



ROYAL
OPERA
HOUSE

Press Release

Tuesday 28 November 2023

Royal Opera House puts on first relaxed performance of *The Nutcracker*

Saturday 9 December 2023

The **Royal Opera House** is delighted to welcome families as part of this year's **Paul Hamlyn Christmas Treat** to watch the first relaxed performance of the festive classic, ***The Nutcracker***. Thanks to the generosity of the **Helen Hamlyn Trust**, in memory of the late Paul Hamlyn, those who are signed up to the Royal Opera House Access Scheme will be able to purchase £5 tickets for this special performance on **9 December 2023**.

This relaxed performance will be designed to support audiences who are neurodiverse. It may also support patrons with learning disabilities, living with dementia and those who prefer a more relaxed experience generally. The Royal Opera House and Main Stage will be adapted to create an inclusive and supportive environment, including providing chill-out zones, embracing audience noise and avoiding flashing lights.

While this is not the first relaxed performance at the Royal Opera House, setting up one of The Royal Ballet's most iconic pieces on the Main Stage for greater access and inclusion is an exciting step forward in the Royal Opera House's accessibility journey.

The Royal Opera House will continue to work with accessibility experts and communities to ensure that steps are continuously being taken to make the theatre experience as inclusive as possible. This includes more accessible theatre shows being confirmed for the 2024/2025 Season.

To learn more about the Paul Hamlyn Christmas Treat, visit the [Royal Opera House website](#).

Jill Bradford, ALAG/Autism Hub Project /Volunteer Coordinator, and Choirmaster of The Autistic Adult Choir, said:

'We are delighted to be part of the first relaxed performance on the Main Stage of ROH. Providing such relaxed spaces and opportunities that are safe, accessible, and welcoming of everyone will help in creating a community

where everyone has the opportunity to take part.'

David Cohen, ALAG/Autism Hub volunteer, said:

'In a way, (relaxed performances) are a way to totally reclaim the fact I'm autistic. I don't care if there's noise or movement around me, as this is telling me that I'm amongst my group, my culture.'

Colter LaFollette, Autistic Adult Choir member, said:

'I am excited because it is going to be my first ballet. I am looking forward to the waltz and the flowers. I think Tchaikovsky really outdid himself with this one.'

Lady Hamlyn, CBE, of the Helen Hamlyn Trust, said:

'The Paul Hamlyn Christmas Treat is all about welcoming audiences, who, for whatever reason have not had the opportunity to enjoy a performance in the main house at the Royal Opera House.'

This year is another special year when we are delighted to welcome families to the first ever relaxed performance on the main stage, a performance of the magical ballet, *The Nutcracker*. My trust first welcomed new audiences in 1986 and I look forward to sharing this special performance, adapted for neurodiverse people and others who will receive a warm welcome at the Royal Opera House.'

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NOTES TO EDITORS

[Images can be downloaded here](#)

PRESS CONTACT

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For more information, visit the [Royal Opera House website](#).

About the Royal Opera House

Home to The Royal Ballet, The Royal Opera and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, the Royal Opera House brings together world-class performers and trailblazing creative teams to share unforgettable performances with audiences near and far. Our theatres are in the heart of London's Covent Garden, but our work is accessed and experienced across the UK and globally through ROH Stream, tours, cinema programme, radio broadcasts and TV output. Our work in schools and communities up and down the country is driven by our curriculum linked Create & Learn 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 free concerts here in our iconic 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 The Royal Ballet

Under the directorship of Kevin O'Hare, The Royal Ballet unites tradition and innovation in world-class performances and is a driving force in the development of ballet as an art form. Based at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, it brings together today's most dynamic and versatile dancers with a world-class orchestra and leading choreographers, composers, conductors, directors and creative teams to share awe-inspiring theatrical experiences with diverse audiences worldwide. The Company's extensive repertory embraces 19th-century classics, the singular legacy of works by Founder Choreographer Frederick Ashton and Principal Choreographer Kenneth MacMillan, a compelling new canon of work by choreographers today including Resident Choreographer Wayne McGregor and Artistic Associate Christopher Wheeldon, and the bold and complementary programming in the Linbury Theatre. Guest choreographers Kyle Abraham, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Cathy Marston, Arthur Pita, Crystal Pite, Hofesh Shechter, Pam Tanowitz and Twyla Tharp have also created work for the Company.

About Learning and Participation

The Royal Opera House's dedicated Learning and Participation programme covers the length and breadth of the country, playing a vital role in building and diversifying the future of ballet and opera. The programme aims to inspire creativity and widen access to our art forms, offering a free, curriculum-linked national schools' programme; a suite of activities for families and individuals in and around our iconic Covent Garden home; and a number of events and performances specially designed to broaden participation, nurture young talent and, more recently, thank the NHS for the work its dedicated staff are continuing to do in response to the pandemic.

About the Royal Opera House Access Scheme

The Royal Opera House Access Scheme gives people personalised assistance throughout the booking process, as well as other benefits. This includes free companion tickets if someone requires support when attending a performance. Access registration helps the Royal Opera House ensure that accessibility requirements are met and supported

About the Helen Hamlyn Trust

The Helen Hamlyn Trust (HHT), established as a successor to the Helen Hamlyn Foundation in 2001, is an independent grant making Trust. Its principal focus is on the initiation of medium and long-term projects linked to the shared interests of Lady Hamlyn CBE and her late husband Lord Hamlyn.

The Helen Hamlyn Trust's core ethos is to develop innovative projects, which aim to effect lasting change and improve quality of life, creating opportunity for the benefit of the public. The Trust develops lasting relationships with leading organisations and individuals in the fields of medicine; the arts and culture; education and welfare; healthy ageing; international humanitarian affairs; and heritage and conservation in India. In, 2021, the trust celebrated its 20th Anniversary with the publication of Nurturing Innovation - 20 years of the Helen Hamlyn Trust. The Trustees are grateful to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation for its financial support of the Trust's work.