

For immediate release

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Northern Ballet announces 50th Anniversary Programme



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[Northern Ballet](#) has announced details of their 50th Anniversary Programme including three world premières, a star-studded [Gala](#) and tours of some of the Company's best-loved productions. World premières in 2020 include [Geisha](#) by Kenneth Tindall, [Merlin](#) by Drew McOnie and a new children's ballet. David Nixon OBE's blockbusters [Cinderella](#) and [The Great Gatsby](#) return for national tours. Northern Ballet will also perform [Three Short Ballets](#) in Newcastle and tour Mariana Rodrigues' [Little Red Riding Hood](#) nationally.

50th Anniversary Celebration Gala

Marking the start of the Company's anniversary programme, Northern Ballet's [50th Anniversary Celebration Gala](#) will see dancers from some of the world's leading companies unite in a unique event celebrating Northern Ballet's 50-year journey. Northern Ballet will be joined by guest stars from The Royal Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, English National Ballet, Scottish Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet and Phoenix Dance Theatre performing

excerpts from Northern Ballet's repertoire and works connected to the Company's history. The gala will be a magnificent celebration of the Company's 50-year story so far.

The 50th Anniversary Celebration Gala will be at Leeds Grand Theatre for one night only on Saturday 4 January 2020. For information visit northernballet.com/gala

Geisha – World Première

In the first of three world premières, Kenneth Tindall, choreographer of the Company's acclaimed *Casanova*, creates his second full-length ballet. Based on a true story, [Geisha](#) is the haunting tale of two young women trapped in a world of duty and sacrifice, who can only be saved by a promise from beyond the grave.

Geisha will feature original music composed by Alexandra Harwood (*The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*), an original scenario and dramaturgy by Gwyneth Hughes (ITV'S *Vanity Fair*), set and costume designs by Christopher Oram (*Casanova* and Disney's *Frozen*, Broadway) and lighting by Alastair West (*Casanova*). Lesley Downer completes the creative team as Historical Consultant.

Geisha will première in Leeds on 14 March 2020 followed by a tour to Sheffield, London, Edinburgh and Cardiff until May 2020. For information visit northernballet.com/geisha



Cinderella

A family favourite, David Nixon OBE's [Cinderella](#) will tour nationally in the spring. An enchanting adaptation of the world's most famous rags to riches story, Cinderella is whisked away from her wicked Stepmother and a desolate life of servitude, to the glistening lake of ice where she first meets her Prince and changes her destiny forever.

Cinderella features an original score by Philip Feeney, sets designed by Duncan Hayler, lighting by Tim Mitchell and costumes by David Nixon OBE. The ballet will tour to Leicester, Milton Keynes and Salford from March to June 2020. For more information visit northernballet.com/cinderella

The Great Gatsby

David Nixon OBE's smash hit [The Great Gatsby](http://northernballet.com/gatsby), returns for a new national tour in the autumn. Based on the novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* tells the story of mysterious millionaire Jay Gatsby as the sparkling façade of his world starts to slip, revealing the loneliness, obsession and tragedy that lies beneath.

Set to a toe-tapping score by Sir Richard Rodney Bennett CBE, with sets designed by Jérôme Kaplan, lighting by Tim Mitchell and costumes by David Nixon OBE, *The Great Gatsby* will tour to Leeds, Nottingham and Sheffield from September – October 2020. For more information visit northernballet.com/gatsby

Merlin – World Première

The second full-length world première of Northern Ballet's 50th anniversary season will see Drew McOnie make his debut with Northern Ballet. The choreographer, whose previous projects include Broadway's *King Kong* and Baz Luhrmann's *Strictly Ballroom*, will create [Merlin](http://northernballet.com/merlin), a magical spectacle inspired by the story of the legendary wizard.

Merlin will feature original music by Grant Olding (*One Man Two Guvnors*, National Theatre), a scenario by Gwyneth Hughes (ITV's *Vanity Fair*), set and costume designs by Colin Richmond (*Grease*, UK Tour) and lighting by Anna Watson (*A Christmas Carol*, Bristol Old Vic). In addition, Chris Fisher, International Illusions and Magic Associate on *Harry Potter & the Cursed Child* has been appointed as Illusionist for *Merlin*.

Merlin will première in Bradford on 16 October 2020 followed by a tour to Norwich, Newcastle, Southampton, Woking and Leeds until December 2020. For more information visit northernballet.com/merlin

Three Short Ballets

Following the success of the Company's debut at Newcastle's Northern Stage this year, Northern Ballet will return in April 2020 with an exhilarating programme of [Three Short Ballets](http://northernballet.com/three-short-ballets) featuring *The Kingdom of Back* by Morgann Runacre-Temple, *Powerhouse Rhumba*

by David Nixon OBE and *For an Instant* by Amaury Lebrun. For information visit northernballet.com/three-short-ballets



Ballets for Children

Continuing its pioneering programme of short ballets created specifically for young children, Northern Ballet will première a new children's ballet in October 2020. The title is yet to be announced but will follow in the footsteps of the recently announced world première of [Little Red Riding Hood](#) (October 2019) which is choreographed by Mariana Rodrigues and will tour nationally in spring 2020 (details to be announced). For updates visit northernballet.com/whats-on

Digital Dance

Continuing the Company's exciting developments in its digital dance offering, Northern Ballet's popular children's ballets [Ugly Duckling](#) and [Goldilocks & the Three Bears](#) will be screened in cinemas nationwide from January 2020. The Company will also present three new dance films on its Digital Dance platform, including an original direct to digital creation by Kenneth Tindall. For updates see digitaldance.org

Other Activities and Opportunities

In addition to its programme of performances, Northern Ballet will be holding a number of other activities and opportunities for audiences and supporters to engage with the Company during its 50th anniversary year. These include an exhibition of ballet costumes in Leeds city centre during April and May 2020 and an exclusive fundraising dinner and performance in Leeds in autumn 2020. For more information on these and other activities as they get announced, see northernballet.com for updates.



David Nixon OBE, Artistic Director of Northern Ballet said: 'Northern Ballet is a truly extraordinary organisation and has endured so many challenges in its history to arrive, 50 years after its inception, as the successful, confident and innovative company that we are today. I am privileged to be the Artistic Director as we reach this milestone anniversary and to be continuing the incredible work of all the artists and staff who have gone before us. Our programme of events for our anniversary year showcases Northern Ballet's strengths in creating new work, reviving some of our most popular productions and making exciting progress with our digital ambitions. As we take our next steps in the Company's journey, I wish to thank all of our supporters past and present, and we look forward to what the future will bring.'

-ENDS-

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50th Anniversary Season Performance Listings

50th Anniversary Celebration Gala

Leeds Grand Theatre, 4 January 2020

Geisha (World Première)

Leeds Grand Theatre, 14 – 21 March 2020

Sheffield, Lyceum Theatre, 24 – 28 March 2020

London, Sadler's Wells, 21 – 25 April 2020

Edinburgh, Festival Theatre, 6 – 9 May 2020

Cardiff New Theatre, 12 – 16 May 2020

Cinderella

Leicester, Curve, 31 March – 4 April 2020

Milton Keynes Theatre, 28 April – 2 May 2020

Salford, The Lowry, 3 – 6 June 2020

Three Short Ballets

Newcastle, Northern Stage, 17 – 18 April 2020

The Great Gatsby

Leeds Playhouse, 3 – 12 September 2020

Nottingham Theatre Royal, 15 – 19 September 2020

Sheffield, Lyceum Theatre, 27 – 31 October 2020

Merlin (World Première)

Bradford, Alhambra Theatre, 16 – 17 October 2020

Norwich Theatre Royal, 20 – 24 October 2020

Newcastle Theatre Royal, 10 – 14 November 2020

Southampton, Mayflower Theatre, 19 – 21 November 2020

Woking, New Victoria Theatre, 24 – 28 November 2020

Leeds Grand Theatre, 8 December 2020 – 20 December 2020

Little Red Riding Hood

Spring 2020 tour - details to be announced

New Children's Ballet (World Première)

October 2020 – details to be announced

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 at creating new full-length work with a unique blend of strong classical technique and world-class 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.

A champion for the cultural exports of the North, Leeds-based Northern Ballet is dedicated to bringing world-class story ballets to as many people and places as possible, under the leadership of Artistic Director David Nixon OBE. Northern Ballet performs a combination of its full-length ballets and specially created ballets for children at more than 40 venues annually.

For more details of Northern Ballet's tour, on sale dates and booking information, please visit northernballet.com/whatson



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