



17 February 2021

The Royal Opera House unveils a week-long programme of activity to celebrate International Women's Day 2021

The Royal Opera House is delighted to announce a week of activity to mark **International Women's Day 2021**.

Join us from **Monday 8 March** as we celebrate International Women's Day 2021 and host a week of events, broadcasts and discussions that go behind the scenes to explore the lives of women in our industry today.

Across the week, we will shine a light on and celebrate female achievement, as well as take a stark look at the continuing and pervasive inequality that exists today in the creative industries and beyond. From industry leaders and artists, to our own Royal Opera House staff, we will celebrate the inspirational women tackling inequality and working to support female empowerment across the creative industries.

Kicking off the week, the Royal Opera House **Insights** series returns for the first time in 2021 with a live discussion - ***Influence, challenge, and change: What is next for women in the creative industries?***

In a free broadcast on the Royal Opera House YouTube channel at **7pm GMT on Monday 8 March**, the distinguished panel of top figures in the arts world will explore what impact women have on the arts today, what needs to change and what active steps we can take to improve gender equality in the creative industry and society at large.

Arifa Akbar, chief theatre critic of *The Guardian*, will chair a panel of arts industry leaders including curator, writer and Director of Tate Modern **Frances Morris**, alongside lighting designer and Associate Director of the National Theatre **Paule Constable**. Paule is one of the founder members of **Freelancers Make Theatre Work** campaigning passionately for the freelance voice.

Indhu Rubasingham, Artistic Director of Kiln Theatre and trustee of the Royal Opera House, joins the panel alongside South African soprano **Pretty Yende** who made her Royal Opera debut in 2017 as Adina in Laurent Pelly's production of *L'elisir d'amore*. Pretty has also performed at La Scala, Metropolitan Opera, Liceu, Barcelona, Deutsche Oper Berlin and Paris Opéra.

As gender disparity has become even more pronounced over the course of the pandemic, discussion will focus on what steps the arts can take to call out inequality, actively support and represent women in the

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arts, and redress the balance and pervasive inequality in our industry. We ask our panel what is next for women in the creative industries.

From 8 March at 6pm GMT, head to the Royal Opera House's Instagram channel to watch a unique conversation between American choreographer **Pam Tanowitz** with **Royal Ballet** First Soloist **Beatriz Stix-Brunell** exploring the process of creating Tanowitz's critically acclaimed 2019 work *Everyone Keeps Me*, her first work for The Royal Ballet. This unmissable conversation will explore female choreography in the 21st century and female role models in the dance world.

Beatriz Stix-Brunell, Royal Ballet First Soloist comments:

'International Women's Day celebrates the economic, social, cultural, and political successes of women. When I think of people who have made impressions throughout my career, Pam Tanowitz is at the forefront. It was a privilege for me to work with her in *Everyone Keeps Me* and discover her unique language in dance, the movement feeling at once humble and bold – an important, honest, and distinctly female voice.'

Throughout the week, the Royal Opera House will place a spotlight on the work of **The Engender Network**. Established by The Royal Opera two years ago, Engender aims to highlight and grow the wealth of female talent both onstage and behind the scenes. It provides space and opportunity for personal development, peer support and creation of new work as well as conversations about gender in opera and exploring the barriers to equality. The network is open to all women and non-binary people in opera. Membership has grown from 80 to 180 during the pandemic and has become a vital resource for creative relationships and the cultivation of new ideas.

Kate Wyatt, Creative Producer for the Royal Opera and Founder Director at Opera UK says:

'At a time when the pandemic is having a disproportionately negative impact on women, it is more important than ever to ensure we do not regress in our drive for equality. Engender is a place for women to connect and support each other, to amplify the work of women in opera, to have a collective voice. We want to increase the amount of female-led work on our stages and ensure more women are involved backstage, in production, administration and planning. The rapid growth of the membership during the pandemic shows needs for change.'

On **Facebook** we will premiere two filmed songs, created following an Engender/**Jette Parker Young Artist** (JPYA) event which paired composers with librettists. **Monday 8 March at 1pm GMT** will see the screening of *Kind Regards*. Composed by **Lillie Harris** with words by **Laura Attridge**, the song is performed by soprano **April Koyejo-Audiger** and is directed by **TD. Moyo**, a graduate of JPYA's 2020 opera director training programme.

On **Thursday 11 March at 1pm GMT** we will premiere a recital of *I am not yours – Mother Nature* – a piece composed by **Anna Semple**. Written by **Susannah Pearse** who also participated in the JPYA Women's Empowerment workshop for opera makers led by **Katie Mitchell** in December 2020, the work is performed by JPYA mezzo-soprano **Stephanie Wake-Edwards** accompanied by **Caroline Dowdle**.

Continuing the Royal Opera House's celebration of female empowerment in the arts, Royal Opera House Deputy Director of Technical and Production **Emma Wilson** examines *Women in Technical Theatre, Let's Change Our Future*. On **Tuesday 9 March** Emma will publish a detailed piece that goes behind the

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scenes of the industry's technical workforce, highlighting areas of positive change in attitudes and approach, while signalling how much more there is to do.

Emma said: 'Encouragement to address routes into the industry, diversity, and the important challenges set by our staff, industry colleagues, unions, and campaigning bodies, must be embraced with the humility of knowing we can do better. We have much to achieve across the Royal Opera House and the industry. We directly acknowledge that the difference we make with our work onstage must be reflected in the quality of life and range of opportunities backstage.'

Over the course of the week, we'll be using our social media channels to ask our audience who are the women that inspire them, as well as sharing a range of additional content reflecting the themes and objectives of International Women's Day. Follow the Royal Opera House to get involved.

#ChooseToChallenge #IWD2021

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NOTES TO EDITORS

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Please find images available to download at the links below:

- [**Insights: Influence, challenge, and change: What is next for women in the creative industries?**](#)
- [**Pam Tanowitz's Everyone Keeps Me with Beatriz Stix-Brunell**](#)
- [**April Koyejo-Audiger \(Kind Regards\) and Stephanie Wake-Edwards \(I am not yours - Mother Nature\)**](#)

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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

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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, as well as a compelling new canon of work by some of the world's leading choreographers of today including Resident Choreographer Wayne McGregor and Artistic Associate Christopher Wheeldon. 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.

About the Royal Opera House

Home to The Royal Ballet, The Royal Opera and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House our vision is to give everyone access to exceptional ballet and opera.

Since closing our doors due to the global pandemic in March 2020, the Royal Opera House has continued to bring together the world's most extraordinary artists and curated the #OurHouseToYourHouse programme of 19 streams, 4 socially distanced live concerts and a suite of online content that has been viewed over 315 million times in 183 countries.

The Royal Opera House continues its #OurHouseToYourHouse programme, bringing audiences the best of the ROH through a new series of live performances, cinema screenings, Friday Premieres and cultural highlights in partnership with the BBC and Sky Arts.

The Royal Opera House is committed to widening participation and deepening learning for all ages. Last summer we launched Create and Learn, offering free online home-learning opportunities for children and young people. In addition, The Royal Ballet partnered with Cast and Doncaster Council to support Doncaster residents with online resources and remote direction to create a unique community dance film, Doncaster Dances.

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 Government loan will take us only part of the way. We need your help with our Recovery Campaign to bring artists back to our stages. roh.org.uk/donate

About the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme

The Jette Parker Young Artists Programme supports the artistic development of young singers, conductors, directors and répétiteurs. The Young Artists are an international group of outstanding professionals at the start of their careers. They are salaried employees of the Royal Opera House usually full-time over two years. The Young Artists work on productions for The Royal Opera and Royal Ballet, singing small roles and covering larger roles, or joining the music or directing staff for productions. They are taught and mentored by Royal Opera and Royal Ballet music staff, a wide range of

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freelance music and language coaches and visiting singers, directors and conductors. Every facility of the Company is made available to them so that their talents are nurtured through total immersion in the life of the Royal Opera House. The Jette Parker Young Artists Programme is made possible thanks to the exceptional generosity of Oak Foundation, who have supported the Programme since 2005. In 2017 they extended their support for their Programme and enabled new initiatives to diversify the range of artists supported by the Programme, including the development of women's conducting courses and the JPYAP Link Artist Programme, which extends coaching opportunities to individuals with exceptional potential from backgrounds underrepresented in the Royal Opera House talent pool.