



Press Release

Thursday 28 May 2026

## Next Generation Festival 2026

Friday 12 June – Saturday 4 July

Featuring international talent from:

- Youth Company of the Ballet Academy of the Vienna State Opera
- The Royal Ballet School
- School of American Ballet
- Royal Ballet and Opera's Chance to Dance
- Rambert School / Junior Company of The Polish National Ballet
- ZooNation Youth Company
- English National Ballet School / John Cranko School
- Just Us Dance Theatre Apprenticeship Company

The Royal Ballet brings together the talented young dancers of today with its **Next Generation Festival**. Hosted in the Linbury Theatre, this year's festival will include performances from some of the world's best junior companies and dance schools. The line up comprises **Ballet Academy of the Vienna State Opera, The Royal Ballet School, School of American Ballet, Chance to Dance, Rambert School / Junior Company of The Polish National Ballet, ZooNation Youth Company, English National Ballet School / John Cranko School** and **Just Us Dance Theatre Apprenticeship Company**.

The Royal Ballet has a storied history of welcoming the dance community to share its stages, and the Next Generation Festival gives audiences the unique opportunity to witness an incredible display of young talent.

The festival opens on the 12 June with **Youth Company of the Ballet Academy of the Vienna State Opera's *Strauss 2225: Dances for the Future***, a new work by Canadian Choreographer **Robert Binet**. Created in the light of Johann Strauss II's 200th birthday,

featuring original choreography, libretti and musical compositions, Binet's work asks the question: In what kind of world will people be dancing in 200 years?

Next, in its centenary year, **The Royal Ballet School** presents a programme that celebrates its 100-year heritage as an incubator for new choreographic work. Audiences can expect to see pieces created and performed by students, alongside an array of new works by influential 21<sup>st</sup> century choreographers, including **Christopher Wheeldon**, **Cathy Marston**, **David Bintley** and **Jessica Lang**. Each work in the programme has been created especially for students of the School.

Following this, The Royal Ballet School's 2026 100th cohort of graduates join forces with the advanced students at the **School of American Ballet** to present a special showcase of young talent. Founded in 1934 by **George Balanchine** and **Lincoln Kirstein**, the School of American Ballet will honor its co-creator with a performance of Balanchine's windswept waltz, **Valse Fantaisie**, alongside a suite of solos and *pas de deux* from his glittering **Who Cares?**

On 21 June, The Royal Ballet's flagship young talent programme **Chance to Dance** returns to the Linbury stage with a mixed programme of works inspired by **Peter Wright's** Romantic ballet **Giselle**. Chance to Dance works in partnership with independent dance schools across the country to welcome young dancers from all backgrounds to reach their highest potential. For this year's *Next Generation Festival*, children from the Bradford and North East Legacy companies will perform alongside the **Chance to Dance: Connect** Company. *Chance to Dance: Connect* builds upon the well-established national *Chance to Dance* programme, bringing together talented dancers of Global Majority Heritage aged 11-18 who aspire to a career in Classical Ballet. As part of this mixed programme, *Chance to Dance* alumni **Jacob Wye** and **Monique Jonas** choreograph two new works on the Chance to Dance: Connect Company and also on fellow alumni **Rishan Benjamin** (Scottish Ballet First Artist) and **Ishan Mahabir Stokes** who perform a new duet inspired by the young people.

Another compelling mixed programme follows, performed by the students of **Rambert School** and the young members of the **Junior Company of Polish National Ballet**. As part of their performance, Rambert School will present three new works: **Session 1** by **Ben Duke**, **Blues in Three** by **Holly Blakey** and **Outside the Stadium** by **Alesandra Seutin**. The Junior Company of Polish National Ballet will perform a series of short works including **Reverentia**, a 2026 work choreographed by **Dawid Trzemiesiech**, **Fluxus** by **Katarzyna Kozielska** and **Verses** by **Robert Bondara**. The evening will also feature **Anna Hop's** duet **Grossienne No.1** and **Antonio Lanzo's** playful folk-inspired piece, **Rumänische Volkstänze**.

The energetic **ZooNation Youth Company** (ZYC) returns to the Linbury Theatre on 28 June with two inspiring works. They present **1776**, a collaboration between **Memphis Jookin'**

pioneer **Lil Buck** and ZooNation's Artistic Director **Dannielle 'Rhimes' Lecointe**, **Body Politic** and **The Schwarzman Centre**. This international collaboration builds bridges across generations and geographies, connecting communities through dance. The piece is paired with **Offline**, a co-creation between the Lecointe and ZooNation Youth Company.

On 30 June and 1 July, leading dance schools **English National Ballet School** and **John Cranko School** will come together to deliver an exciting mixed programme of renowned choreographers and celebrate the legacy of **Sir Anton Dolin**. The John Cranko School present **Variations For Four** choreographed by Anton Dolin, **When Light and Dark Meet** by **Jordan Pellitari**, **At Last** by **Xenia Wiest** and **All long dem day** by **Marco Goecke**. English National Ballet School perform Dolin's **Pas de Quatre**. Closely connected to the history of English National Ballet, *Pas de Quatre* remains one of the most enduring works of the Romantic ballet repertoire, originally created by **Jules Perrot** in 1845 and later reconstructed by Dolin in 1941.

Finally, **Just Us Dance Theatre** presents the **Just Us Apprenticeship Company**. Bringing the festival to a close is **A Night of Hip Hop Theatre**, a triple bill of Hip Hop works. The Company is the UK's first and only Hip Hop training and development programme (12 weeks) that provides bursary support for young people to take part, providing a much-needed supported route into the professional performance sector, particularly for early career Black and Global Majority dancers. The programme is run by **Just Us Dance Theatre**, a Hip Hop development charity, led by Artistic Director and former Royal Ballet Choreographic Residency artist 2023/24 **Joseph Toonga**. The evening will feature a newly commissioned work from Dutch artist and choreographer **Chandenie Gobardhan**, a repertory work by **Joseph Toonga** and a powerful new collaboration by choreographers **Kenrick 'H2O' Sandy MBE** and Joseph Toonga.

**ENDS**

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

Images can be downloaded [here](#).

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The Royal Ballet and Guest Companies

***NEXT GENERATION FESTIVAL***

Linbury Theatre

12 June - 4 July

Tickets: £3 - £30

For more information, and to book, visit: [Next Generation Festival 2026](#)