generous philanthropic support from The Taylor Family Foundation and Georgia Rosengarten.

Samuel Sakker is participating in the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme.

INSIGHTS: NEW HOFESH SHECHTER

20 March at 7:30pm

Clore Studio Upstairs

Hofesh Shechter rehearses with dancers of The Royal Ballet weeks before the world premiere of his first work for the Company.

BIOGRAPHIES

Hofesh Shechter is an Associate Artist of Sadler's Wells and his company is Resident Company at Brighton Dome. Shechter was born in Jerusalem and studied at the Jerusalem Academy for Dance and Music, graduating into the Batsheva Dance Company. He studied drum and percussion in Tel Aviv and Paris and moved to the UK in 2002.

George Balanchine (1904–83) was one of the leading dance figures of the 20th century. He created a new style of ballet with his company New York City Ballet and reinvigorated the US ballet scene. His innate musicality is evident in all his works, and led to a rich partnership with composer Igor Stravinsky. Many of Balanchine's estimated 425 works – which notably include *Serenade* (1934) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1962) – are in the core repertoires of companies around the world.

Kenneth MacMillan (1929–92) was one of the leading choreographers of his generation. His close association with The Royal Ballet began when he joined The Sadler's Wells School (now The Royal Ballet School) aged 15. He was Director of the Company 1970–77 and Principal Choreographer 1977–92. His ballets are distinguished by their penetrating psychological insight and expressive use of classical language. These qualities are demonstrated in his many works for the Company, which include *Romeo and Juliet*, *Gloria*, *Manon*, *Mayerling* and *Requiem*.

PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS

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