

BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET

PRESS RELEASE

19 January 2023

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BRB2

- BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET ANNOUNCES BRB2, A COMPANY OF RISING STARS THAT WILL TOUR A SPECIALLY CURATED SHOWCASE PROGRAMME ALONGSIDE THEIR CONTINUED WORK WITH THE MAIN COMPANY
- BRB2's INAUGURAL TOUR BEGINS AT ROYAL AND DERNGATE, NORTHAMPTON BEFORE TRAVELLING TO THEATRE ROYAL NOTTINGHAM, NEW THEATRE PETERBOROUGH, THE LINBURY LONDON AND WOLVERHAMPTON GRAND
- THE PROGRAMME ENTITLED *CARLOS ACOSTA'S CLASSICAL SELECTION* FEATURES PAS DE DEUX, SOLOS, AND DIVERTISSEMENTS BY CHOREOGRAPHERS INCLUDING FREDERICK ASHTON, PETER WRIGHT, WILL TUCKETT, CARLOS ACOSTA AND MANY MORE

Birmingham Royal Ballet is delighted to announce the launch of its new company BRB2 and its inaugural UK tour in April - June 2023.

BRB2 is a new initiative where BRB pro-actively seeks out some of the best young ballet graduates from around the world to join a two-year performance programme, providing vital employment for the next generation of exceptional ballet dancers (aged 18-22) to transition from training into jobs at BRB or other leading ballet companies, impacting the dance sector worldwide. It will act as a magnet for the best UK and international talent, providing extensive training and professional experience, sending developed, professional dancers back into the dance sector and providing role models for the next generation. BRB2 is inspired by Dutch National Ballet Junior Company and ABT Studio Company.

The BRB2 dancers will not only train and perform with the whole Birmingham Royal Ballet company in major productions, but they will also develop their own touring programme, supported by senior members of BRBs ballet staff.

In most ballet companies new joiners and artists can spend years working their way up to dancing principal roles; this showcase puts the spotlight on the new talent in Birmingham Royal Ballet's ranks in an exciting, crowd-pleasing and challenging way. In this first year six

of the company are current BRB dancers and six the founding group of BRB2. In 2024, the founders will graduate and, in their second year, be joined by six new dancers – providing an ongoing platform for brilliant young talent to be showcased across the UK. The full Royal Ballet Sinfonia conducted by Paul Murphy will perform live on opening night in Northampton and for the rest of the tour there will be specially recorded music with *End of Time* and *Dying Swan* performed live by Jeanette Wong (Head of Piano) and Antonio Novais (Principal Cellist).

Carlos Acosta said: *'It is with great pleasure that I present my Classical Selection and introduce you to Birmingham Royal Ballet's rising stars in our exciting new company, BRB2.'*

Since arriving at BRB, I have wanted to develop a young company. A company with its own artistic identity in which some of our finest young dancers would not only have the opportunity to take on lead roles of their own, but which would also provide a structure for brilliant young dancers graduating from ballet schools around the world to gain real-life experience with a touring ballet company. With the support of David and Mary Laing, The Kirby Laing Foundation and The Linbury Trust I am thrilled that we can bring this dream to life in 2023!

BRB has a strong track record in launching the careers of some of the world's most renowned dancers, who have developed their skills at BRB and then gone on to become global stars. BRB is proud that Darcey Bussell, Leanne Benjamin and Miyako Yoshida, amongst others, had their first professional jobs at Birmingham Royal Ballet. BRB2 will help the company give opportunities to more of the brightest stars of the future.'

BRB's First Soloist, **Kit Holder**, will lead BRB2 as Artistic Coordinator in this first year. This role has been created to support Kit's professional development and the continued development of his leadership skills. Along with Carlos Acosta, Kit has developed the exciting programme featuring favourite pieces from classical ballet across over a century of performance.

Kit Holder said: *'BRB2 will not only ensure that young professional dancers joining Birmingham Royal Ballet will be ready to deliver world-class performances in a wide range of roles, but they, along with those going on to other companies and organisations, will be ready to make a positive contribution to the wider dance world.'*

The dancers for the first cohort were selected by Carlos and Dominic Antonucci, BRB's Assistant Director. The founding members of BRB2 are **Oscar Kempsey-Fagg** (UK), **Mason King** (UK/New Zealand), **Frieda Kaden** (Germany), **Mailene Katoch** (France) and **Jack Easton** (USA).

Joining them for the first UK tour will be **Enrique Bejarano Vidal** (Mexico), **Olivia Chang Clarke** (UK), **Regan Hutsell** (USA), **Sofia Linares** (Spain), **Eric Pinto Cata** (UK), **Lucy Waine** (UK) and soloist **Riku Ito** (Japan).

The programme for the 2023 UK tour includes: Pas de Deux from: **Frederick Ashton's Rhapsody** - premiered at the Royal Ballet in 1980 by Mikhail Baryshnikov and Lesley Collier, Collier herself will be rehearsing the BRB2 duo who will perform this piece; **August Bournonville's** most famous ballet **La Sylphide**; the love duet from **Swan Lake** - probably the most famous *pas de deux* in ballet; **Carlos Acosta's** take on Fokine's *The Dying Swan* which features two dancers instead of one (hence **The Dying Swans** plural) and is double the usual length; **Marius Petipa's Diana and Actaeon pas de deux**; **Ben Stevenson's End of Time** set to **Rachmaninoff's** gloriously melancholic *Sonata in G Minor* (3rd movement).

In the second half **Gustavo Mollajoli's *A Buenos Aires*** celebrates the spirit of tango to music by **Astor Piazzolla**; the iconic **Edith Piaf's *Je ne regrette rien*** choreographed by **Ben Van Cauwenbergh**, whose **Jacques Brel**-inspired humorous gala piece ***Les Bourgeois*** will also feature. **Acosta's** choreography for the ***Carmen pas de deux*** promises to raise the temperature with **Bizet's** heat-seeking score and **Will Tuckett's** solo ***Nisi Dominus*** will reinstate some sense of calm to proceedings before **Jorges Garcia's *Majisimo*** closes out the programme, performed to **Massenet's** music from ***Le Cid***.

The BRB2 company will tour to Royal and Derngate Northampton (25 April); Theatre Royal Nottingham (28 & 29 April); New Theatre Peterborough (3 & 4 May); the Linbury London (13 & 14 June); and Wolverhampton Grand (25 June).

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Listings information

Northampton Royal and Derngate

25 April 7.30pm - full live orchestra

Theatre Royal Nottingham

28 April 7.30pm; 29 April 2.30pm & 7.30pm

New Theatre Peterborough

3 & 4 May 7.30pm

The Linbury Theatre, London

13 & 14 June 7.30pm

Wolverhampton Grand

24 & 25 June 7.30pm

Programme

Rhapsody – pas de deux

Choreography: Frederick Ashton

Music: Serge Rachmaninoff, *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini*

La Sylphide – Act II pas de deux

Choreography: August Bournonville

Music: Herman Lovenskiold

Swan Lake – Act II Pas de deux

Music: Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky

The Dying Swans

Choreography: Carlos Acosta (after Michel Fokine and Michel Descombes)

Music: Camille Saint-Saens

Diana and Actaeon – pas de deux

Choreography: Marius Petipa, Agrippina Vaganova

Music: Cesare Pugni

End of Time – pas de deux

Choreography: Ben Stevenson

Music: Sergey Rachmaninoff, *Cello Sonata in G Minor* (3rd movement)

Interval

A Buenos Aires

Choreography: Gustavo Mollajoli

Music: Astor Piazzolla, *Primavera Portena*

Je ne regrette rien

Choreography: Ben Van Cauwenbergh

Music: Edith Piaf's *Je ne regrette rien*

Les Bourgeois

Choreography: Ben Van Cauwenbergh

Music: Jacques Brel's *Les Bourgeois*

Carmen

Choreography: Carlos Acosta

Music: Bizet – Shchedrin

Nisi Dominus

Choreography: Will Tuckett

Music: Claudio Monteverdi (from *Vespers*)

Majisimo

Choreography: Georges Garcia

Music: Jules Massenet (from *Le Cid*)

Notes to Editors

Birmingham Royal Ballet

Based at Birmingham Hippodrome, Birmingham Royal Ballet is the United Kingdom's leading touring ballet company performing a range of traditional, classical and heritage ballets as well as ground-breaking new works with the aim of encouraging choreographers of the future.

The Company's Director since January 2020 is the internationally renowned Carlos Acosta.

Birmingham Royal Ballet standardly performs at Birmingham Hippodrome for approximately ten weeks of the year and the remainder of the year tours throughout the United Kingdom and overseas. On average, the Company performs 175 shows a year nationally and internationally.

As well as playing for Birmingham Royal Ballet, the Sinfonia plays for The Royal Ballet and has a long tradition of playing for tours by the world's leading ballet companies, including Paris Opéra Ballet, New York City Ballet, San Francisco Ballet and The Australian Ballet. They have performed with Het Nationale Ballet, Queensland Ballet and Acosta Danza. They also worked with the Pet Shop Boys on *The Most Incredible Thing*. On the concert platform, the Sinfonia has also accompanied the National Opera Studio, the Voice of Black Opera competition and Opera North's production of *Carousel*. They have recorded Edward Loder's opera *Raymond and Agnes* with distinguished Australian conductor, Richard Bonyngne.

For Linbury date tbc as they won't have announced new generations yet.

The Royal Ballet and guest companies

NEXT GENERATION FESTIVAL

Linbury Theatre

7–23 June 2023

A wealth of emerging artists come together to celebrate the future of dance in Next Generation Festival. Throughout the course of the festival, there will be performances by junior companies and premier dance schools drawn from the UK, across Europe and around the world – a great opportunity to appreciate local and international talent today. See the art form as it is now and witness the immense potential of dance as it blossoms into its vibrant future.