Our New Home
Northern Ballet's powerhouse for dance

Bernard Atha
Champion for the Arts in Yorkshire

She's Coming...
Our must-see ballet for 2011
Dear Friends

Welcome to your new look inside magazine, the first issue from our fantastic new home in the centre of Leeds.

It has been a very eventful few months since we last spoke and we have definitely entered an exciting new era. As you’ll see we have had a subtle change of name, dropping ‘theatre’ from our title. This is part of a complete rebrand which also incorporates a new logo (at a jaunty angle), a series of dramatic new production images, a palette of colours and a new website to help make us immediately recognisable to our audiences across the UK and overseas.

The launch of the rebrand coincided with the move to our amazing new home on Quarry Hill, Leeds, which really is a sight to behold. It truly is the powerhouse of dance we dreamed it would be. Situated in Leeds’ cultural quarter, next to the BBC, the West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds College of Music and Yorkshire Dance, our glass-fronted building has 7 studios over 6 floors, a Studio Theatre, and a bright, open atrium complete with cafe. We are sharing the building with Phoenix Dance Theatre. I can’t tell you how good it is to finally have an appropriate, purpose-built space we can call our own, a space that will facilitate our world-class dancers and our growing Academy – the dancers of the future. This is a bright and friendly new building which will encourage invention and creativity, where we can showcase our work and invite others to join and become involved. We officially launch the building in January 2011.

We are already in the process of creating a new production, the first to be developed here in the new Northern Ballet HQ, and my first new full-length ballet in over two years. I am creating Cleopatra with the endlessly-talented Claude-Michel Schönberg. Claude-Michel is best know for his musicals Les Misérables, Miss Saigon and Martin Guerre and by Northern Ballet aficionados for his score for Wuthering Heights which we revived last year to great acclaim. Cleopatra’s story has interested both Claude-Michel and me for some time and I am thrilled we are finally getting to create it as a ballet together. Cleopatra is an iconic woman – a mother, a lover, a queen – whose popularity seems to continue to grow. The production will open in Leeds on 26 February 2011.

Before we take to Egypt however, we’ve been back to the land of the Snowflakes with The Nutcracker which we’ve performed around the country and we’re also off to Beijing where will perform Romeo & Juliet and Madame Butterfly over the New Year period. Busy times ahead!

So, we may look a bit different and we are in a new home, but all these changes just enhance the fact that we’re still the same great Company. As ever we’re grateful for your loyalty and support. I look forward to seeing you at the theatre soon, and welcoming you to our new home.

Best wishes

David Nixon, OBE
Artistic Director
Don’t just sit there

Northern Ballet’s Dance Education Officers Sophie Alder and Caroline Burn are getting the people of Yorkshire moving! They are leading two dance projects focusing on creating cross cultural activities that combine the arts and sport to encourage people to be active. Sophie is working on a project that brings together dance and diving to be performed at the Leeds Diving Centre and at the John Charles Sports Centre, while Caroline is combining dance and rugby in Hull as she teams up with the Rugby Football League dancers to create an audience participation piece to be performed on the pitch at the Hull rugby derby on Good Friday, 2011.

Goodbyes

So long, farewell to: Georgina Gabbie, Head of Wigs; Megan McLoughlin, Trusts and Foundations Manager; Pippa Plumptree-Varley, Learning Co-ordinator and Carly Harris, Communications Assistant.

We have also bid farewell to Christopher Hinton-Lewis (pictured) who has moved on to the Royal New Zealand Ballet; David Ward, who has left to work with BalletMet in Ohio and Nathalie Léger who retired from dancing but is now a teacher in our Academy.

We’ve also said a short-term goodbye and congratulations to Selina McGonagle who has gone on maternity leave with her second child, William Patrick Clossick.

Hellos

Northern Ballet welcomes Javier Torres (pictured) as a Premier Dancer. Javier joins us from Ballet Nacional de Cuba. Nicola Gervasi has also joined the Company as 1st Year Corps and Michaela Griffin, Josh Barwick and Matthew Broadbent join as Apprentices.

Welcome to Viki Westall, Academy Deputy Associate Director; Faye Cardwell, Academy Assistant; Heidi Thornton, Assistant Stage Manager; Thomas Orchard-Webb, Communications Assistant; Mischa Summerill, Learning Assistant; Heather Harkness, Academy Student Support Assistant; Claire O’Neill, Wardrobe Assistant and Helen Russell, Wigs Manager.

Of course with our new home come new people. Our reception team includes Aled Roberts, Karen Dixon and Carol McCarthy with Rosita deSouza on Saturday’s, all ably supported by Fiona Heseltine on occasions. Our Caretakers are Shaun Daniels and Robert Cordingley.

Official Building Launch

We will officially open our new building with a special open day on 22 January. This is an opportunity to come along and see the new facilities in use and see behind the scenes of both Northern Ballet and Phoenix Dance Theatre. Watch classes and rehearsals in the studios, take a tour of the building, take part in a range of free activities from both companies and our partners. You’ll find more information on our website over the coming weeks www.northernballet.com Read all about our wonderful new home on pages 6 and 7.

Photo: Christopher Hinton-Lewis as Hamlet. Photo: Dee Conway
Keep dancing

Dance classes are now underway and available for people of all ages and abilities at our new home. From tiny tots to classes for the over 50s, beginners classes to advanced training, there is something for everyone. For further details visit our website www.northernballet.com/joinin

Northern Ballet overseas

Northern Ballet continued its international touring programme this summer with performances of *Peter Pan* (pictured) in Hong Kong and Macau and *A Christmas Carol* in Bangkok. The dancers head to Beijing in January to perform *Madame Butterfly* and *Romeo & Juliet*. Marketing Leeds and Welcome to Yorkshire are supporting Northern Ballet's tour to Beijing. The Bangkok tour was supported by Marketing Leeds and OOCL Freight Company which provided invaluable support by shipping sets and costumes from Leeds to Bangkok and back. Visit the Northern Ballet website to see dancers' pictures and blogs from their trips abroad.

Waitrose donation

Northern Ballet's Academy students were spotted dancing in the aisles at the new Waitrose Meanwood store in celebration of the supermarket's support of training for budding ballet dancers in Leeds and Yorkshire. The donation came just as Northern Ballet and its Academy took up residence in our new home and will be used to help establish a dance library of books and DVDs, as well as to fund bursaries and uniforms for students aged 8-16.

Quarry Hill Creates

A partnership of cultural businesses located on the Quarry Hill area of central Leeds have come together to reclaim it as one of the most exciting and creative areas of the city. Quarry Hill Creates is a partnership of more than 14 creative organisations sited on or around Quarry Hill who are coming together to raise the profile of this intriguing area of the city, to share resources and expertise and to work collaboratively on new projects. Watch this space for news on upcoming collaborations and performances.

Some of the articles in this issue have been edited for space reasons. You can read them in full on our website at www.northernballet.com/inside
welcome to our powerhouse for inventive dance
It’s finally happened, we’ve moved to our new purpose-built home on Quarry Hill and it’s better than any of us could ever have imagined. Located in central Leeds it is a landmark building which gives us the profile and visibility we lacked in our old headquarters.

You enter the building through our spacious atrium in which you will find the café/bar, our reception team, meeting rooms and the two ground floors studios which make up the large 230-seat Studio Theatre.

The café is open from 8am-8pm serving a range of delicious food and drink. It’s the perfect place to rub shoulders with professional dancers and Academy students from both Northern Ballet and Phoenix Dance Theatre, catch glimpses of rehearsals in the Studio Theatre and even listen to the Northern Ballet Sinfonia in rehearsal – all for the price of a cup of coffee!

The Studio Theatre is Europe’s largest dance studio. As our stage is the same size as the Leeds Grand Theatre stage, we will be able to rehearse new productions with set and lighting before we move into the theatre. This wonderful space is also available for hire for performances, conferences, dinners and other functions.

Over a further four floors you’ll find more studio space (we have 7 studios in total), the administrative centres for both Northern Ballet and Phoenix Dance and a health suite.

There are meeting rooms throughout the building that are available for hire and the Bernard Atha Board Suite, located on floor five, has an adjoining terrace area which inside can testify...
northern ballet’s new home

The move to our new building has coincided with a cut in our funding from Arts Council England of £195,000 for 2011/12. With possible cuts planned from the local authority and with our audiences making careful decisions about how to spend their money it is going to be a very challenging time for the Company. However, we feel we are in a great position to face the challenges that lay before us. We need to use our building to help generate much needed revenue for the Company so you could help us by hiring it for your own meetings and events and recommending it to others. If this is something you’d be interested in contact Judith Baker, our Friends & Events Manager on 0113 220 8000 or email Judith.baker@northernballet.com

Update your address book - our new address is Northern Ballet, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7PA, Tel: 0113 220 8000 Email info@northernballet.com www.northernballet.com

For a full version of this article including a guided tour of each floor visit www.northernballet.com/inside

northern ballet’s new home

gives magnificent views of the city at all times of the day and is particularly spectacular at sunset. The Board Suite and terrace make the perfect space for entertaining as well as an ideal and inspiring meeting space.

On the top of the building is a green roof. Offering wonderful views of the city it’s not accessible to anyone other than the Northern Ballet sheep who keep the grass short and provide wool for our costumes (only joking).

We will be organising opportunities for Friends to get involved in the new building. As so many of you contributed towards our capital fundraising campaign we hope you are proud of our new home and will use it as much as possible. We can’t thank you enough for your continued support of the Company.

The new building offers us so many opportunities for creativity, collaboration and partnerships. It coincides with the creation of our new ballet, Cleopatra and the launch of our new brand, so we are facing the future positively. The support of our Friends and Patrons will, however, be instrumental to our continued success.
Bernard Atha – a champion of the Arts and a true Yorkshire icon

Born and bred in Yorkshire, Bernard Atha is a man who defines the meaning of Yorkshire grit in the way he has shown steely determination in steering Northern Ballet through many challenges over many years. Bernard, as he is fondly known by the dancers and staff at Northern Ballet, was until recently Chair of our Board of Directors. He has now passed the mantle onto David Forbes but to honour his hard work and in the true hope that Bernard remains involved with the Company, he has been given a new title, Honorary Life President.

A true champion of the arts in Leeds, Bernard was instrumental in the success of many of the major arts developments in the city including West Yorkshire Playhouse and Yorkshire Dance. He brought Northern Ballet to Leeds in 1996 and worked tirelessly to ensure our dreams of a new headquarters became a reality.

We believe Bernard is unique and the whole Company would like to thank him for the work he has done for us. inside had the pleasure of talking to Bernard just before a dinner was held in his honour at Northern Ballet.

Bernard, you’ve been Chair of Northern Ballet for many years, campaigning for our new building. How does it feel to be sitting here now?

It’s a dream come true. It’s better than I could have hoped for. The original concept was to bring a school, the Central School of Ballet, up here to premises we would have found. It wouldn’t have been as good as this. This is truly majestic.

You’ve been instrumental to many of the cultural developments in Leeds. Do you look around you and get a certain sense of satisfaction at your life’s work?

There is a certain amount of satisfaction but I don’t want to be pompous about it. I am pleased particularly with this area, Quarry Hill. About 12 years ago I made a proposal for this to be a cultural quarter for Leeds and amazingly most of what I proposed has happened. Yorkshire Dance gave a home to Phoenix Dance Theatre for many years, the College of Music came here and Northern Ballet was the final piece of the jigsaw. We had this site allocated 10 years ago for Northern Ballet and it’s
been a real fight to make sure other people haven’t come in and taken it. You have to give credit to the Council for not handing this site over to anyone else as it is very valuable. But it’s been a fight that has been very worthwhile. The possibilities for all the organisations based here to collaborate is very exciting.

The burden of making this building happen has fallen pretty much on one person, Mark Skipper (Northern Ballet’s Chief Executive) and it is a tribute to him that we are sat here now. I’m very proud of the whole Company and I’m very proud of him.

As a proud parent who has watched Northern Ballet come of age, what are your hopes now for the future of Northern Ballet?
The Arts Council recognising Northern Ballet’s importance and funding it at an appropriate level. It is a company that takes ballet to more people all over the country than any of the other companies do. Northern Ballet now has a standard of dance that matches some of the best in the world and I think that’s a tribute to Yoko Ichino and David Nixon who brought it to that level. To gain an appreciation of the arts you have to be exposed to it. Northern Ballet brings ballet into many peoples’ lives and I believe our lives are richer because of the Company.

For a longer version of this interview visit www.northernballet.com/inside

Above from left: Northern Ballet Chair David Forbes, Premiere Dancer Pippa Moore, ex-Northern Ballet dancer David Ward and Honorary Life President Bernard Atha on the site of the Company’s new home before its completion.
Claude-Michel Schönberg and David Nixon’s Cleopatra

Performance dates:

World Première
Saturday 26 February – Saturday 5 March
Leeds, Grand Theatre
Box Office 0844 844 2701

Thursday 10 – Saturday 12 March
Edinburgh, Festival Theatre
Box Office 0131 259 6000

Wednesday 16 – Saturday 19 March
Hull, New Theatre
Box Office 01482 226655

Tuesday 22 – Saturday 26 March
Sheffield, Lyceum Theatre
Box Office 0114 249 6060

Tuesday 5 – Saturday 9 April
Cardiff, New Theatre
Box Office 029 2087 8889

Tuesday 3 – Saturday 7 May
Milton Keynes Theatre
Box Office 0870 060 6652

Wednesday 11 – Saturday 14 May
Belfast, Grand Opera House
Box Office 0289 024 1919

Tuesday 17 – Saturday 21 May
London, Sadler’s Wells
Box Office 0844 412 4306
Cleopatra is Northern Ballet's new production for 2011. Created by Claude-Michel Schönberg and David Nixon, this promises to be one of Northern Ballet’s most exciting ballets. David Nixon gave inside a taste of what to expect.

Cleopatra’s story is one that David Nixon has been itching to tell as a ballet. “I’ve been interested in Cleopatra and that period for a long time. I think the legend and the mystery of the woman grow rather than lessen. Two-thousand years later she is as popular as she ever was, in fact more so.”

The inspiration behind Cleopatra came from the revival of a previous collaborative project, Northern Ballet’s Wuthering Heights, which saw Claude-Michel and David working together for the first time in 2002.

David explains: “The revival of Wuthering Heights in 2009 was the key turning point because Claude-Michel and I decided that we needed an extra scene in the ballet for Heathcliff,” David said. “The combination of re-writing part of the music and working with a new cast six years after having created the original production somehow meant the ballet took off far more intensely and powerfully than it had the first time. Claude-Michel was really inspired by this, and so immediately we started talking about the next project and I said, you know, Cleopatra is still there.”

“Two weeks later I got a phone call from Claude-Michel asking me to come over and listen to some of the music he’d written. It was incredible. It was imaginative and sensual and moving and captured the humanity of the characters. Sometimes with people like Cleopatra and Alexander the Great, or any of these phenomenal characters, we forget that they are also human and are capable of emotions. I felt so much emotion in the music Claude-Michel had written, even the naivety of Cleopatra was there. I felt that I could not let somebody else choreograph to that music. It was mine!”
Claude-Michel's music is the driving force behind David's creative process for *Cleopatra*. “The dance really comes out of the music. I respond to what he’s written. Maybe because he writes for musicals there’s always a bit more latitude in what you can do with the music. With Claude Michel’s music, if I find myself somewhere else, I can often work with it. It moves you, and you move to it. The music is really powerful and I think people will love it. For me, it’s some of the best he’s ever written.”

*Cleopatra* has inspired generations of artists and David is keen that he represents this iconic woman as honestly and fairly as he can. He tells us: “What we want to focus on is that she’s not just a seductress, she’s an intelligent, sensual woman, who always has her country at the forefront of her mind. People thought of her not only as a Queen but also as a Goddess. I want the audience to understand her as a human as much as someone going to lead a country. She possessed a quality that could engage men and hold them, and I’m hoping to somehow create that kind of charisma, and at the same time let the audience know this was a woman who had children, who was trying to protect them. She was someone who thought several times in her life that she had achieved her goal only to be left running for her life.

There’s an incredible woman in there.”

*Cleopatra* has its world premiere in Leeds on Saturday 26 February and will then embark on a national tour to theatres in Edinburgh, Hull, Sheffield, Cardiff, Milton Keynes, Belfast, London, Nottingham, Woking and Norwich. Tickets are on sale in most venues.

For an extended version of this interview visit [www.northernballet.com/inside](http://www.northernballet.com/inside)

Keep up-to-date with the development of the ballet by signing up to Cleopatra Confidential at [www.northernballet.com/cleopatra](http://www.northernballet.com/cleopatra) and receive advance booking information, behind-the-scenes photos, footage, interviews and clips of the music.

Book a table at our exclusive *Cleopatra* dinner in Leeds on Wednesday 2 March 2011. For £150 per person, enjoy a pre-performance champagne reception, a complimentary programme, interval drinks and a three course post-performance meal in the unique surroundings of the Howard Assembly Rooms at Leeds Grand Theatre. For further information or to book a place contact Judith Baker on 0113 220 8000 or email judith.baker@northernballet.com

Main picture: Martha Leebolt as Cleopatra and Tobias Batley as Mark Antony. Photo: Jason Tozer.
Move a step closer to Northern Ballet and join in the fun. There are lots of ways to get more from the Company through your local theatre, your school or at our new home in central Leeds.

In your local theatre you can find out more about the Company and the production with a talk or demonstration, or you can try out some movements in a workshop.

We are renowned for our work in schools around the UK, through production-based workshops, cross-curriculum projects and teacher training.

In our new home we offer classes for everyone, from tiny tots to adults, in ballet, contemporary and jazz. There are classes available for people of all abilities, from those who want to have fun, tone up and get in shape through to professional level dancers.

Find out if dancing really is as easy as the dancers make it look! Our classes offer

**Opportunities** for all ages and abilities from tiny tots to adults

**Inspiration** from training alongside Northern Ballet dancers

**Excellence** through tuition from world-class professionals

**Variety** with Ballet, Jazz and Contemporary Dance classes

**Accessibility** with evening, weekend and lunchtime classes

Find out more at www.northernballet.com/joinin or speak to us on 0113 220 8000.
New faces at the Academy

Our Academy continues to go from strength to strength. The students are thrilled with our new home, especially the Studio Theatre which will offer them their first experience of performing to a live audience.

Our students have always benefited from the unique support and guidance of ex-professional dancers and from the access they have to the Company. Two ex-Northern Ballet dancers, Nathalie Léger and Natalie Leftwich, have recently joined the Academy teaching staff. Their faces will be familiar to many of you.

Photos from top left: Children taking part in a Northern Ballet education activity; a member of Northern Ballet’s Academy; Premiere Dancer Kenneth Tindall, Photo: Bill Cooper. Main photo: A member of the tiny tots dance class.

Above: Natalie Leftwich, Photo: Brian Slater; Nathalie Léger, Photo: Hanson
In early July Northern Ballet’s Learning team travelled across the world to Hong Kong to lead a three-day dance project for the British Council at the Providence Garden for Rehab in the new territories of Hong Kong. Dance Education Officer Caroline Burn worked with local dance artists, care workers and members of the Rehab Centre, exploring the benefits of dance and movement for people with learning difficulties.

“Our aim was to develop the knowledge and understanding of how dance can be used to encourage creativity, expression and interaction between the people with disabilities and their care workers,” she explains.

The project used props to make movement less intimidating, encouraging social interaction and developing participants’ individual movement skills. Working in pairs encouraged team building and helped grow confidence.

Caroline worked with the care workers to develop their own dance sessions, showing them how the theory they had learned could be used in the context of a session, allowing them to explore their own creativity.

Reflecting after the project, the care workers and dance artists spoke about the positive effects of movement for the centre members and how activities for the whole group can work on different levels according to what each participant can achieve.

Caroline was thrilled with the success of the project, “We left the care workers with a new set of skills, almost a tool bag of things they could use as a starting point for carrying out their own dance sessions.

“On a personal level the project was really inspiring. What was interesting for everybody was seeing the dramatic shift in the people with learning disabilities making their own choices and decisions, and sometimes being in control of their care workers! For me this was a reminder that everybody at some point needs to be a leader, and in control, and share those skills, to be able to work together and have a voice. I think dance can do that.”

“What was interesting for everybody was seeing the dramatic shift in the people with learning disabilities making their own choices and decisions, and sometimes being in control of their care workers!”

In Hong Kong
Let’s be friends

Friendship is one of the most rewarding things in life. Good friends help you to be the best you can be. Our Friends and Patrons help to secure the future of the Company they love and allow us to share our work with many more people around the UK and overseas.

We think of friendship as the ultimate gift. Do you know someone who would enjoy the benefits of our Friends and Patrons schemes? For less than £1 a week they can support Northern Ballet and gain a unique behind-the-scenes insight into our world: meet our dancers, watch rehearsals, get sneak-previews of new work and meet like-minded people.

For more information please visit www.northernballet.com/friends or contact Judith Baker on 0113 220 8000 or email judith.baker@northernballet.com

The Directors’ Circle

Now you can join a growing group of individuals who have a passion for dance and a commitment to invest in the future of one of the country’s most successful dance companies.

By joining our Directors’ Circle you can enjoy benefits at a number of levels allowing you to engage on a more personal basis with our work. These include performance tickets, exclusive events, the opportunity to watch from the wings and private dinners with the dancers and creative teams.

Current members include: Mr and Mrs Geoffrey Armitage; Mr and Mrs Jeremy Burton; Mr and Mrs Terry Bramhall; Mr Michael Bryan; Mr and Mrs Peter Farmer; Mr and Mrs Christopher Kinder; Mrs Ann Meyrick; Mr and Mrs Bruce Noble; Mrs Janice Reed; Mr and Mrs Phil Swallow; Mr and Mrs Peter Terry (Gold Members).

For information about joining the Directors’ Circle and for the full list of members’ benefits contact Hannah Walker, Individual Giving Manager, on 0113 220 8000 or email hannah.walker@northernballet.com
Take a seat

Naming a seat for a loved one in the Studio Theatre at Northern Ballet's stunning new powerhouse for inventive dance is a unique way to show you care.

From just £150 your gift will give someone the opportunity to take their place in the future of Britain’s favourite ballet company.

Simply create an inscription to be etched on a brass plate, which will be placed on the seat in the Studio Theatre for the life span of the seat. Northern Ballet will provide you with a gift certificate and an invitation to take a tour around our new home and see your gift.

For further details contact Hannah Walker, Individual Giving Manager, 0113 220 8000 or email hannah.walker@northernballet.com

Fantastic group offers

A visit to the theatre is always special but what better way to enjoy Northern Ballet than with a group of friends, family or colleagues?

We offer generous discounts on selected performances of all of our productions. Depending on the venue you chose to attend you may also be eligible for a whole host of other benefits such as no booking fees, dedicated phone lines, extended reservations periods and pre-booking facilities for programmes and ice-creams.

Full details of current group discounts can be found at www.northernballet.com/groups or to be kept up-to-date with the latest groups news register for our eBulletin on the Keep in Touch page on our website.
Ways to keep in touch

Join our keep in touch service and get regular news and updates, as well as special offers, ticket alerts, competitions and behind-the-scenes photos and footage. Sign up at www.northernballet.com/keepintouch. You can also connect with us on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

...Giselle

Look out for our production of Giselle at Leeds Grand Theatre from Wednesday 25 to Saturday 28 May 2011. You will find more information about it in your next issue of inside.

Photo: Pippa Moore as Clara and Ashley Dixon as the Nutcracker Prince in Northern Ballet’s The Nutcracker.
Photo: Jason Tozer.