



Press Release

Tuesday 9 January 2024

The Royal Ballet announces further details for the Festival of New Choreography

10 – 21 February 2024

The Royal Ballet announces further details about the forthcoming **Festival of New Choreography**, opening in February 2024. In a series of performances, events and activities, the **Royal Opera House** comes alive across the whole building to embrace and champion new, diverse voices in choreography.

The Festival comprises:

- **NEW WORKS – Four world premieres in one night** on the Main Stage by **Gemma Bond, Joshua Junker, Jessica Lang** and **Mthuthuzeli November**;
- **DARK WITH EXCESSIVE BRIGHT**, an immersive ballet by **Robert Binet** in the Linbury Theatre;
- **DUETS** presented in the Clore Studio;
- A live-streamed **INSIGHT** into the creation process;
- **DAZZLING DEBUTS**, part of the Royal Opera House Family Sunday;
- **LIVE AT LUNCH** open rehearsal in the Paul Hamlyn Hall.

NEW WORKS – Four world premieres in one night brings together four international choreographers to make their choreographic debut on the Main Stage. This mixed programme features works by Gemma Bond, Joshua Junker, Jessica Lang and Mthuthuzeli November.

Canadian choreographer **Robert Binet** presents the first ever immersive ballet in the Linbury Theatre, transforming the space with innovative stage, lighting design and audio-visual technology to make an intimate and immersive experience of ballet for all.

British choreographer and former Royal Ballet First Artist **Gemma Bond** makes her Main Stage choreographic debut with *Boundless*, a new work set to **Joey Roukens'** 'In Unison' concerto for two pianos and orchestra and with designs by **Charlotte MacMillan**. Active in the United States across such venues as The Joyce, New York City Center and the Metropolitan Opera House, Bond is the recipient of a number of choreographic accolades including a Bessie for outstanding breakout choreographer and the Clive Barnes Foundation Award for choreography. She previously presented work in the Linbury Theatre with ABT Studio Company for The Royal Ballet's choreographic platform *International Draft Works*.

Royal Ballet First Artist **Joshua Junker** will also present his first ever Main Stage work for The Royal Ballet. The Dutch choreographer has choreographed for *Draft Works*, for The Royal Ballet's gala in Doncaster in 2022, and last year created a work for Dutch National Ballet's Junior Company which garnered him a Stichting Dansersfonds '79 Incentive Award. The inspiration for Junker's Royal Ballet commission is drawn from the music by Nils Frahm and Vikingur Ólafsson and how it sketches a new world of many layers that the listener slowly enters.

American director and choreographer **Jessica Lang** has created ballets for companies worldwide, including American Ballet Theatre, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre and Birmingham Royal Ballet. Her new work for The Royal Ballet, *Twinkle*, recalls childhood enchantment with music featuring Brahms' *Cradle Song* and Mozart's twelve variations of *Ah vous dirai-je, Maman*, known popularly as the tune *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*. The English poet Jane Taylor first published the classic rhyme 'The Star' in 1806 and this lullaby continues to be the most universal melody expressing the fascination and wonder of the night's sky.

South African-born choreographer **Mthuthuzeli November** is the recipient of an Olivier Award and Black British Theatre Award, among other awards for his creativity. He has choreographed internationally with an extensive portfolio of work made for Ballet Black and Northern Ballet that has been seen by Linbury Theatre audiences, including most recently *Nina: By Whatever Means*. His first commission by The Royal Ballet, *For What it's Worth*, features a new score co-created by November himself and **Alex Wilson** plus costume design by **Yann Seabra**.

In the Linbury Theatre, Canadian choreographer **Robert Binet** presents *Dark with Excessive Bright*, a new work that imagines the invisible forces of the universe in human form, and captures the growth, decay, chaos and consistency that co-exist in the world. With a score of chamber music by the American composer **Missy Mazzoli** and design by architect and set designer **Shizuka Hariu**, this work creates an immersive space by removing the seating so that the audience can move freely through the space. All

performances are accessible to Blind and d/Deaf audiences through technology that integrates the communication of poetic text through audio description and creative captioning. Binet works with his long-time collaborator **Devon Healey** to curate this innovative Access experience. *Dark with Excessive Bright* is a co-production with The National Ballet of Canada where Binet is Choreographic Associate. He is the recipient of the Next Generation Award from Dance Collection Danse and in 2017 presented *The Dreamers Ever Leave You* at London's Printworks with The Royal Ballet and The National Ballet of Canada.

In the Clore Studio, dancers and choreographers from several national dance companies including The Royal Ballet will present **DUETS**. Three performances on the afternoon of Sunday 25 February will give emerging choreographers the opportunity to share new work with audiences in an intimate studio setting.

All the new ballets will be complemented by a programme of Learning and Participation activity happening across the House. On 5 February, dancers and choreographers will come together for an **Insight** into the Festival, including with **Joseph Toonga** who undertakes this Season's Royal Ballet Choreographic Residency and will have a new work featured on the Main Stage next Season. The House will come alive on Sunday 18 February for **Family Sunday: Dazzling Debuts**, an event for the whole family to explore Opera and Ballet, including work by **Kristen McNally** and **Valentino Zucchetti** of The Royal Ballet and by the differently-abled dancer and choreographer **Joseph Powell-Main**. The Festival continues with Powell-Main in a Live at Lunch free event on Friday 23 February.

The Festival of New Choreography Main Stage performances will run from 15 – 21 February 2024. *Dark with Excessive Bright* will be performed in the Linbury Theatre from 10 – 20 February 2024.

ENDS

DARK WITH EXCESSIVE BRIGHT is supported by

DANCE BY
REFLECTIONS
VAN CLEEF & ARPELS

NOTES TO EDITORS

[Images can be downloaded here.](#)

PRESS CONTACT

Ashley Woodfield: Ashley.Woodfield@roh.org.uk | Head of Ballet Press

Lily Curle: Lily.Curle@roh.org.uk | Press Officer

NEW WORKS – Four world premieres in one night

Main Stage

15 – 21 February 2024

Boundless – new Gemma Bond

Yasmine Naghdi, Ryoichi Hirano and dancers of The Royal Ballet

New Joshua Junker

Liam Boswell, Francisco Serrano and dancers of The Royal Ballet

Twinkle – new Jessica Lang

Fumi Kaneko, William Bracewell and dancers of The Royal Ballet

For What it's Worth – new Mthuthuzeli November

Mayara Magri, Leo Dixon, Hannah Grennell, Isabel Lubach and dancers of The Royal Ballet

DARK WITH EXCESSIVE BRIGHT – Robert Binet

Linbury Theatre

10 – 20 February 2024

Dancers of The Royal Ballet

A co-production with The National Ballet of Canada

DUETS

Clore Studio

Sunday 25 February 13:00; 15:00; 17:00

Choreographers and companies to be announced

INSIGHT

Clore Studio and Live Stream

Monday 5 February 19:45-21:00

Choreographers including Joseph Toonga

DAZZLING DEBUTS

Royal Opera House Family Sunday

Sunday 18 February

Kristen McNally, Joseph Powell-Main, Valentino Zucchetti

LIVE AT LUNCH

Paul Hamlyn Hall

Friday 23 February

Joseph Powell-Main

Tickets: £3 - £50

For more information, and to book, visit: [Festival of New Choreography \(roh.org.uk\)](http://Festival of New Choreography (roh.org.uk))

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 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.