Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Former Northern Ballet Artistic Director David Nixon awarded CBE



David Nixon CBE. Photo Simon Lawson.

Former Northern Ballet Artistic Director David Nixon has received a CBE for services to dance, in Her Majesty the Queen’s Birthday Honours list 2022.

David Nixon CBE was Artistic Director of Northern Ballet from 2001 to 2022. During his time with the Company, 29 acclaimed full-length ballets and 23 one-act works were added to the repertoire, as well as 14 original full-length musical compositions. As a choreographer, David created 13 original full-length ballets for Northern Ballet including *Wuthering Heights*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *The Great Gatsby* and *The Little Mermaid*.

Under David Nixon’s directorship, Northern Ballet’s reputation as a world-class dance company grew exponentially with several works shown in cinemas nationally and internationally. The significance of his leadership was recognised with several awards. He received Dance Europe’s Director of the Year award in 2003 and 2006, and in 2010 he was awarded an OBE for his services to dance in The Queen’s New Year Honours list.

David Nixon CBE stepped down from his role as Artistic Director in Spring 2022, after 20 hugely successful years of artistic leadership. His successor Federico Bonelli, former Principal Dancer at The Royal Ballet, took up the position of Artistic Director in May 2022.

David Nixon CBE said:

“I am both thrilled and honoured to have been acknowledged in this very special Jubilee Queen’s honours with a CBE. I must thank all of you who have nominated me for this extraordinary award and to say that I share it with all of my colleagues with whom I have worked with at Northern Ballet over the past 21 years. This is as much an acknowledgment of their passion and commitment to our beloved art form of Ballet and narrative dance as it is of my personal achievement.”

**-ENDS-**

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**Notes to Editors**

**David Nixon CBE**

David Nixon was Artistic Director of Northern Ballet from 2001 to 2022.

David trained as a dancer, first in his home town of Chatham, Ontario and then at the [National Ballet School of Canada](https://www.nbs-enb.ca/Home) where his training began in earnest. It was during his time there that he first became interested in choreography, helping to revive a choreographic workshop with the approval of school director Betty Oliphant. After further training in Europe he returned to Canada to train with Erik Bruhn and the great Russian teacher, Eugene Valukin.

David’s career began at the [National Ballet of Canada](https://national.ballet.ca/Homepage) where he progressed rapidly through the ranks to become a Principal Dancer, dancing lead roles in the classical and contemporary repertoire. In 1985 he joined the [Deutsche Oper Ballet](https://www.deutscheoperberlin.de/en_EN) in Berlin as Principal Dancer where he won the Critics’ Award for Best Male Performance (1987) and continued to increase his own choreographic output. This included producing and directing a successful mixed programme, David Nixon’s Liaisons, at the [Hebbel Theatre](https://www.hebbel-am-ufer.de/en/), Berlin in 1990.

David left Berlin for a series of Principal Guest Artist positions with National Ballet of Canada, [Bayerisches Staatsballett](https://www.staatsoper.de/en/staatsballett.html), Munich and [Royal Winnipeg Ballet](https://www.rwb.org/) before returning to Deutsche Oper Ballet in 1994 as First Ballet Master. His Guest Artist credits also include: [Birmingham Royal Ballet](https://www.brb.org.uk/); [Komische Oper](https://www.komische-oper-berlin.de/); [Deutsche Staatsoper](https://www.staatsoper-berlin.de/de/); [Hamburg Ballet](https://www.hamburgballett.de/en/); and Sydney City Ballet.

In 1994 David became Artistic Director of [BalletMet](https://www.balletmet.org/) in Columbus, Ohio, USA. During his six years with the Company he added 16 world and 15 company premières to the repertoire.

After joining Northern Ballet, David added an impressive array of new works to the repertoire including: *Madame Butterfly* (nominated for an MEN Award); *Wuthering Heights*; *I Got Rhythm*; *Swan Lake*; *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (nominated for an Olivier Award and MEN Award); *Peter Pan*; *Dracula*; *The Three Musketeers* (winner of MEN Award and nominated for an Olivier Award); *A Sleeping Beauty Tale*; *The Nutcracker*; *Hamlet*; *Cleopatra*; *Beauty & the Beast*; *The Great Gatsby* (nominated for a National dance Award and UK Theatre Award); *Cinderella* (nominated for a Manchester Theatre Award); *The Little Mermaid* (winner of a BroadwayWorldUK Award); and several short works. His adaptation of *Dracula* became Northern Ballet's first performance to be broadcast live in cinemas on Halloween 2019.

David’s productions have been staged worldwide including Europe, Canada, the USA and South Africa. Most recently he reproduced *The Great Gatsby* for [West Australian Ballet](https://waballet.com.au/) in 2017.

In 2020, David’s choreography featured on primetime television on BBC One’s *The Greatest Dancer*.

David was voted Director of the Year by readers of Dance Europe in 2003 and 2006, and in 2018 was awarded the Ken McCarter Award for Distinguished National Ballet School Alumni by Canada’s National Ballet School.

Under his directorship Northern Ballet has also won several awards: Critics’ Circle National Dance Awards (Audience Award) 2004, 2005 and 2006; Critics’ Circle National Dance Awards (Patron’s Award) 2009; Taglioni European Ballet Awards (Best Company) 2014; South Bank Sky Arts Awards (Dance Award) 2016 for *1984* and 2020 for *Victoria*, UK Theatre Awards (Achievement in Dance) 2018. Northern Ballet has also been nominated for many prestigious awards: South Bank Sky Arts Awards (Dance Award) 2017 for *Jane Eyre*; UKTheatre Awards (Achievement in Dance) 2016; Critics’ Circle National Dance Awards (Outstanding Company) 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2021.

In January 2010 David was awarded an OBE for his services to dance in the Queen’s New Year Honours list.

**Northern Ballet**

Northern Ballet is one of the UK’s leading ballet companies and the widest touring ballet company in the UK. Bold and innovative in its approach, Northern Ballet is prolific at creating new full-length work with a unique blend of strong classical technique and impressive storytelling. Northern Ballet’s repertoire embraces popular culture and takes inspiration from literature, legend, opera and the classics, pushing the boundaries of what stories can be told through dance.

A champion for the cultural exports of the North, Leeds-based Northern Ballet is dedicated to bringing ballet to as many people and places as possible. Northern Ballet’s Company of dancers performs a combination of its full-length ballets and specially created ballets for children at more than 40 venues annually.

Launched in 2019, Northern Ballet’s digital dance platform ensures more people can access their work, from full-length films of popular ballets through to exciting short dance films by up-and-coming choreographers and filmmakers. Visit digitaldance.org to discover more.

For more details of Northern Ballet’s tour, on sale dates and booking information, please visit northernballet.com/whatson