

Press Release – for immediate release

NATIONAL YOUTH BALLET ANNOUNCES 2019 SEASON *WONDERLANDS*

- **WONDERLANDS** showcases seven new works by emerging choreographers
- The 2019 season, led by interim artistic directors Ruth Brill and Drew McOnie, features 105 young dancers aged 9-18 from across the UK
- Performances at the Crescent Theatre, Birmingham on Thursday 29 and Friday 30 August, and at Sadler's Wells on Sunday 1 September 2019

For its 2019 season, **National Youth Ballet** will present **WONDERLANDS**, a mixed programme of new works choreographed by some of the country's rising talents, performed by a Company of young dancers aged 9-18 from across the UK.

WONDERLANDS leaps into magical, enchanted landscapes where words hold no power and dance is the only way to exist. An exciting mixed programme of completely original works, the country's finest young dancers are paired with the creative imaginations of a carefully selected dream team of dynamic choreographers.

The programme features seven new works; **Masquerade** by Stephanie Rosenheim, bringing the beauty and romance of a ball to life with the evocative music of Khachaturian's *Masquerade Suite*; **Day to Night** by Sophia Hurdley, a kaleidoscope of responses moving through a magical journey from day into night; **Utopia** by Charlie Brittain, questioning whether a Utopia can exist between humans; **Carnival** by Stuart Winter, celebrating the spirit of a travelling fair in the 1960's, set to Antonin Dvořák's *Carnival Overture*; **Pulse** by Ruth Brill, exploring the feeling of awe, amazement and admiration caused by something beautiful, remarkable or unfamiliar; **Flora** by Louise Bennett, moving through a magical garden in which different flowers inspire movement; and **Heartless** by Matthew Nicholson, the story of a young Queen of Hearts, danced to *Alice in Wonderland* by Carl Davis.

The 2019 Season is led by interim artistic directors **Drew McOnie** and **Ruth Brill**, both **National Youth Ballet** alumni with a longstanding association with the Company.

Drew McOnie and Ruth Brill said today: *"As proud alumni of the National Youth Ballet, we are thrilled to be part of a team leading a season in which seven world premier ballets will be presented. The company delivers its young artists an unparalleled level of professional involvement across all departments, and seeing them excel in uncharted territories is so thrilling. It was the belief in our early creative aspirations from National Youth Ballet that undoubtedly lead us to where we are today, and we are so excited to now watch the rise of these incredible young artists, both those on stage and off."*

National Youth Ballet plays an important role in the dance ecology by placing ballet technique and repertory structure at the core of theatrical creativity.

Now in its 32nd year, the company provides empowering and transformational opportunities for young people to participate in, create and perform ballet. It aims to extend the national reach and network, provide equality of opportunity through bursaries, remain innovative by developing and creating work for young people and secure the future of National Youth Ballet through sustained funding.

At the heart of its annual season is a two-week residential programme that sees the young company come together with a team of professional dancers, choreographers and teachers to take them on a journey from studio to stage, emulating the experience of being in a professional dance ensemble. This year dancers from across the country auditioned for the highly coveted places. 105 aged between 9-18 were offered places with the Company and will perform in the 2019 season.

National Youth Ballet also nurtures talent offstage, and through its **Beyond Ballet platform** offers emerging artists the chance to create work in a company environment alongside established professionals. Aimed at early career professionals aged 18-35, **Beyond Ballet** offers artists mentoring, shadowing opportunities and a paid role as part of the artistic team, with their work being profiled within the season. This year for the first time, the programme features entirely new works created by **Beyond Ballet** artists.

The 2019 season also sees the return of the annual **Choreographic Competition**, with the winning piece being showcased within the **WONDERLANDS** programme. This year's competition takes place on Thursday 22 August 2019 and will be judged by National Youth Ballet alumni Tyrone Singleton, Principal, Birmingham Royal Ballet and Arielle Smith, Young Associate Choreographer, New Adventures.

Many National Youth Ballet alumni go on to work professionally, with recent success stories including; **James Lovell** and **Max Westwell**, currently playing The Prince and The Swan in Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake*; **Jack Wilcox** who features in the London Palladium production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*, **Niamh O'Flannagain** who has been offered the post of Apprentice Dancer for Ballet Ireland's production of *Nutcracker*; **Arielle Smith**, a former **Beyond Ballet** choreographer who has been offered the post of New Adventures Young Associate Choreographer by Matthew Bourne; Asher Rosenheim who is making his debut with New Adventures in Matthew Bourne's *Romeo and Juliet*; **Basil James** who has joined the Royal Ballet Upper School; and **Oscar Ainsworth** who has joined Northern Ballet.

Notable alumni from National Youth Ballet's history include **Drew McOnie** (Director and Choreographer), **Ruth Brill** (Choreographer and First Artist at Birmingham Royal Ballet), **Sir Gregory Dean** (Principal at Royal Danish Ballet), **Jessica Brown Findlay** (Actress, *Downton Abbey*), **Tyrone Singleton** (Principal at Birmingham Royal Ballet) and **James Streeter** (First Soloist at English National Ballet). Over 80 alumni are currently performing on the West End stage or with professional ballet companies across the world, with many having worked for leading companies including Royal Ballet, English National Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet and Matthew Bourne's New Adventures.

National Youth Ballet's Patrons include Carlos Acosta, Sir Matthew Bourne, Dame Darcey Bussell, Jayne Cadbury, Antony Dowson, Janet Kinson, Joanna Lumley, Dame Monica Mason, Wayne Sleep, and Sir Peter Wright.

For the 2019 Season, the Associate Artistic Director is Carrie Johnson, the lighting designer is Andrew Ellis and the projection designer is Kenneth MacLeod.

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For further information, images, interviews and tickets please contact
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LISTINGS

Thursday 29 – Friday 30 August 2019

THE CRESCENT THEATRE

Sheepcote Street, Birmingham B16 8AE

Performances: Thursday 7.30 pm, Friday 2.30pm and 7.30pm

Tickets: Adults £23.25, under 16s £20.00, students £13.00

Box Office: 0121 643 5858 / crescent-theatre.co.uk

Sunday 1 September 2019, 7.30 pm

SADLER'S WELLS

Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4TN

Tickets: £32.00 - £55.00, students £10.00*

Box Office: 020 7863 8000 / sadlerswells.com

*Transaction fee applies: £3 for telephone bookings, and £1.95 for online bookings. No charge in person at Box Office.