

# BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET

## PRESS RELEASE

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### BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET ANNOUNCES 2024 - 25 SEASON

- **BLACK SABBATH – THE BALLET IN ROTTERDAM JUNE 2024  
PRESENTED BY HOLLAND DANCE FESTIVAL**
- **THE MAIN COMPANY TO PERFORM CARLOS ACOSTA'S CLASSICAL  
SELECTION IN ICELAND SUMMER 2024**
- **AUTUMN SEASON BEGINS WITH LA FILLE MAL GARDÉE AS PART OF  
24-28 ASHTON WORLDWIDE FESTIVAL**
- **WORLD PREMIERE OF THE THIRD PART OF THE BIRMINGHAM  
TRILOGY, LUNA, FEATURING AN ALL FEMALE CREATIVE TEAM**
- **THE NUTCRACKER RETURNS TO BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME AND  
THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL**
- **SPRING 2025 UK TOUR OF SIR DAVID BINTLEY'S CINDERELLA**
- **BRB2'S THIRD UK TOUR TO FEATURE AN ALL-NEW PROGRAMME FOR  
SPRING 2025**

IMAGES AVAILABLE [HERE](#)

Today, announcing Birmingham Royal Ballet's 2024 - 25 Season, the company's Director **Carlos Acosta** said: *'I am so happy to be able to share our plans for the future with everyone. Still riding high from the successes of the autumn/winter 2023 season, we have a lot to celebrate, but we also keep moving forward, keep challenging ourselves and keep aiming high, in terms of our goals and ambitions. Everyone at BRB has worked incredibly hard to ensure my vision for this company has been, and continues to be, realised, and I am very proud of our achievements and excited about our plans. This Season exemplifies the importance of balancing the creation of platforms for emerging talents to shine, alongside the joy we bring to the classical canon of work that the Company is so proud to perform.'*

Fresh from the sell-out success in Birmingham, Plymouth and London, ***Black Sabbath – The Ballet*** has had a raft of international interest. The European premiere will be at the Luxor Theatre in Rotterdam, presented by Holland Dance Festival (13 - 15 June) and we are already in advanced talks about touring ***Black Sabbath - The Ballet*** to the USA in summer 2025.

In summer 2024, the Company will make its first-ever visit to Iceland to perform ***Carlos Acosta's Classical Selection*** in Reykjavik.

The autumn season begins at Birmingham Hippodrome (25 - 28 September) where BRB presents Sir Frederick Ashton's ***La Fille mal gardée***, its Founder Choreographer's most popular ballet. This is the first time ***La Fille mal gardée*** has been presented by BRB under the directorship of Carlos Acosta, who, for many, is one of the definitive interpreters of Colas in this sunny, effervescent ballet. The production will tour to Plymouth Theatre Royal (10 - 12 October) and Sadler's Wells London (25 - 26 October) and is part of the official 2024-28 Ashton Worldwide Festival. Additional BRB events programmed as part of the Festival include ***A Celebration of Ashton*** in February 2025, and a special Ashton Foundation 'Insight' masterclass, featuring Carlos Acosta and Sandra Madgwick coaching BRB dancers in the roles of Colas and Lise on 30 April 2024 at Elmhurst Ballet School.

Also this autumn, BRB presents the **World Premiere of *Luna***, a 2-act (full-length), abstract ballet in six movements, which forms the final part of Carlos's Birmingham Trilogy (*City of a Thousand Trades + Black Sabbath + Luna*). This new work is inspired by the pioneering and socially enterprising women of Birmingham who have contributed to the shape of the city that Birmingham Royal Ballet calls home. Drawing inspiration from the book *Once Upon a Time in Birmingham: Women Who Dare to Dream* by Louise Palfreyman, it features an all-female, international creative team, including Choreographers **Iratxe Ansa** (Spain); **Wubkje Kuindersma** (Netherlands); **Seeta Patel** (UK); **Arielle Smith** (UK); **Thais Suárez** (Cuba); with music composed by **Kate Whitley** (UK). Costume Design is by **Imaan Ashraf**, Projection Design by **Hayley Egan** and Lighting Design by **Emma Jones**. The creative team will explore contemporary universal themes including matriarchal roles in society, education, female empowerment, overcoming adversity, and community. The World Premiere will be at Birmingham Hippodrome (3-5 October) before it has its London premiere at Sadler's Wells (22-23 October).

**Sir Peter Wright's *The Nutcracker*** was his gift to the City of Birmingham when Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet moved to the city in 1990 and it remains one of the world's most spectacular presentations of this festive tale. After breaking all previous box office records in the Birmingham 2023 run, this year will see the **first-ever Relaxed performance** at Birmingham Hippodrome, which will bring this story to life for children and young people normally unable to attend theatre productions of this scale (1pm, Tue 3 Dec). *The Nutcracker's* Birmingham run begins on 22 November playing through to 14 December. The Royal Albert Hall spectacular presentation of ***The Nutcracker*** returns this year (29 - 31 December 2024).

The 2025 Spring UK Tour will be **Sir David Bintley's *Cinderella***, one of BRB's most popular ballets. With sumptuous sets and costumes by John MacFarlane, virtuoso dance and some of ballet's most memorable coups de theatre, *Cinderella* continues to thrill audiences across

the world with one of the largest UK touring productions. One of BRB's most in-demand ballets, *Cinderella* opens at the Mayflower Southampton (6 - 8 February) before travelling to Birmingham Hippodrome (19 February – 1 March), The Lowry Salford (6 - 8 March), Sunderland Empire (13 - 15 March), Bristol Hippodrome (27 - 29 March), and finally Plymouth Theatre Royal (9 - 12 April).

Spring 2025 will see the third **BRB2** UK tour, this time featuring an all-new programme, to be announced. BRB2 has attracted a wealth of international talent to the company already. These future stars have already made their mark within the company and, as the 2-year initiative approaches its first conclusion, all eyes are on what these talented young dancers will do next. Watch this space.

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### **Listings Information (UK only)**

Please note, on-sale dates vary across the season.  
Please check [BRB's website](#) for details.

#### ***La Fille mal gardée***

Choreographer Sir Frederick Ashton  
Composer Ferdinand Herold (Arr. John Lanchbery)  
Design Osbert Lancaster

25 - 28 September Birmingham Hippodrome (PN 25/9)  
10 - 12 October Theatre Royal Plymouth  
25 - 26 October Sadler's Wells London (PN 25/10)

#### ***Luna***

Choreographers Iratxe Ansa (Spain); Wubkje Kuindersma (Netherlands); Seeta Patel (UK); Arielle Smith (UK); Thais Suárez (Cuba)  
With music composed by Kate Whitley (UK).  
Costume Design Imaan Ashraf (UK)  
Projection Design Hayley Egan (UK)  
Lighting Design Emma Jones (UK)  
3 - 5 October Birmingham Hippodrome (PN 3/10)  
22 - 23 October Sadler's Wells London (PN 23/10)

#### ***The Nutcracker***

Choreography Sir Peter Wright, Lev Ivanov, Vincent Redmon  
Production Sir Peter Wright  
Composer Pytor Ilyich Tchaikovsky  
Design John Macfarlane

22 November - 14 December Birmingham Hippodrome (PN 22 Nov)  
3 Dec (1pm) Relaxed performance

### ***The Nutcracker***

Choreography Sir Peter Wright, Lev Ivanov, Vincent Redmon  
Additional choreography Sir David Bintley, Marion Tait  
Production Sir David Bintley  
Composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky  
Costumes & props John Macfarlane  
Settings & additional props Dick Bird  
Lighting Peter Teigen  
Projection Designs 59 Productions

29 - 31 December Royal Albert Hall (PN 29/12)

### **2025**

### ***Cinderella***

Choreographer Sir David Bintley  
Composer Sergei Prokofiev  
Design John Macfarlane

6 - 8 February Mayflower Southampton (PN 6/2)  
19 February - 01 March Birmingham Hippodrome (PN 19/2)  
6 - 8 March The Lowry Salford  
13 - 15 March Sunderland Empire  
27 - 29 March Bristol Hippodrome  
9 - 12 April Theatre Royal Plymouth

## **Biographies for LUNA Creative Team**

### **Choreographers**

#### **Iratxe Ansa**

For more than 20 years, the Basque dancer Iratxe Ansa danced for some of the most important European companies. Basel Ballet, the defunct Gulbenkian Ballet in Lisbon, the National Dance Company at the time of Nacho Duato, the Opera Ballet of Lyon, as well as the Nederlands Dans Theater (NDT) all form part of her career path.

When she left the NDT in 2009, she also left behind a brilliant career as a dancer. A career that started upon her graduation from the John Cranko Schule in Stuttgart, and which took her to hone her skills for outstanding European companies. She danced for legends of the twentieth century such as William Forsythe, Jiri Kylián, Nacho Duato, Mats Ek, Ohad Naharin, Wayne McGregor, and Crystal Pite, just to name a few. Nonetheless, she was still far from reaching the end of her career.

Instead she was now set to begin a new chapter in her career as a freelancer. It took her across the world to work for dancers of different cultures, schools, and nationalities. She kept on dancing and creating, increasingly developing her own methodology. In this manner, she delved into matters about physicality and musicality, two principles of utmost importance in her understanding of dance, and which have helped consolidate her as a researcher of the body.

In 2019 Iratxe and Igor founded METAMORPHOSIS DANCE, a dance company based in Madrid, since then they have combined directing their own company with their career as guest choreographers in European dance companies.

In 2020 she was recognized for her achievements with the National Prize for Dance in Spain.

### **Wubkje Kuindersma**

Wubkje Kuindersma is a freelance choreographer from The Netherlands and is Young Creative Associate with Dutch National Ballet since 2021. Human connection and gender equality are important themes in her work. The leading American publication Dance Magazine included Kuindersma in its 'Top 25 to watch for 2019', an annual list of dancers, choreographers and companies the magazine deems representative of the future of dance. In 2019, Kuindersma was nominated for the Prize of the Dutch Dance Days Maastricht, an award for young, promising talent. In 2016 she received the BNG Award for Excellent Talent in choreography.

Her acclaimed duet "Two and Only" for Dutch National Ballet delivered Marijn Rademaker a nomination for the Prix Benois de la Danse 2018. Her choreography "Architecture of Hope" for West Australian Ballet won the West Australian Performing Arts Award for Best New Work in 2020. Music plays a vital role in Wubkje's creations and she loves to get creative with other art forms. She often designs her own costumes and stage design for her creations.

Critic's Choice Dance Europe mentioned Kuindersma's "Anatomy of Light" as one of best premieres in 2022, alongside works of Beaujean, Van Schaijk, Goecke and Clug.

She currently creates her first full length story ballet "Echoes of Van Gogh" at West Australian Ballet, with premiere september 8th 2023 in Perth. Kuindersma has created new works for Dutch National Ballet and its Junior Company, Korzo&Ndt, Ballett Dortmund, das Hessisches Staatsballett, Noverre Society of Stuttgart Ballet, BalletX, West Australian Ballet, Dansk Danseteater, Ballett Landestheater Coburg, Beijing Dance Academy, the Dutch National Ballet Academy, Bundesjugendballet of John Neumeier, Codarts, Dantzaz, Philharmonie Luxembourg, Skanes Dansteater, Ballet Kiel.

For more info, please visit [wubkje.com](http://wubkje.com)

### **Seeta Patel**

The award-winning choreographer and dancer Seeta Patel was born in London and began her training under the guidance of Kiran Ratna in 1990. She has since worked with a range of Bharatanatyam and contemporary dance professionals including Mavin Khoo, Padma Shri Adyar K Lakshman, Pushkala Gopal and Darshan Singh Bhuller. She has also performed and toured with a number of companies such as DV8 Physical Theatre, Shobana Jeyasingh Dance Company, David Hughes Dance Company and Mavin Khoo Dance.

Seeta has presented solo and ensemble works at the Southbank Centre Purcell Room, Royal Opera House, ROH2 and Sadler's Wells such as: Cycle of Change (2005), She Was Still (2005-6), Alter Ego (2007), Shringara (2009), Last One Standing (2010) and First Light (2014). Her solo classical London debut, Shringara: Journey of Desire, was performed to a capacity audience at The Clore Upstairs, Royal Opera House (June 2009), and then toured around the UK in 2010/11. She subsequently presented solo classical works Dancing My Siva and Something Then, Something Now to sold out audiences at Sadler's Wells and the Purcell Room (Darbar Festival).

Over the past 12 years, Patel has received numerous awards and bursaries for her creative and professional development. She was awarded the Lisa Ullmann Travel Scholarship to study in India (2005) and at the New York Film Academy (2013). In 2017, she received the Washington S&R Award for her work championing Bharatanatyam in the diaspora.

Seeta worked as a choreographic collaborator with the world renowned contemporary circus company, Gandini Juggling, for their production Sigma which premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2017 before touring in 2020 and subsequently won the Archangel Award, Total Theatre Award, and Asian Arts Award.

In tandem with her choreographic and performing work Seeta has worked in film, TV and theatre. She produced a multi award-winning short dance film, *The Art of Defining Me* in 2013, which gained national and international acclaim. She was a judge, mentor and advisor for the inaugural BBC TV Young Dancer Competition and in 2016 choreographed a new play at the Theatre Royal Stratford East entitled *The House of In Between*.

Seeta's contemporary work in collaboration with the Australian choreographer and performer Lina Limosani is the one-woman show, *Not Today's Yesterday* which takes a dramatic look at the whitewashing of history around the world. The show was a recipient of the Adelaide Artist Fringe Fund and premiered successfully at the Adelaide Fringe Festival in 2018 where it won Best Dance, and the Peace Foundation Award. The production toured around the UK in 2018 and 2019, including the Edinburgh Fringe as part of the British Council showcase. During the tour Seeta curated a series of lively and interesting post-show talks in association with a range of activists, historians and artists. The work went on to tour internationally including Australia, India, Italy and Egypt.

Most recently, Seeta Patel's critically acclaimed Bharatanatyam version of the iconic ballet, *The Rite of Spring*, toured the UK through 2019-2021, winning the 2020 Eastern Eye Arts, Culture and Theatre Award in the Dance Category and being nominated for best stage production by the Asian Media Group in 2019. The work is now developed with an extended cast and full orchestra and premiered to critical acclaim at Sadler's Well in March 2023.

The constantly evolving world of South Asian Dance is developing as an integral part of the international dance landscape and Seeta Patel is a vital part of this growing business; she mentors and supports up-and-coming dancers and produces high quality work which entertains and engages an increasing audience both in the UK and abroad.

### **Arielle Smith**

Havana-born Arielle is an Olivier Award award-winning choreographer who crosses dance theatre and film. Her Olivier was awarded for her creation *Jolly Folly* for The English National Ballet. She has since been celebrated in *The Stage* 25 list as one of 25 individuals to become the future stars of the UK theatre industry, having also been named on *The Guardian's* ones to watch for 2022. Arielle's theatre credits include *Carmen* for San Francisco Ballet; *Unexpected Twist* (Northampton/UK Tour); *Orfeo* (Garsington); *Jack and the Beanstalk* (Lyric Hammersmith), directed by John Caird and *Blackmail* (Mercury Theatre), directed by Anthony Banks. She has a number of classical commissions and theatre projects in development. She has choreographed for some of the largest ballet companies around the world, including Matthew Bourne's *New Adventures* where she was Associate Choreographer on his *Romeo & Juliet*. Other credits include *Lots.Of.Varied.Expectations* and *Mañana Iguana*.

### **Thais Suarez**

Thais graduated from Modern, Contemporary, and Folkloric Dance from the National School of Arts and later from the University of the Arts (ISA) with the highest qualifications. She began and developed her Dance career in the internationally renowned company, *Danza Contemporanea de Cuba* (DCC), where she spent almost a decade as a principal dancer. She has played leading roles by choreographers such as Mats Ek, Itzik Galili, Jan Linkens, Juan Kruz Diaz de Garaio, Fleur Darkin, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Rafael Bonachela, Theo Clinkard, Angels Margarit, Billy Cowie, George Céspedes, Julio Cesar Iglesias, among others. It has been celebrated by the public and critics of the most important stages in the world, namely Sadler's Wells, Opera de Monte Carlo, Teatro Real (Madrid), Maison de la Dance (Lyon), Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (Washington D.C.), National Auditorium (Mexico City), and deserving of several national and foreign awards and recognitions. In July 2018, she decided to separate from DCC and found, together with her partner Norge Cedeño, *OtroLado Dance Company*. From there they developed an ascending choreographic career that has led them to collaborate with important international companies such as Gauthier

Dance, Aterballeto, Acosta Danza, Malpaso, and many others and together turn the young Cuban company into one of the most unique and impressive voices of the Cuban contemporary dance.

Thais Suárez, with her creative singularity and her unique physical and interpretative quality, is recognized both by the criteria of artists, specialised critics, and the general audience, as one of the most incredible artists of Cuban Contemporary Dance in recent years.

### **Kate Whitley**

Kate Whitley is a composer and pianist. She runs The Multi-Story Orchestra, which performs in car parks around the UK: “forget fusty concert halls, the future of music is emerging in a municipal car park” (The Times).

She writes music for orchestras, choirs and instrumentalists. Her music has been broadcast on Radio 3 and performed as part of the BBC Proms.

Her pieces for choir and orchestra include *Alive* to words by poet Holly McNish, which won a 2015 British Composers Award and was described as “a remarkable feat” (The Telegraph), and *I am I say to words* by Sabrina Mahfouz: “a tremendous work” (The Times).

Her piece *Speak out to words* by Nobel prize winner Malala Yousafzai was commissioned by the BBC for International Women’s Day 2017 in support of the campaign for better education for girls: ‘a powerful statement, full of kinetic energy’ (Wales Arts Review) and has been performed by orchestras around the world.

In 2018 she wrote *Sky Dances* for the London Symphony Orchestra, which was performed by an orchestra of over 100 in Trafalgar Square conducted by Sir Simon Rattle.

Winning a 2018 Critics Circle Award, she has been described as a composer with “a strong, distinctive voice who, without compromising, communicates directly to a wide audience, within the concert hall and beyond”.

Kate is a 2018 Bortletti-Buitoni Trust Special Award Winner and a 2013 Sky Academy Futures Fund winner. She was 2013-4 Music Fellow at Rambert Dance Company and 2015 New Music Programmer at Kettles Yard Art Gallery. She is a 2021 Clore Leadership Fellow.

### **Iman Ashraf - Costume Designer**

Imaan Ashraf is a London based Costume Designer and Stylist. She is a recent graduate of MA Costume Design for Performing from the London College of Fashion with a BA in Liberal Arts (History major) from King's College London. Her recent work focuses on the experiences of women during points of historical conflict as well as the intersections of nature and the human body.

### **Hayley Egan - Projection and Video Design**

Hayley is a Video Designer for theatre, opera and live events. Her previous work includes; *Cinders!* (Scottish Ballet); *Boy Parts* (Soho Theatre); *The Sound of Music and Mom, How Did You Meet The Beatles?* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *Tomorrow Gala* (Old Vic), *Pijin* (Theatre Iolo); *Ruin* (Lost Dog); *Coppelia* (Associate, Scottish Ballet); *Everyday* (Deafinitely Theatre); *The Scandal at Mayerling* (Scottish Ballet); *Triple Bill: Witch* (Royal Academy of Music); *A Tale of Two Cities* (Associate, Lost Dog); *The Boy with Two Hearts* (WMC, National Theatre); *You’re Safe Til 2024* (Barbican); *The Child in The Snow* (Wilton's Music Hall); *The Language of Kindness* (Wayward Productions); *I’ll Take You To Mrs Cole!* (Complicité Associates); *I’m a Phoenix, Bitch!* (Associate, Battersea Arts Centre); *Grief Is The Thing With Feathers* (Associate, Galway International Arts Festival). *Carmen* (Associate, Scottish Opera); *The Handmaid’s Tale* (Associate, Royal Danish Opera); *Litvinenko* (Associate, Grange Park

Opera); Don Giovanni (Associate, Greek National Opera); Nixon in China (Associate, Scottish Opera); Freedom Season (Welsh National Opera); Orlando (Associate, Vienna State Opera); The Yellow Wallpaper (Channel 4 Random Acts).

### **Emma Jones - Lighting Design**

Emma is a Lighting Designer based in Scotland. Emma works across many creative mediums and has worked extensively with companies including Scottish Opera, Scottish Dance Theatre, The National Theatre of Scotland, Danza Contemporanea de Cuba, Charlotte McLean Dance, The Royal Lyceum Edinburgh, Joan Cleville Dance, The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, shotput dance-theatre, Dundee Rep Theatre, Derby Theatre and The Citizens Theatre Glasgow.

Having a particular passion for dance Emma has designed the lighting for over 16 newly commissioned works for Scottish Dance Theatre, working with both established and emerging choreographers including Damien Jalet, Anton Lachky, Botis Seva and Henri Oguike

In 2020 became an associate artist with Shotput Dance-Theatre Company.

### **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 over 100 shows a year nationally and internationally.

**The Royal Ballet Sinfonia** is Birmingham Royal Ballet's permanent orchestra, it is also Britain's busiest ballet orchestra. The Sinfonia also plays frequently for The Royal Ballet and other leading ballet companies, including performances with Paris Opéra Ballet, New York City Ballet, Australian Ballet, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, the Kirov, Norwegian Ballet, Atlanta Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, and La Scala Ballet. [www.brb.org.uk](http://www.brb.org.uk)