

**Monday 26 September 2022**

**For immediate release**

## **David Collins joins Northern Ballet as its new Executive Director**

- *David will join the Company from Opera North in early 2023*
- *He replaces outgoing Chief Executive Mark Skipper, who retires this month*
- *David will work with new Artistic Director Federico Bonelli on plans for the upcoming season*

**Northern Ballet is delighted to announce that David Collins is joining the Company as its new Executive Director.**

David joins the Company from Opera North, where he is currently Executive Director and Deputy CEO. A hugely respected and highly successful leader with extensive experience across the arts, David will join Northern Ballet in early 2023 following the departure of Mark Skipper DL, who retires on 30 September after taking the organisation to extraordinary new heights during his 26 years as Northern Ballet's Chief Executive.

David arrives at an exciting moment for Northern Ballet as it looks to the future under the artistic leadership of Federico Bonelli, who took over as the company's new Artistic Director in May, and the chairmanship of Guy Perricone, who joined in July. He joins as the Company continues its successful 2022/23 season, presenting a vibrant mix of treasured classics and newly commissioned work across England and Northern Ireland, and prepares to confirm its plans for 2023/24.

David joined Opera North, one of UK's leading touring opera companies, in 2016, when he was appointed as its Director of External Affairs. After working on an £18 million capital redevelopment programme that transformed the company's Leeds headquarters, he became Executive Director and Deputy CEO in October 2021. Before joining Opera North, David was the Royal Shakespeare Company's Head of Marketing, where his projects included the launch of Live from the RSC and the capital transformation of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre.

**David Collins, Northern Ballet's incoming Executive Director, said:**

"Under the leadership of Mark Skipper, Northern Ballet has flourished, creating extraordinary work that connects thousands of people across the UK through dance rooted in compelling stories. That success has been underpinned by their commitment to opening up the joy and power of participation in dance for all. I'm thrilled by the prospect of working in partnership with Federico and the many skilled people across the Company to shape a future for Northern Ballet that builds on that

enduring commitment to create work of relevance for, and with, communities across the country.”

**Federico Bonelli, Northern Ballet’s Artistic Director, added:**

“I can’t wait to begin working with David to shape Northern Ballet’s plans for an exciting future, both on and off the stage. David’s reputation as an inspiring, passionate and proactive arts leader speaks for itself, as do his recent successes at Opera North. I’m delighted that he’ll be helping me in the months and years to come, building on Mark Skipper’s outstanding legacy and taking the Company to new heights.”

**Guy Perricone, Chair of Northern Ballet, said:**

“I am absolutely delighted that David Collins will be joining Northern Ballet as our new Executive Director. David brings significant experience in managing arts organisations and will be able to build on the invaluable contribution of Mark Skipper, our CEO for over 20 years. This is a very exciting time for Northern Ballet, for our supporters and for our staff, and I am certain that David and Federico Bonelli, our Artistic Director, will form an exceptional leadership team to shape and direct Northern Ballet into the next, exciting phase of its evolution.”

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**David Collins**

David Collins has been the Executive Director/Deputy CEO at Opera North since 2021. He joined the company in 2016 as its Director of External Affairs – leading the marketing, box office, communications, digital and development teams; overseeing the fundraising campaign for the landmark £18 million Music Works capital redevelopment programme; and leading on Opera North’s growing digital output. Before joining Opera North, David was Head of Marketing at the Royal Shakespeare Company, working on productions in Stratford-upon-Avon, London and on tour nationally and internationally, as well as the launch of Live from the RSC and the capital transformation of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. He is a Trustee of Opera Europa, the association of European opera companies, and Pilot Theatre, the Yorkshire-based touring company.

**Northern Ballet**

Northern Ballet is one of the UK's leading ballet companies and the widest touring ballet Company in the UK. Bold and innovative in its approach, Northern Ballet is prolific in creating new full-length work with a unique blend of strong classical technique and impressive storytelling. Northern Ballet's repertoire embraces popular culture and takes inspiration from literature, legend, opera and the classics, pushing the boundaries of what stories can be told through dance.

Based in Leeds and a true champion for the cultural exports of the North, Northern Ballet is dedicated to bringing ballet to as many people and places as possible. Its Company of dancers performs a combination of its full-length ballets and specially created ballets for children at more than 40 venues each year.

Launched in 2019, Northern Ballet's digital dance platform ensures more people can access the company's work, from full-length films of popular ballets through to exciting short dance films by up-and-coming choreographers and filmmakers. Visit [digitaldance.org](https://digitaldance.org) to discover more.

*For more information, visit [northernballet.com](https://northernballet.com).*