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**NORTHERN BALLET PRESENTS
FEDERICO BONELLI'S FIRST SEASON AS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
2023/2024**

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- **TRIPLE BILL FEATURING A WORLD PREMIÈRE FROM TILER PECK AND UK PREMIÈRE FROM BENJAMIN ELLA PRESENTED ALONGSIDE HANS VAN MANEN'S *ADAGIO HAMMERKLAVIER* IN AUTUMN 2023.**
- **A RESTAGING OF NORTHERN BALLET'S LANDMARK PRODUCTION OF CHRISTOPHER GABLE CBE AND MASSIMO MORRICONE'S *ROMEO & JULIET*.**
- **A NEW CONTEMPORARY RESPONSE TO THE CLASSIC STORY OF *ROMEO & JULIET* FROM MTHUTHUZELI NOVEMBER FOR 2024.**
- **CHILDREN'S BALLET *TORTOISE & THE HARE* RETURNS IN AUTUMN 2023 FOR PERFORMANCES IN LEEDS AND LONDON BEFORE AN EXTENSIVE UK TOUR.**
- ***SKETCHES* A PROGRAMME DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CHOREOGRAPHIC VOICES LAUNCHES IN MAY 2023 FEATURING NEW WORK FROM COMPANY DANCERS AND LOCAL LEEDS-BASED ARTIST.**
- **THE COMPANY'S GROUNDBREAKING INCLUSIVE DANCE FESTIVAL, *EXPRESSIONS*, MARKS ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY WITH A PIONEERING NEW DANCE FILM BY BEN WRIGHT FEATURING NORTHERN BALLET DANCERS AND DISABLED DANCE ARTISTS FROM THEIR ABILITY COURSE, AND A PERFORMANCE FROM CANDOCO.**
- **NORTHERN BALLET LATE WILL SEE THE COMPANY OPEN UP THEIR BUILDING AFTER HOURS FOR A SERIES OF SPECIAL EVENTS FEATURING NEW WORK, PREVIEWS, FILMS AND DJS.**

- **THE COMPANY'S LEARNING TEAM WILL LAUNCH RISE & SHINE, A NEW INCLUSIVE DANCE PROJECT IN LOCAL SCHOOLS SUPPORTED BY PAUL HAMLYN FOUNDATION.**

Today, Northern Ballet announced their 2023/24 Season, the first under new Artistic Director Federico Bonelli.

Celebrating the breadth of the Company's work, Bonelli's new season presents stories that connect with people of all ages and backgrounds. From UK and world premières created by compelling new voices with fresh perspectives, to the revival of critically acclaimed classic repertoire - these are stories created in Leeds for a national stage.

Federico Bonelli, Artistic Director of Northern Ballet says: *"I am thrilled to present my first season as Artistic Director of Northern Ballet and to build upon the extraordinary work that has taken place before me, both on and off the stage.*

At Northern Ballet we tell stories that connect with people and for my first season I have invited some exciting young choreographers to Leeds, to create new stories and share their fresh and compelling perspectives with us. These are presented alongside the revivals of landmark productions that we will take across the country with the hope of introducing a whole new generation of people to the power and beauty of world-class ballet.

Touring is part of our DNA, however, I am incredibly proud of our place within the wider cultural landscape of Leeds and the North of England. This year, we're opening up our space and resources and looking forward to collaborating more closely and forging partnerships with our community, local artists and organisations throughout the North.

At the heart of everything we do is the belief that ballet has the power to have a significant impact on people's lives. From our pioneering dance film to our new schools pilot, I am incredibly proud of our commitment to developing and growing our work in inclusive dance, as we continue to challenge ourselves to help make our artform more accessible.

We remain fiercely committed to breaking down the barriers to our artform, building inclusive pathways for the next generation of creative voices and connecting audiences of every age, background and lived experience, throughout the country, with unforgettable stories and performances that are accessible to everyone."

In September, the company will present *Generations: Three Short Ballets*, a trio of contemporary pieces created by choreographers from across the generations. Curated by Bonelli, the triple bill will feature a world première from American ballet dancer and choreographer Tiler Peck - her first choreographic commission for a European ballet company; a UK première by emerging choreographer and Royal Ballet Soloist Benjamin Ella; and the contemporary classic *Adagio Hammerklavier* by Dutch master Hans van Manen – created 50 years ago, this year this will be the first time the piece has been performed by the Company. The mixed bill will be performed at the Stanley & Audrey Burton Theatre in Northern Ballet's home in Leeds (8-16 Sept) and at the Linbury Theatre in London (31 Oct - 2 Nov).

Tiler Peck says: *"It is an absolute honour to be creating a new work for Northern Ballet. I have always admired Federico's work and was humbled when he asked me if I would make a new commission for the company. This will be my first time choreographing for a European*

company and I am grateful for the opportunity to work with Northern Ballet's incredibly versatile dancers. I recently performed at Sadlers Wells and was overwhelmed by the support from audiences. I am very much looking forward to coming back to the UK and sharing a new work with them."

Benjamin Ella says: "I'm very excited about working with Northern Ballet and presenting this piece. I'm certainly quite new to this craft, but with these fresh eyes and an open mind I feel I have nothing to lose and just so much to learn and explore! I'm very grateful to Federico and Northern Ballet for giving me this wonderful opportunity."

For Spring 2024 Northern Ballet will restage their critically acclaimed production of Christopher Gable and Massimo Morricone's *Romeo & Juliet*. Breathing new life into this classic piece, Northern Ballet will work with members of the original creative team to bring this much-loved work back into repertoire and present it to audiences around the UK. Building on its tradition of storytelling, Northern Ballet has commissioned a contemporary response to *Romeo & Juliet* with a new work for 2024 from Olivier Award Winning South African choreographer Mthuthuzeli November. Mthuthuzeli returns to Northern Ballet after creating *Wailers* for the Company in 2022, this new work will be a storytelling ballet that takes inspiration from the well-known classic.

Northern Ballet provides for many, their first experience of world class ballet with their Ballets for Children, and Autumn 2023 will see the revival of Dreda Blow & Sebastian Loe's *Tortoise & the Hare*. Performed by members of the Company and accompanied by live music, the ballet will be performed at the Stanley and Audrey Burton Theatre in Leeds (dates TBA) before transferring to the Linbury Theatre, London (27 - 29 Jan), followed by a full UK tour in Spring 2024 (dates TBA).

Northern Ballet tours extensively throughout the country, reaching the largest possible audience. However, the Company remains an intrinsic part of the fabric of Leeds, Yorkshire and the North. Under Bonelli's artistic leadership, Northern Ballet will open up its home and resources, working more closely than ever before with local communities, artists and cultural organisations to help establish Leeds as a creative powerhouse in the North of England.

Northern Ballet champions, supports and guides artists at every stage of their careers, providing accessible pathways into training, developing home-grown artists and platforming national and international choreographic voices. In May, the Company will launch *Sketches*, a new choreographic development programme, which will build on the Company's previous Choreographic Labs. Devised by Bonelli, artists at different stages of their careers will have access to mentorship from leading choreographers to experiment with movement, ideas, and storytelling. Seven dancer-choreographers from the Company (Wesley Branch, Harris Beattie, Filippo Di Vilio, Katharine Lee, George Liang, Gavin McCaig and Bruno Serraclara) will work with mentors Mthuthuzeli November, Kenneth Tindall, and Sharon Watson MBE DL to develop new work which they will present to audiences for the very first time, alongside a piece by award-winning Leeds based artist Jamaal Burkmar.

In January 2024 Northern Ballet will launch Northern Ballet Late, a new series of after-hours informal ballet evenings at the Company's home in Leeds. The inaugural event will feature a special night of performances, a sneak preview of *Romeo & Juliet* alongside films, DJs, and a late-night bar.

The Company remains committed to growing their practice and expertise in participatory inclusive dance. In a Company first, dancers from Northern Ballet's Company and Ability, the Company's weekly dance course for adults with additional learning support needs, join forces in the world première of a pioneering new dance film, *Every Little Thing is a Change*. Created by renowned Director and Choreographer Ben Wright the film will première as part of Expressions, the Company's ground-breaking inclusive dance festival that celebrates the talents of disabled dancers from Yorkshire and beyond. The festival which marks its 10th anniversary will also feature I think we should start over by the world's foremost inclusive dance company, Candoco.

As part of their ongoing work in Yorkshire schools, Northern Ballet are launching a new inclusive dance project *Rise & Shine*. Supported by Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the project will see the Company pilot and develop inclusive dance in schools, encouraging and supporting children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities to progress their movement skills and creativity. Led by Northern Ballet Community Dance Artists alongside artists with lived experience of disability and specialist Music Therapists, the project will cover the full academic year with weekly sessions, culminating in the opportunity for the children to perform as part of the Expressions Festival in 2024.

Classic stories also returning are previously announced productions of David Nixon CBE's *Beauty & the Beast* and much-loved Christmas classic *The Nutcracker*. Set to a hand-picked score of classic music from the likes of Bizet and Debussy, played live by the Northern Ballet Sinfonia, *Beauty & the Beast* will embark on a national tour in Autumn 2023 (4 Oct - 9 June) whilst *The Nutcracker* returns to Leeds Grand Theatre for Christmas following sell out performances in 2022.

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**For further information please contact Kate Hassell at Bread and Butter PR or
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Listings

Sketches

Stanley & Audrey Burton Theatre, Leeds
5 May 2023

Expressions

Stanley & Audrey Burton Theatre, Leeds

12 –13 July 2023

Online release of *Every Little Thing is a Change* to be announced

Generations: Three Short Ballets

Stanley & Audrey Burton Theatre, Leeds

8 - 16 September 2023

Linbury Studio, Royal Opera House, London

31 Oct - 2 November 2023

Beauty & The Beast

Nottingham Theatre Royal

4 - 7 Oct 2023 ^[AD]

Newcastle Theatre Royal

7 - 11 Nov 2023 ^[AD]

Norwich Theatre Royal

21 - 25 Nov 2023 ^[AD]

Leeds Grand Theatre

4 - 9 Jun 2024 ^[AD]

The Nutcracker

Leeds Grand Theatre

29 Nov - 10 Dec 2023 ^[AD]

The Tortoise & The Hare

Stanley & Audrey Burton Theatre, Leeds

Dates to be announced

Linbury Studio, Royal Opera House, London

27 Jan - 29 Jan 2024

Northern Ballet Late

Stanley & Audrey Burton Theatre, Leeds

26 January 2024

Romeo & Juliet

Leeds Grand Theatre, Leeds

8 - 16 March 2024 ^[AD]

Sheffield Lyceum Theatre

2 - 6 April 2024 ^[AD]

Nottingham Theatre Royal

30 April - 4 May 2024 ^[AD]

Norwich Theatre Royal

14 - 18 May 2024 ^[AD]

Sadlers Wells, London

28 May - 1 June 2024 ^[AD]

^[AD] Audio Described performance available. For more information, please visit

northernballet.com/audio-described-performances