



ROYAL
OPERA
HOUSE

PRESS RELEASE

12 FEBRUARY 2013

**THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE HEADS TO BRAZIL TO
DEVELOP NEW LONG TERM RELATIONSHIP WITH THE
THEATRO MUNICIPAL IN RIO DE JANEIRO AND TO
OPEN ITS NEW SEASON WITH THREE GALA
PERFORMANCES WITH ARTISTS FROM THE ROYAL
BALLET AND THE JETTE PARKER YOUNG ARTISTS
PROGRAMME**

Thursday 21 and Friday 22 February Education Symposium
Friday 1, Saturday 2 and Sunday 3 March Gala Performances

The Royal Opera House is expanding its international links, creating a long term education, audience engagement and skills programme in Rio de Janeiro designed to strengthen and develop links between the ROH, Teatro Municipal and the arts education communities in both countries. This work follows the established memorandum of understanding between the Royal Opera House and the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing, a model of best practice in the international exchange of ideas and knowledge.

Tony Hall, Chief Executive of the Royal Opera House, said “This is a very exciting initiative between Brazil and the UK. I’m particularly thrilled that we are sharing skills, training and development between the two countries. This is also a fantastic opportunity to build on our audiences already established in Brazil through our cinema screenings, and seems entirely fitting that the two countries are working together more closely across culture, inspired partly by

the creativity that was so prominent during the London 2012 Olympics and London 2012 Festival.”

A two day Symposium, developed in partnership with the Teatro Municipal and the British Council’s TRANSFORM Festival brings together dance teachers and practitioners from a wide variety of Rio dance schools, social organisations and professional dance companies which currently offer training programmes for children. Together with representatives from the Royal Opera House and Teatro Municipal, they will investigate approaches to ballet teaching and how to use dance as an educational tool to develop the individual.

The aim is to stimulate discussion around the theme of developing life skills in children through participation in ballet, to create a forum for the exchange of ideas and skills, and to establish new relationships that can lead to longer term dialogue and professional development.

The Symposium also aims to celebrate the strong local practice in creating access to art and culture in the city’s favelas and disadvantaged communities, and will provide an invaluable opportunity for knowledge exchange and mutual learning.

Paul Reeve, Director of Learning and Engagement, **Clare Thurman**, Ballet Education Manager and **David Pickering**, Dance Practitioner (and dancer with The Royal Ballet), will lead talks and discussions at the Symposium alongside representatives of the ROH’s Chance to Dance programme which offers free ballet training to primary school children in two inner London boroughs and in Thurrock. The Symposium also includes practical sessions led by teachers from both countries.

In addition to the Symposium, ROH’s team will lead participatory ballet sessions on the stage of Teatro Municipal with groups of children and young people drawn from community dance projects in Rio.

The educational activity is followed by three Gala Performances with eight Royal Ballet Principals and three Jette Parker Young Artists which will open the Theatro Municipal 2013 Season.

Oak Foundation, supporters of the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme since 2005, has generously made an additional grant in support of this programme of activity, which also includes a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* directed by former Young Artist André Heller-Lopes

Brazilians **Roberta Marquez** and **Thiago Soares**, together with **Leanne Benjamin**, **Federico Bonelli**, **Sarah Lamb**, **Steven McRae**, **Marianela Nunez** and **Edward Watson**, will dance a variety of *pas de deux* from some of the best loved ballets in The Royal Ballet repertory including the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet*, the *pas de deux* from Ashton's *Thais* and the Black Swan *pas de deux* from *Swan Lake*. There will also be works from **Wayne McGregor**, Resident Choreographer and **Christopher Wheeldon**.

One of the *pas de deux*, *In the Hothouse* by choreographer **Alastair Marriott**, features mezzo-soprano **Justina Gringyte**, who will also join soprano **Dušica Bijelić** and tenor **Pablo Bemsch** to sing arias and duets from some of great operatic and operetta repertory: Saint-Saëns *Samson et Dalila*, Mascagni *L'amico Fritz*, Donizetti *L'elisir d'amore*, Lehar *Giuditta* and Johan Strauss *Die Fledermaus*. Former Young Artist **Dominic Grier** conducts and the Programme's Artistic Director **David Gowland** will accompany some pieces on the piano.

The Royal Opera House's relationship with Brazil will continue to strengthen over the next few years leading up to a proposed tour by The Royal Ballet in 2015. Ongoing Royal Opera House education and community projects are in development with the Theatro Municipal.

Brazil is a key audience for the Royal Opera House Cinema Season, being the fourth largest audience out of the 32 countries currently screening ROH opera and ballet. In addition, Brazilians are the second largest cohort which interacts

with the Royal Opera House through social media after the UK, following the US.

Royal Opera House

As well as presenting almost 400 performances at the iconic Covent Garden theatre in London, the Royal Opera House also plays a leading role in education, community engagement, skills development, professional training and cultural regeneration in the UK.

Since 2007, the Royal Opera House has been working in Thurrock, an area east of London which is the largest regeneration area in Europe. As well as relocating its scenic construction and art to a state of the art workshop on the High House Production Park in Purfleet, within Thurrock, the Royal Opera House has embedded itself in the local community through schools' work, establishing the ROH Thurrock Community Chorus, a Youth Choir and working in collaboration with other local organisations to provide skills training and opportunities in the area. Recently, the opening of the National Skills Academy Backstage Centre on the same site has enhanced the opportunities for skills training and, in collaboration, the ROH and the NSA are working with colleagues internationally as well as other parts of the UK.

The ROH acclaimed Chance to Dance programme has started in Thurrock, giving primary aged school children who would otherwise not have the opportunity to have ballet lessons, to try the art form for themselves.

More broadly, the ROH has a long-established programme of Creative Apprentices across various backstage and administration skills sets, currently numbering almost 1% of the total workforce. It has led on several cross-organisational programmes to provide paid job opportunities to young unemployed people which, through the evidence of their success, has led Arts Council England to start a nationwide scheme modelled on the schemes initiated by the Royal Opera House and its partners through the Culture Quarter Programme and the Creative Jobs Programme.

Theatro Municipal, Rio de Janeiro

As the premier playhouse in Brazil, the Theatro Municipal in Rio de Janeiro is also an architectural gem built in 1909. Its eclectic style design was chosen after an international competition. Referencing the Rio landscape, the beautiful building is a result of the fusion of two winning proposals: that of the French architect Albert Guilbert, vice president of the Association of French Architects, and the Brazilian engineer Francisco de Oliveira Passos.

Between October 2008 and May 2010, the Theatro Municipal underwent the greatest redevelopment in its history under the administration of Governor Sérgio Cabral. The Theatro Municipal is the only institution of its kind in the country to retain full activity of three artistic companies – Ballet, Chorus and Symphonic Orchestra - since the 1930s. Throughout 103 years of history, its stage has received the most prestigious opera singers, concert virtuosi, orchestras, ballet dancers and companies of international renown. The Theatro Municipal Foundation also has an important educational arm with the State School of Dance Maria Olenewa. This is the first major dance school in the country which for 85 years has trained some of the leading Brazilian dancers.

British Council TRANSFORM

British Council TRANSFORM is a new arts and creativity programme aiming to develop the artistic dialogue between the UK and Brazil over four years. TRANSFORM enables artists and professionals from the arts sector in both countries to share experiences and to collaborate in order to bring about significant creative and social change for individuals, communities and institutions.

-ENDS-

PRESS OFFICE CONTACTS

Elizabeth Bell

Head of Corporate Communications

Tel: 020 7212 9717

Mobile: 07900 388 512

elizabeth.bell@roh.org.uk

