

ROYAL BALLET & OPERA

After Hours

Programme

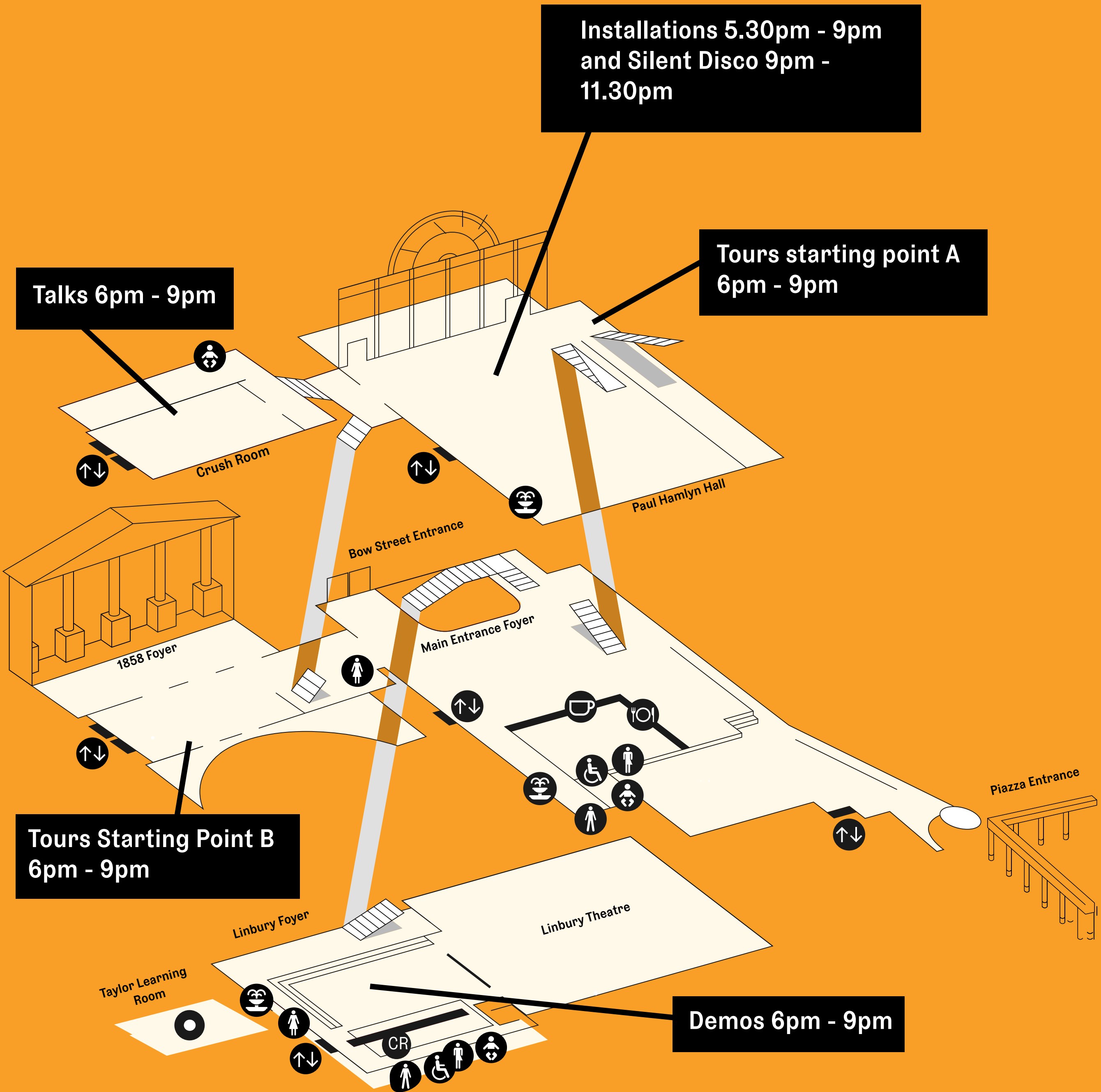


LOTTERY FUNDED



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Map

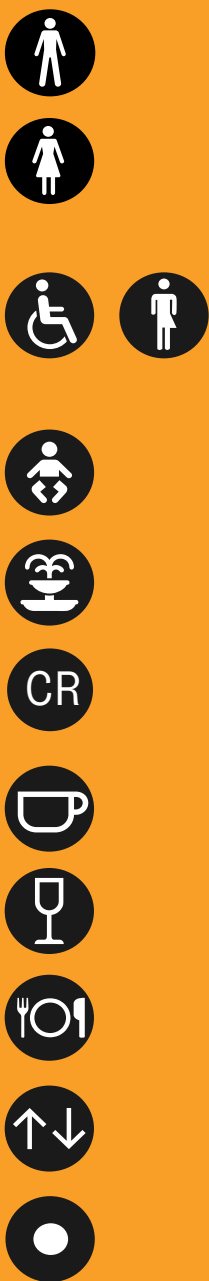


MEN'S TOILETS
WOMEN'S TOILETS

ACCESSIBLE/GENDER
NEUTRAL TOILETS

BABY CHANGING
WATER FOUNTAIN
CLOAK ROOM

CAFÉ BAR
FOOD QUIET
SPACE LIFT



Info

Friday 21 August 2026

Welcome to **AfterHours**, an evening of talks, demonstrations, tours and installations.

Choose your path through the night by following one of our four themes, or dip into a little of everything as you explore the links between opera, ballet and pop culture.

- STORIES
- STAGES
- SCREEN
- STYLE

See how productions have been inspired by literature, how artists and designers have worked across different creative disciplines, and how film, fashion, music and design continue to influence and be influenced by the work created on our stages.

Round off the evening beneath the glass canopy of the Paul Hamlyn Hall with a silent disco featuring live DJs and multiple music channels, giving you the chance to choose your soundtrack and dance the night away.

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5.30pm
Doors open
Welcome drink on arrival

6pm-9pm
Talks, Demos and Tours

9pm-11.30pm
Silent Disco

Food and additional drinks are not included in your ticket price but will be available to purchase throughout the evening in the Paul Hamlyn Hall, including cichetti (small plates) from Cicoria.

Themes

STORIES

Discover how literature, mythology and real-life events inspire the operas and ballets brought to stages.

STAGES

Explore the craft, creativity and technical expertise that transform ideas into live performance.

SCREEN

See how opera and ballet connect with film, television and digital media, both on and off the stage.

STYLE

Uncover the influence of fashion, design and visual culture on the worlds we create and the audiences we inspire.



Hear from artists, creatives and specialists as they explore the connections that shape ballet, opera and the culture around them. Discover how storytelling, film, fashion, design and music come together through the experiences of the people who bring our work to life.

6pm — 6.30pm

Page to Stage

Uzma Hameed
Writer, Director and Dramaturg

How do you transform a novel into a ballet? Join writer, director and dramaturg Uzma Hameed as she explores adapting literature for the stage, drawing on her work for Wayne McGregor on Woolf Works and MADDADDAM.

STORIES

STAGES

6.40pm — 7.20pm

Popcorn and Puccini

Dan Dooner and Patrick Milne
Royal Opera Company Staff Director and Répétiteur

What makes a film feel truly operatic? Join Dan Dooner and Patrick Milne as they explore opera in cinema, using live musical examples to reveal how music heightens emotion, shapes storytelling and creates unforgettable moments on screen.

SCREEN

STAGES

7.30pm — 8.10pm

Beyond Balletcore

Olivia Cowley and Caspar Lench
Royal Ballet Soloist

From rehearsal studios to high-street fashion, discover ballet’s influence on style. Royal Ballet Soloist Olivia Cowley explores the rise of balletcore, why dancers wear what they wear and how function continues to inspire fashion.

STYLE

STAGES

8.20pm — 8.50pm

Designing the Main Stage

Esther Bialas
Costume Designer

Hear from costume designer Esther Bialas as she explores the creative process behind designing costumes for our Main Stage, revealing how ideas develop from initial concepts into spectacular costumes.

STORIES

STYLE

6pm — 6.30pm

Costume Breakdown

Jess Bishop and Kirsten Roberts-Baxter Dye Workshop Assistant Manager and Dye Workshop Senior Technician

Watch the Dye Workshop team in a live breakdown of a costume. Jess Bishop and Kirsten Roberts reveal the craftsmanship, materials and specialist techniques used to create, transform and maintain costumes for the theatre, TV and film.

STORIES SCREEN

6.40pm — 7.10pm

Designed to Last

Rosie Blackshaw & Leila Ransley Costume Logistics and Hires Manager and Assistant Manager

Costumes at the Royal Ballet and Opera are made to last. Discover how creativity and sustainability go hand in hand as Rosie Blackshaw and Leila Ransley explore costume making across theatre, film and television.

STORIES STYLE

7.20pm — 7.50pm

Finding Your Voice

William Spaulding Chorus Director

Step into the world of the Royal Opera Chorus with Chorus Director William Spaulding. Discover how the chorus helps drive the story forward and experience the power of singing together as part of an opera ensemble.

STORIES STAGES

8pm — 8.30pm

Building a Character

Bradley Charles Participation Manager, ZooNation

Discover how movement brings characters to life with ZooNation’s Participation Manager, Bradley Charles. Inspired by Alice in Wonderland and ZooNation’s production of The Mad Hatter’s Tea Party, explore the creative process behind building character through movement.

STORIES STAGES

8.40pm — 9.20pm

The Art of Action

James Dance, Rich Gittins & Lockhart Ogilvie Senior Armoury Technician & Stunt Professionals

Experience an action-packed demonstration comparing stage combat with screen fighting. Discover the techniques behind creating thrilling, convincing action safely for both live audiences and the camera.

SCREEN STAGES

Tours

Join us for a tour behind the scenes and discover the people, spaces and processes that bring the Royal Opera House to life. Through our themes, each tour offers a different perspective on how creativity, craftsmanship and collaboration come together.

Stories Tour

Starting from Paul Hamlyn Hall Entrance

Step into the world of storytelling as you explore the Props Department, a Ballet Studio and the Flys. Discover how everything from handcrafted props and movement notation to stage effects helps bring unforgettable stories to life.

Stages Tour

Starting from 1858 Foyer

Explore the hidden world behind the curtain, from the Opera Rehearsal Room to side-stage areas rarely seen by audiences. Discover the machinery, technical ingenuity and backstage expertise that make some of our most spectacular stage moments possible.

Booking your tour

When you arrive, you will have the opportunity to sign up for up to two backstage tours taking place throughout the evening, as part of your ticket. Tour sign-ups will be available in the 1858 Foyer when you collect your welcome drink.

Each of the four tours will run repeatedly between 6pm and 9pm, giving you plenty of opportunities to join the tours that interest you most.

Tours depart from two different locations across the building. Please refer to the event map or ask a member of staff, who will be happy to direct you to the correct starting point.

Please arrive at your tour starting point five minutes before the scheduled start time so your guide can begin the tour promptly.

Screen Tour

Starting from 1858 Foyer

Explore how ballet and opera have captivated audiences beyond the stage, from iconic films and fairy tales to cinema broadcasts. Discover connections between productions in the Helpmann Studio and learn how Royal Ballet and Opera shares performances with audiences around the world in our Sound and Broadcast department.

Style Tour

Starting from Paul Hamlyn Hall Entrance

Step into the world of theatrical design as you visit two of our costume-making spaces: the Costume Production Department and Hats and Jewellery. Discover how costumes, accessories and bespoke creations help bring unforgettable characters to life.

