



Press release

Tuesday 14 April 2026

Royal Ballet and Opera 2026/27 Season

- 10 new opera productions: *Parsifal*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *Götterdämmerung*, *Good Sometimes Queen*, *Così fan tutte*, *Les Boréades*, *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* with *The Rite of Spring* in concert, *UR_*, *La Gioconda* and *Hercules*
- A Season of ballet masterworks: *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, *Ashton's Symphonic Variations* and *Daphnis and Chloë*, and MacMillan's *Manon* and *Song of the Earth*
- Wayne McGregor at 20: The Royal Ballet revives *Chroma* and *MADDADDAM* to mark his two decades as Resident Choreographer
- 50 years of Schools' Matinees: expanding access, opportunity and creative futures
- A global Season on screen: nine productions broadcast in 1,500 cinemas
- Tickets from £7, on sale from 24 June 2026

Royal Ballet and Opera (RBO) today announces the 2026/27 Season, a showcase of world-class talent across both bold reinterpretations of classic works and groundbreaking new creations. This expansive Season underscores the RBO's commitment to delivering extraordinary artistic experiences that resonate deeply with audiences across the globe.

Alex Beard, Chief Executive Officer, Royal Ballet and Opera said:

"Our 2026/27 Season is a celebration of bold storytelling, artistic innovation and inspiring performances that push the possibilities of our art forms. Through world-class music, dance and theatre, we aim to connect with audiences not only in our two theatres, but across the globe.

Alongside our cinema season, digital platforms and international reach, we are opening doors for people right across the UK through our expanding schools and community programmes - inspiring creativity and growing access to our art forms for all."

The Royal Opera

The Royal Opera presents an exciting Season of landmark new productions and powerful revivals. In her Main Stage debut, Royal Opera Associate Director **Netia Jones** - renowned for her inventive use of digital media - leans into technology to reimagine Mozart's comedy of manners *Così fan tutte* through a sharply contemporary lens. **Thomas Hengelbrock** conducts.

Evgeny Titov makes his House debut, his *Parsifal* offering a visionary dystopian perspective on **Wagner's** sublime epic. Royal Opera Music Director **Jakub Hrůša** conducts, later returning to conduct a new production of *Un ballo in maschera* directed by **Philipp Stölzl** in his House debut, and a revival of **Richard Jones'** production of **Janáček's** searing *Káťa Kabanová*. He also leads a concert performance of *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* paired with *The Rite of Spring* showcasing the full force of the **Orchestra of the Royal Opera House**. The Royal Opera's Principal Guest Conductor, **Speranza Scappucci**, leads the revival of Richard Jones's *Il trittico* - a rare chance to experience **Puccini's** complete triptych.

Barrie Kosky brings his acclaimed journey through **Wagner's** momentous *Ring cycle* to its powerful conclusion with *Götterdämmerung*, conducted by Conductor Laureate of The Royal Opera **Antonio Pappano**. Pappano also reunites with Director of Opera **Oliver Mears** for a new production of *La Gioconda*, following its widely praised debut at the Salzburg Easter Festival. *La Gioconda* has not been staged at Covent Garden for almost a century. The Season further features Kosky's striking new staging of Handel's *Hercules*. Conducted by Baroque specialist **Laurence Cummings**, this production marks the work's first return to Covent Garden since 1750 and continues the Company's acclaimed Handel series.

Further operatic highlights include Netia Jones's first programmed Linbury Theatre Season, featuring the world premiere of **Brett Dean's** double bill *Good Sometimes Queen*, directed by **Ola Ince**. The Company also revives **4.48 Psychosis**, **Philip Venables'** award-winning operatic adaptation of **Sarah Kane's** seminal 2000 play. Having previously collaborated with The Royal Ballet and Wayne McGregor on *Untitled, 2023*, Icelandic composer **Anna Thorvaldsdottir** sees her chamber opera *UR_* brought to the stage in Jones's technologically bold, ritual-infused production.

In a co-production with **Irish National Opera**, the Season also marks a significant milestone with *Les Boréades*, the first-ever staging of **Rameau** by The Royal Opera at Covent Garden. American director **R.B. Schlather** makes his House debut alongside another debut: **Camille Delaforge**, who conducts the **Irish Baroque Orchestra**, bringing this rarely performed masterpiece to brilliant life.

Oliver Mears, Director of The Royal Opera, said:

"With the world in turmoil, The Royal Opera presents a Season of enchantment and exhilaration, featuring a thrilling range of repertoire: from the first-ever Rameau opera staged at Covent Garden by The Royal Opera to radical contemporary masterpieces; from debut directors creating bold new versions of *Così fan tutte* and *Parsifal* to Barrie Kosky's highly anticipated *Götterdämmerung* - the conclusion of our breathtaking new *Ring cycle*. Underpinning everything are our world-class artists: the very best singers

working today, with the finest conductors and theatre-makers to create experiences of unforgettable music drama.”

A series of powerful first revivals also return to the stage: **Christof Loy**'s staging of **Strauss' Elektra**, conducted by **Semyon Bychkov**, Richard Jones' Olivier Award-winning **Alcina** conducted by **David Bates**, and Oliver Mears' **Tosca**, conducted by **Daniel Oren**. Audience favourites also make a welcome return. **David McVicar**'s production of **The Magic Flute**, conducted by **Dalia Stasevska** who makes her debut and **Julia Jones**; **Kasper Holten**'s **Don Giovanni**, conducted by **Stefano Montanari**; **Damiano Michieletto**'s **Carmen**, conducted by **Sesto Quatrini**; **Robert Carsen**'s **Aida**, conducted by **Michele Mariotti**; and **Moshe Leiser** and **Patrice Caurier**'s acclaimed **Madama Butterfly**, conducted by **Henrik Nánási**.

This Season the **Jette Parker Artists** celebrate their 25-year anniversary. Alongside their annual Summer Performance on the Main Stage and their highly popular **Jukebox** event in September, the Programme will be celebrating with a series of world-class recitals and events.

As Principal Partner of The Royal Opera, Rolex congratulates the Company on its 2026/27 programme which features Rolex Testimonee Bryn Terfel. Through its Perpetual Arts Initiative, Rolex fosters excellence and achievement at the highest level and contributes to preserving and enriching our cultural heritage.

The Royal Ballet

This Season, The Royal Ballet proudly unveils a programme that both honours an extraordinary lineage and embraces the exhilarating future of the art form – a celebration of the world's finest dancers and the creative forces redefining what ballet can be.

In celebration of his 20th anniversary as **Resident Choreographer**, The Royal Ballet revives **Wayne McGregor**'s **Chroma**. The ballet burst onto the scene in 2006, electrifying audiences with its radical exploration of the extremes of the human body. With a powerful original score by **Joby Talbot** and **Jack White III**, **Chroma** and its success led to McGregor's appointment in his current role and earned him his first of four Olivier awards.

This landmark moment anchors an extraordinary mixed programme, **Disruptors**, in May 2027, when audiences are invited to experience ballet anew through four genre-defying works from today's most compelling contemporary voices. **Pam Tanowitz** brings her unmistakable blend of wit, playfulness and emotional depth in **Or Forevermore**, joined by **Never Known**, the atmospheric 2024 creation by Royal Ballet Soloist and choreographer **Joshua Junker**. Completing the **Disruptors** programme is **Hunting a Whisper in the Wind**, a poetic pas de deux from **Akram Khan**, the internationally acclaimed choreographer celebrated for his bold and imaginative approach to storytelling through movement.

The celebration of McGregor's two decades with the Company continues with the return of his multi-sensory epic **MADDADDAM**, following its exhilarating sold-out UK premiere in 2024. Inspired by **Margaret Atwood**'s monumental trilogy of novels and with an original score by **Max Richter**, the work reaffirms its place as one of McGregor's most visionary and ambitious

creations - a defining milestone in a partnership that has reshaped the landscape of contemporary ballet.

The Season also welcomes the return of compelling works that form the bedrock of the Company's heritage. We open with **Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon***, a dramatic masterpiece of passion and betrayal. In this signature work of The Royal Ballet, MacMillan's nuanced understanding of human psychology makes for an unflinching look into the moral degradation of Manon's Paris, while all its decadence and decay are brought to life through **Jules Massenet's** score and **Nicholas Georgiadis's** designs.

This is followed by ***Visionaries: Robbins and MacMillan***, bringing together two 20th-century masterpieces: MacMillan's elegiac ***Song of the Earth*** and **Jerome Robbins's** much-loved ***Dances at a Gathering***. Seen side by side, these works highlight the expressive depth and remarkable versatility of our dancers.

In January 2027, The Royal Ballet honours its Founder Choreographer **Frederick Ashton** with ***Landmarks: Unmissable Ashton*** – a chance to experience three of his milestone creations across three decades: ***Les Rendezvous***, ***Symphonic Variations*** and ***Daphnis and Chloë***. Together, they illuminate the imaginative sweep and exquisite craftsmanship of the choreographer who helped define the very essence of English ballet. The programme is also a rare opportunity in ballet to hear the Royal Opera Chorus combine forces with the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House in ***Daphnis and Chloë's*** immense orchestration by **Maurice Ravel**.

Christmas brings the return of **Peter Wright's** beloved ***The Nutcracker***, revived in his centenary year and continuing its cherished tradition as a festive favourite for audiences of all ages. **Liam Scarlett's** acclaimed production of ***Swan Lake*** for The Royal Ballet also returns, uniting **Tchaikovsky's** sweeping score with **John Macfarlane's** sumptuous designs in an enduring tale of love, treachery and redemption.

To mark **The Royal Ballet School's** centenary, the Company brings together dancers from The Royal Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet and The Royal Ballet School in a vibrant showcase of past, present and future talent. A suite from **Ninette de Valois's *Checkmate*** opens the programme, followed by unique performances of Ashton's ***Birthday Offering*** combining dancers from both companies. Completing the evening will be an exciting array of works from other choreographers associated with the School and companies.

For ballets on the Main Stage, Royal Ballet Music Director **Koen Kessels** leads the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, alongside staff conductor **Martin Georgiev** and returning conductors **Charlotte Politi**, **Jonathan Lo** and **Geoffrey Paterson**.

Beyond the Main Stage, the Linbury Theatre comes alive with a dynamic mix of Royal Ballet creativity and exceptional visiting companies. The programme opens with **The McRae/Vassilev Project**, an exciting new venture bringing together the acclaimed charismatic qualities of Principal dancer **Steven McRae** and Principal Guest Concert Master **Vasko Vassilev** in a new fusion of music and movement directed by **Natalie Abrahami** (*Rusalka*, *The*

Turn of the Screw). The piece features a new creation choreographed by **Loughlan Prior** inspired by the music of the prodigious violinist **Niccolo Paganini**.

Sitting alongside the RBS centenary celebrations is **Madam**, a tribute to Royal Ballet Founder Ninette de Valois, co-curated by Director **Kevin O'Hare** and Principal Guest Artist **Lauren Cuthbertson**. Weaving excerpts from Madam's ballets with conversation, discussion and film, the programme delves into the enduring impact of this seminal figure of British ballet.

Innovative Danish company **Kammerballetten** makes its Linbury Theatre debut with **Stay Tuned**, a poetic full-length chamber ballet created by the acclaimed choreographic duo **Sol León** and **Paul Lightfoot**. Known internationally for their distinctive movement language and celebrated works for companies around the world, including The Royal Ballet's Main Stage works in June this year, León and Lightfoot bring together nine exceptional dancers and live musicians for a rich, seven-movement odyssey set to music by Baroque and contemporary composers. With *Stay Tuned*, the company invites Linbury audiences into an intimate and contemplative fusion of dance and music, demonstrating the artistry that has positioned Kammerballetten at the forefront of contemporary ballet.

Choreographer **Pam Tanowitz** and Royal Ballet Principal **William Bracewell** come together for an exciting collaboration in the Linbury Theatre. **Once more to this star** is set to the piano arrangement of **Stravinsky's** *The Rite of Spring* and an original score by **Ted Hearne**. Known for her singularly witty deconstruction of balletic vocabulary, Tanowitz shares a special relationship with the Company. She has created four works for The Royal Ballet comprising *Everyone Keeps Me* and *Secret Things* in the Linbury Theatre, and *Dispatch Duet* and *Or Forevermore* on the Main Stage, for which she also worked with Bracewell. This project will see Bracewell push himself creatively, extending beyond classical ballet as choreographer and dancer continue their unique partnership.

The Company continues to welcome a remarkable roster of guest companies – including **Fallen Angels Dance Theatre**, **Ballet Black**, **London City Ballet**, **Introdans** and **Northern Ballet** - each enriching the Season with fresh perspectives and inspiring storytelling. Rounding off the Season, groundbreaking storytellers **ZooNation**, led by **Kate Prince**, return next Summer with the acclaimed, hip hop inspired, ***The Mad Hatter's Tea Party***.

Championing future talent remains central to The Royal Ballet's mission. The **Next Generation Festival** and **International Draft Works** return, offering audiences a compelling first encounter with the choreographers and performers who will shape the art form in the years to come.

Kevin O'Hare, Director of The Royal Ballet, said:

"At this time in The Royal Ballet School's centenary year when we reflect on the incredible legacy of 'Madam', our founder Dame Ninette de Valois, it's wonderful to usher in a new Season filled with masterworks that have shaped and defined the Company over the years. We are delighted to demonstrate the significant aesthetic voices of Frederick Ashton and Kenneth MacMillan in some of their most elegant and

powerfully atmospheric works, including *Symphonic Variations* and *Song of the Earth*, alongside the magical 19th-century classics *Swan Lake* and *The Nutcracker* that never cease to exert enduring appeal on audiences. From strong foundations to renewal, we continue to celebrate our pioneering Resident Choreographer Wayne McGregor, recalling that staggering moment when *Chroma* first premiered, and look to how the possibilities of dance continue to be expanded by other distinctive choreographers across both stages in modern classics and new works. We are excited to share this Season with audiences around the globe.”

RBO Cinema

The Royal Ballet and Opera will also bring their work to global audiences next Season, presenting nine productions in more than 1,500 cinemas worldwide. Beloved classics including *The Nutcracker*, *Manon* and *The Magic Flute* return to the big screen alongside major new productions of *Götterdämmerung* and *Così fan tutte*, extending the reach of our stages to communities across the globe.

Extending the net of opportunity

As the Royal Ballet and Opera marks the remarkable 50th anniversary of Schools’ Matinees, we renew our commitment to widening access to creativity for every child. Millions experience our work and more than 150,000 young people benefit from our Learning and Participation programmes every single year – demonstrating that our public value is about performance, progression and personal growth.

Alex Beard said:

“Our mission is to empower every primary teacher in the UK to bring dance, music and creative expression into daily learning. Creativity should never be an “add-on” - every teacher can use it, every child should feel it, and every school can thrive because of it. By giving teachers the tools, confidence and inspiration to embed the arts into everyday classroom practice, we can transform children’s learning, wellbeing and joy.”

Our commitment to next generation artistic talent continues through Chance to Dance, the Youth Opera Company, Overture orchestral mentoring, the Aud Jepsen Young Dancers and the Jette Parker Artist programme. We are also expanding pathways into professions in the creative industries through work experience programmes and our growing award-winning Apprenticeship scheme, ensuring young people can see, and seize, the possibilities of a future career in the arts. And as an organisation that generates £240 million for the UK economy and champions British creativity globally, we remain committed to making those opportunities accessible to all.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

- Read about the Season in full [HERE](#)

- Images can be found [HERE](#)
- A full list of all accessible performances can be found [HERE](#)
- Public booking opens for the 2026/27 Season on 24 June.
- Cinema tickets on sale from 27 May 2026

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ABOUT THE ROYAL BALLET AND OPERA

At the Royal Ballet and Opera, we are making the extraordinary for everyone. Inspiring imagination and igniting emotion. We are a cultural powerhouse, bringing together two world-class performing companies in one of the UK's leading arts institutions. Based at the Royal Opera House in the heart of London's Covent Garden, our work is enjoyed by audiences in our two theatres and globally through our streaming platform, cinema Season and company tours. Our work in schools and communities up and down the country is driven by our curriculum-linked programmes, specially designed to inspire creativity, broaden participation and diversify the future of opera and ballet. These sit alongside industry-leading talent development projects, regional partnerships, and a raft of daytime events, family activities, tours, exhibitions and concerts in our Covent Garden home. We are also expanding our audience through our flagship Young ROH scheme and are committed to reducing our impact on the environment and aim to achieve net zero emissions by 2035

ABOUT ROLEX AND MUSIC

Rolex celebrates human achievement as a journey marked by milestones, emotions and defining moments. For more than half a century, the brand has partnered some of the world's most talented artists and leading cultural institutions to promote excellence and the transmission of artistic heritage, creating a link between the past, present and future.

Through the Perpetual Arts Initiative, a broad portfolio of arts that extends through architecture, cinema, dance, music, literature, theatre and visual arts, the brand confirms its long-term commitment to global culture.

Rolex has partnerships with internationally renowned opera houses including Teatro alla Scala, the Royal Ballet & Opera, Metropolitan Opera, Opéra national de Paris, Teatro Colón, Opéra de Monte-Carlo and the Opernhaus Zürich. It also supports performing arts centres such as the National Center for the Performing Arts and the Elbphilharmonie.

Rolex promotes music through prestigious festivals and orchestras, including the Salzburg and Whitsun festivals, as well as the Vienna Philharmonic. It also partners ventures that encourage rising young artists such as Operalia – the World Opera Competition, the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation, the Vienna Philharmonic Academy and the Herbert von Karajan Young Conductors Award. Rolex Testimonees in music are world-leading artists including Cecilia Bartoli, Benjamin Bernheim, Michael Bubl , Renaud Capu on, Gustavo Dudamel, Juan Diego Fl rez, H l ne Grimaud, Jonas Kaufmann, Yannick N zet-S guin, Jakub Orli ski, Anoushka Shankar, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Sir Bryn Terfel, Rolando Villaz n, Sonya Yoncheva, and Yuja Wang. <https://www.rolex.com/perpetual-initiatives/perpetual-arts/music>