



ROYAL
BALLET

News Announcement

6 July 2021

The Royal Ballet Announces Company Joiners for the 2021/22 Season

The Royal Ballet continues its commitment to create opportunities for the next generation of dance professionals and today announces joiners for the 2021/22 Season.

The **Aud Jebsen Young Dancers Programme** provides young graduate dancers with a contract to work alongside the *corps de ballet* of The Royal Ballet. This year we welcome four dancers to the Company from **The Royal Ballet School: Olivia Findley, Ava May Llewellyn, Viola Pantuso** and **Alix Van Tiggelen**.

Following the disruption of the pandemic and with thanks to the generous support of **Aud Jebsen**, The Royal Ballet extends the contracts of the 2020/21 Aud Jebsen Dancers for a second year. **Denilson Almeida, Daichi Ikarashi, James Large, Hannah Park, Maddison Pritchard** and **Marianna Tsembehoi** continue on the programme for the 2021/22 Season.

Marco Masciari also continues as a **Prix de Lausanne** dancer for a second Season.

As previously announced, **First Soloist Beatriz Stix-Brunell** leaves the Company after 11 years to begin her academic career at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. **Kevin O'Hare, Director of The Royal Ballet** comments 'Beatriz has made an indelible contribution to the life and spirit of The Royal Ballet and be very proud of her part in shaping the Company's recent history, working with some of the world's leading choreographic lights. We congratulate her on her distinguished academic admission and look forward to her final performance on the Royal Opera House stage in Christopher Wheeldon's *After the Rain* pas de deux.'

Nurturing choreographic talent remains at the heart of the Company and this year The Royal Ballet welcomes **Joseph Toonga** as **The Royal Ballet's Emerging Choreographer**. Toonga will have the opportunity to shadow the Company's associated and visiting choreographers and be mentored by Resident Choreographer **Wayne McGregor**. In dance productions inspired by real-life stories, Toonga's choreographic language embraces Hip Hop and other dance styles and he looks forward to an extended exploration of working with classical dance with the dancers of The Royal Ballet during this two-year programme. His craftsmanship and signature choreographic style challenges conventions commonly used in Hip Hop dance and

shifts audience perceptions by addressing racial stigmas and societal stereotypes. He has created work for many dance companies, **DanceEast Associate Artist, National Youth Ballet/ Bundesjugendballett, Richard Alston Dance Company, Elephant in the Black Box, Junior Ballet Madrid** and **East Wall** with **Hofesh Shechter**. In 2007 Toonga set up his dance company **Just Us Dance Theatre (JUDT)**, a collective where he has established an international artist development programme in Brazil and the UK's first annually running Hip Hop apprenticeship company. He is also co-founder of artist-led hip-hop initiative **Artists4Artists**. Toonga won the **Best Choreography Award at Reverb Dance Festival** (New York) in 2015.

Joseph Toonga comments, 'I am really excited and intrigued to embark on this next stage of my artistic journey. I'm looking forward to working with The Royal Ballet, learning from this opportunity and being able to explore and experiment, taking my craftsmanship and network to another level'.

The Royal Ballet also announces new appointments to the Music Department.

Jonathan Lo is appointed as **Royal Ballet Staff Conductor** for the 2021/22 Season. Jonathan Lo is **Music Director** of **Northern Ballet** and is an alumnus of the **Royal Opera House Jette Parker Young Artist programme**. Lo made his main stage debut with The Royal Ballet in 2019 conducting Christopher Wheeldon's *Within the Golden Hour* and Crystal Pite's *Flight Pattern*. He is also a guest conductor for **Birmingham Royal Ballet, Rambert Dance, Dutch National Ballet** and **Scottish Ballet**.

Charlotte Politi takes up the **Constant Lambert Conducting Fellowship**, a placement deferred for a year due to the pandemic. This two-year programme provides a tailor-made mentoring programme for conducting ballet, working across The Royal Ballet and Birmingham Royal Ballet. Politi was born in Paris and grew up in Italy where she studied conducting and was selected as a conducting fellow at the **Accademia Chigiana** in 2015. She later studied at the **Hochschule für Musik Karlsruhe**, and graduated from the **University of Michigan**. Politi was a quarterfinalist at the **Competition for Young Conductors in Besançon**. In 2020 she was selected by Riccardo Muti for the **Italian Opera Academy**, in 2021 she took part in the Conductors' Academy with the **Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich**. She recently conducted for orchestras including **Baden-Baden Philharmonie, Stuttgarter Philharmoniker, Württembergische Philharmonie Reutlingen** and **Philharmonisches Kammerorchester Dresden**.

Charlotte Politi comments, 'I am delighted to be joining The Royal Ballet Companies. I very much look forward to working across London and Birmingham and getting to know all the amazing artists who are part of these prestigious institutions.'

Edo Frenkel joins **The Jette Parker Young Artist Programme** as **Ballet Conductor**. Frenkel is currently **Artist in Residence** at **Cité des arts de Paris** as composer and pianist and has performed in numerous international festivals including **Ojai, Aldeburgh, Lucerne, Verbier**,

and **Opera Rara**. He has acted as assistant conductor to **Sir Simon Rattle, Brad Lubman, Matthias Pintscher** and **Barbara Hannigan**.

Edo Frenkel said, 'After such a turbulent year, I'm so joyful and excited to be starting with The Jette Parker Young Artists and The Royal Ballet. I can't imagine a better place or more wonderful colleagues with whom to be making music.'

Hannah Quinn joins the Music Staff as **Royal Ballet Company Pianist**. Quinn graduated from the **Royal Conservatoire of Scotland**. During her studies she was awarded the **Leonard Hancock Memorial Prize** and the **James H Geddes repetiteur prize**. Hannah is an alumnus of the **National Opera Studio**. She was the Ivor Guest Trainee Pianist for The Royal Ballet from 2019-20 and has worked for the company as a freelancer since 2016 as a class and rehearsal pianist. Hannah has worked as a repetiteur at **English National Opera, British Youth Opera, Scottish Opera** and **English Touring Opera** where she was Head of Music Staff for two seasons. Hannah is also a trained conductor and has performed with **Southbank Sinfonia, Trinity Orchestra, Tianjin Philharmonic** and **Hampstead Garden Opera**.

Ends

Notes to Editors

Images can be downloaded here - [HERE](#)

For further information, please contact

Ashley.Woodfield@roh.org.uk

Tel 07984513676

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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, the compelling new canon of work by choreographers today including Resident Choreographer Wayne

McGregor and Artistic Associate Christopher Wheeldon, and the bold and complementary programming in the Linbury Theatre. Guest choreographers Cathy Marston, Crystal Pite, Twyla Tharp, Pam Tanowitz, Hofesh Shechter and Sid Larbi Cherkaoui have also created work for the Company.

About The Royal Opera

The Royal Opera, under the artistic direction of Antonio Pappano, Music Director, and Oliver Mears, Director of Opera, is one of the world's leading opera companies. Based in the iconic Covent Garden theatre, it is renowned both for its outstanding performances of traditional opera and for commissioning new works by today's leading opera composers, such as George Benjamin, Harrison Birtwistle, Mark-Anthony Turnage and Thomas Adès.

About the Royal Opera House

Home to The Royal Ballet, The Royal Opera and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, the Royal Opera House brings together the world's most extraordinary artists in live, streamed and broadcast events and performances that thrill, move and excite; that transport people to other worlds. Our theatres are in London's Covent Garden but our work is accessed and experienced across the UK and globally through touring partnerships, cinema programmes, free outdoor screenings, radio, TV and live-streaming.

Since closing our doors due to the global pandemic in March 2020, the Royal Opera House continued to bring together the world's most extraordinary artists and curated the #OurHouseToYourHouse programme, made up of nine live concerts (six for opera, two for ballet and two galas), 38 streamed productions and a suite of online content that has been viewed over 15 million times in 183 countries, together with a suite of cultural highlights in partnership with the BBC, Sky Arts and Netflix and a host of online home learning opportunities wherever you are in the country.

We are hugely excited to welcome people back to our theatres as soon as possible, showcasing the very best of our art forms and bringing the joy of live performance back to our audiences. We would like to thank everyone who continues to support our creative community as we get closer to re-opening our doors once again.

Royal Opera House Recovery Campaign

Live performance is a shared experience, and our audiences are at the heart of what we do on our stages, backstage, online, in cinemas and in our communities. The global pandemic has affected all arts organisations across the world. We have lost £3 in every £5 of our income, and our loan from Government takes us only part of the way. We need your help with our Recovery Campaign to bring our artists back to our stages. roh.org.uk/donate

