

**Two new lead appointments**  
**Residential Performance Company Artistic Director**  
**2025 - Amelia O'Hara**  
**Artistic Consultant - Louise Bennett**



(Left - Right: Amelia O'Hara, Louise Bennett)

National Youth Ballet is delighted to announce **Amelia O'Hara** as Artistic Director of its Residential Performance Company 2025, following on from her role as NYB's Associate Artistic Director, a position she took up in 2022. Her new role includes direction and production of the summer residential course and showcase performance. She trained at the Royal Ballet School and Tring Park School and performed as a professional ballet dancer before embarking on a career in teaching and arts management.. Amelia has been a popular and much valued member of the NYB team for 10 years, having assisted founder Jill Tookey and five subsequent Artistic Directors including Mikah Smilie, Drew McOnie, Ruth Brill, Carrie Johnson and most recently Louise Bennett (2022-2024) in the planning and delivery of *re | generation* (2022) and *Evolving Visions* (2023-2024).

**Louise Bennett** will continue to work with NYB as Artistic Consultant in 2025, alongside her role as Artistic Director of London Vocational Ballet School. Under her artistic direction, the Residential Performance Company has flourished since the pandemic. Louise nurtured the invaluable process of research and development, giving young people and choreographers the space to explore their individual creativity, the impact of which has resulted in two high quality productions as London's Sadler's Wells Theatre\*. In her new role as Artistic Consultant, Louise will bring strategic expertise to NYB's leadership into the future and maintain a close relationship with the Residential Performance Company process.

Jo Meredith, NYB Creative Director: *"We look forward to Amelia's leadership as we embark on the next chapter of our Residential Performance Company's artistic development. I greatly admire her passion, commitment and dedication to young dancers' development. I am also delighted that Louise Bennett will be continuing to share her skills, knowledge and extensive experience with NYB as Artistic Consultant."*

Barbara Palczynski, NYB Chief Executive: *"NYB's Residential Performance Company has gone from strength to strength since 2021, with superlative artistic leadership under Louise, supported by Amelia. I have been inspired by the way they have worked together with an unswerving commitment to the quality of the experience we offer young dancers, both artistically and with a focus on wellbeing. Developing our team and their skills is an important part of our growth and a key part of NYB's future sustainability. I am excited to embrace the different energy that Amelia will bring as Artistic Director and I look forward to working more closely with Louise as Artistic Consultant, knowing that, with their thoughtful artistic approaches NYB will thrive and continue to achieve its mission."*

## Contact

For more information on NYBs Residential Performance Company visit the webpage <https://nationalyouthballet.org/residential-performance-company-2025/> , or contact NYBs Marketing and Communications Manager on [megan@nationalyouthballet.org](mailto:megan@nationalyouthballet.org).

Images to accompany this Press Release can be found [here](#).

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## Notes

### Amelia O'Hara

Amelia (she/her) is a passionate and experienced classical ballet teacher, and former professional dancer, who is committed to ensuring that the next generation of young people have the opportunity to experience the joy and transformational power of dance. She

believes in creating positive and safe environments where young people can develop their artistic confidence, and advocates for wider access routes into the arts.

As a dancer, Amelia trained at The Royal Ballet School and Tring Park School for the Performing Arts, where she performed with The Royal Ballet Company and Northern Ballet Theatre. She went on to work and tour extensively with Scottish Ballet, Ballet Cymru, Peter Schaufuss Ballet Company and Ballet Ireland, as well as working with Arielle Smith, Drew McOnie, Jenna Lee and International Arts Collective for various productions worldwide.

After her successful career as a dancer, Amelia undertook the Royal Ballet School's Diploma of Dance Teaching and currently teaches for the Royal Ballet School's Associate programme in Manchester, and for Birmingham Royal Ballet's Dance Track department. She has also taught for multiple organisations including Ballet Boost, Ballet Ireland, ACE Dance and Music, English National Ballet's Youth Co, Elite Ballet Project, Laine Theatre Arts, and as Movement Rehearsal Director at Mountview for Arielle Smith.

Amelia first experienced NYB as a student, when she received a scholarship from Eve Pettinger MBE which enabled her to attend. This was where she met NYB's dynamic founder, Jill Tookey CBE, who would later invite Amelia to work with them whilst on her breaks from performing. This opportunity allowed Amelia to explore and develop another side to her work, and over the years her roles and responsibilities at NYB have grown. In 2022 she became the Associate Artistic Director and she is honoured to now become the Artistic Director for the Residential Performance Company 2024/2025.

## **Louise Bennett**

Louise (she/her) is currently the Artistic Director of London Vocational Ballet School and was the Artistic Director of National Youth Ballet's Residential Performance Company from 2022-2024. She trained at The Royal Ballet School and danced with The Royal Swedish Ballet, Norwegian National Ballet and English National Ballet. After ending her performing career in 2016, she worked as a freelance ballet teacher, artistic director, rehearsal director, creative producer and choreographer based in London.

From 2020-2022, upon director Demis Volpi's invitation, she worked as a Ballet Master at Ballett am Rhein in Düsseldorf, Germany, working on creations and repertoire by choreographers including Demis Volpi, Sharon Eyal, Azure Barton, José Limón and Andrey Kaydanovskiy. She then returned to London to take up the post of Artistic Director of National Youth Ballet's Performance Company, working with a large creative team and 100 young dancers to produce mixed bills of new creations and NYB revivals, performing at Elmhurst Ballet School, The Crescent Theatre, and Sadler's Wells Theatre. Louise has taught ballet for companies including The Royal Ballet, English National Ballet, Ballett Zürich, Ballett am Rhein, Company Wayne McGregor, Ballet de l'Opéra du Rhin, Ballet Black, Rambert and Matthew Bourne's New Adventures, for students at Rambert School, London Vocational Ballet School, Laban, Zürich University of the Arts, and Balettakademien Stockholm, and as a ballet coach for early-career professionals at the Biennale College Danza in Venice.

Earlier this year she produced the project 'Performing Hope: Nature in the City', in collaboration with Climate Basecamp and Central School of Ballet, and she has worked as a personal coach for Francesca Hayward during several film shoots.

As a choreographer, Louise has created pieces for National Youth Ballet, The Royal Ballet School, Ballet Central, Encore Dance Company, Tivoli Ballet and Outside Edge Theatre Company, as well as winning the Kenneth MacMillan and Ninette de Valois choreographic awards while studying at The Royal Ballet School.

## Residential Performance Company details

A unique programme providing an immersive opportunity for young dancers aged between nine and eighteen to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be a company dancer. Throughout the production period they will develop their creative, collaborative and performance skills by working as a company and experiencing the creative processes of a variety of highly esteemed choreographers and répétiteurs.

### Audition dates

Location	Date
Leeds - Northern Ballet, LS2 7PA	Sunday 26 January 2025
Birmingham - Birmingham Royal Ballet, B5 4AU	Sunday 9 February 2025
Newcastle - Gateway Studio, NE8 1EP	Sunday 16 February 2025
London - Acosta Dance Centre, SE18 6BH	Sunday 23 February 2025
Bath - Bath Dance College, BA3 3QG	Sunday 2 March 2025
London - London Vocational Ballet School, W12 8AP	Sunday 9 March 2025
Online - Zoom	Sunday 16 March 2025

### Residential dates

Sunday 10 August 2025 – Saturday 16 August 2025 inclusive

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\* *“Evolving Visions is a happy couple of hours in the company of some very talented young dancers, whose joy and enthusiasm reached across the footlights. Well done to all!”* David Mead for Seeing Dance.

*“NYB’s philosophy is for everybody to feel supported and make their work together joyful and fun. And that joie de vivre comes over in all the work I saw”* Liftedleg.com