



ROYAL  
BALLET

JULY 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**KENNETH MACMILLAN : A NATIONAL CELEBRATION**  
**THE ROYAL BALLET, BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET, ENGLISH**  
**NATIONAL BALLET, NORTHERN BALLET, SCOTTISH BALLET AND**  
**YORKE DANCE PROJECT SHARE THE COVENT GARDEN STAGES**  
**TO CELEBRATE A CHOREOGRAPHIC MASTER**

Tuesday 10 October – Wednesday 1 November

Tickets £4 - £70 [roh.org.uk](http://roh.org.uk)

This October, in a landmark festival celebrating the vision, influence and legacy of **Kenneth MacMillan**, **The Royal Ballet** will be joined by **Birmingham Royal Ballet**, **English National Ballet**, **Northern Ballet** and **Scottish Ballet** and **Yorke Dance Project** to perform in tribute to the genius of this ground-breaking choreographer.

**Kevin O'Hare**, Director of The Royal Ballet, said: "Kenneth created a new language and possibilities for dance. His influence reached far beyond the ballets he created for The Royal Ballet and that's why it's so exciting to be able to invite these companies to celebrate his work here at the Royal Opera House."

Across a variety of evenings, each company will perform one of Kenneth MacMillan's one-act masterpieces: The Royal Ballet presents *The Judas Tree*, his final creation for the Company and his most controversial. Drawing upon themes which occupied MacMillan throughout his career- the cruelty of the mob, fear and sexual violence- in a potent dance-drama. *Concerto*

is performed by Birmingham Royal Ballet. Created in 1966, and set to *Piano Concerto No.2* by **Shostakovich**, it is an example of the pure precision and energy with which he imbued his early work.

Kenneth MacMillan's enduring masterpiece *Song of the Earth* is performed by English National Ballet. Created in 1965 for **Stuttgart Ballet**, the work explores the themes of love, death and renewal, setting a simple narrative to **Mahler's** haunting *Das Lied von der Erde*. Northern Ballet perform *Gloria*, a piece inspired by **Vera Brittain's** *Testament of Youth*. This deeply moving memoir of wartime bereavement resonated profoundly with MacMillan, who lost his father at the Battle of the Somme, and went on to create this ballet as a poignant and timeless reflection on the futility of conflict. *Le Baiser de la fée* (*The Fairy's Kiss*) will be performed by Scottish Ballet, in a new production designed by **Gary Harris**. This work explores the perpetual dilemma of the artist; the sacrifice of ordinary happiness in service of the muse. Set to a score by **Stravinsky** and inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's *The Ice Maiden*, this ballet incorporates a psychological darkness which has since become synonymous with Kenneth MacMillan's work.

Performed by dancers from all five companies, *Elite Syncopations* is a light-hearted, vaudeville-inspired dance tapestry, marrying social dances of the 1920s with virtuoso classical ballet in an unforgettable spectacle. Featuring on-stage musicians and set to a ragtime score of music by composers including **Scott Joplin**, *Elite Syncopations* incorporates characters as loud as their costumes, and is one of MacMillan's wittiest works.

The celebrations also include performances of two rarely seen short ballets, *Sea of Troubles* (performed by **Yorke Dance Project**), and *Jeux*, created by **Wayne Eagling** and inspired by MacMillan's reconstruction of **Vaslav Nijinsky's** lost 1913 ballet (performed by The Royal Ballet). Additionally, *Kenneth MacMillan: a National Celebration* incorporates a series of special *Insights*, exploring his choreographic legacy and boundary-pushing vision in

detail, with contributions from some of his closest collaborators and the custodians of his extraordinary work.

Birmingham Royal Ballet's Director, **David Bintley**, said: "Kenneth MacMillan was, without a doubt, one of the greatest choreographers of the 20th century, and his works continue to influence and enhance the repertory of Birmingham Royal Ballet, and other companies all around the world. This collaboration between the UK's five leading ballet companies really marks the significant impact that Kenneth's work has made upon our art form, and is a fitting tribute to his extraordinary life."

**Tamara Rojo**, Artistic Director of English National Ballet adds: "I am so pleased that next season we are able to present the masterpiece *Song of the Earth* in this anniversary year of Kenneth MacMillan. This incredibly moving work is a wonderful vehicle for the extremely talented dancers of English National Ballet, and I can't wait for audiences to see them perform it as part of this celebration."

Artistic Director of Northern Ballet **David Nixon** said: "I can think of no more generous, nor truly celebratory way of honouring the brilliance and legacy of Sir Kenneth MacMillan than bringing all the ballet companies together on the Royal Opera House stage. It demonstrates a brilliant vision on the part of Kevin O'Hare and thanks to this opportunity and the generosity of Lady MacMillan, Northern Ballet is also able to present its own triple bill of Sir Kenneth's work; a moment of history making for the company."

Scottish Ballet CEO/Artistic Director **Christopher Hampson** reflects: "It is thrilling for Scotland's national dance company to revive *Le Baiser de la fée*, an early work showing the prodigious talents to come from one of our most cherished choreographers. Returning this work to the stage of the Royal Opera House also marks our debut on this iconic stage. We are delighted to be involved in celebrating the life and work of Kenneth MacMillan alongside The Royal Ballet and others. Reviving this formative work will allow generations to come to better understand MacMillan's journey from a nurtured, young

choreographer to becoming the 20th century's most iconic storyteller through dance.”

-- ENDS--

Generous philanthropic support from Sarah and Lloyd Dorfman, Richard and Delia Baker, The Fonteyn Circle and The Royal Opera House Endowment Fund

## NOTES TO EDITORS:

### Programme One

*Concerto* (Birmingham Royal Ballet) / *Le Baiser de la fée* (Scottish Ballet) / *Elite Syncopations* (The Royal Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet, English National Ballet, Northern Ballet, Scottish Ballet)

Wednesday 18 October, Thursday 19 October at 7.30pm

**Conductors:** Paul Murphy, Tom Seligman

### Programme Two

*The Judas Tree* (The Royal Ballet) / *Song of the Earth* (English National Ballet)

Tuesday 24 October and Wednesday 1 November at 7.30pm

**Conductors:** Koen Kessels, Gavin Sutherland

### Programme Three

*Gloria* (Northern Ballet) / *The Judas Tree* (The Royal Ballet) / *Elite Syncopations* (The Royal Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Northern Ballet, Scottish Ballet)

Thursday 26 October and Friday 27 October at 7.30pm

**Conductors:** Tom Seligman, Koen Kessels, with accompaniment from the Royal Opera Chorus

## CLORE STUDIO UPSTAIRS

*Jeux* (Artists of The Royal Ballet)

Wednesday 18 October, Thursday 19 October and Tuesday 24 October at 6.30pm

***Sea of Troubles* (Yorke Dance Project)**

Thursday 26 October, Friday 27 October and Wednesday 1 November at 6.30pm

**Box Office:**

0207 304 4000

[www.roh.org.uk](http://www.roh.org.uk)

Tickets £4 - £70

#ROHmacmillan

**CONCERTO**

Choreography	Kenneth MacMillan
Music	Dmitry Shostakovich
Designer	Jürgen Rose
Lighting designer	John B. Read

**ELITE SYNCOPATIONS**

Choreography	Kenneth MacMillan
Music	Scott Joplin / other ragtime composers
Costume designer	Ian Spurling
Lighting designer	William Bundy
Revival lighting designer	John B. Read

**GLORIA**

Choreography	Kenneth MacMillan
Music	Francis Poulenc
Designer	Andy Klunder
Lighting designers	Bill Besant and John B. Read

**LE BAISER DE LA FÉE**

Choreography	Kenneth MacMillan
Music	Igor Stravinsky

Designer Gary Harris  
Lighting designer George Thomson

### **THE JUDAS TREE**

Choreography Kenneth MacMillan  
Music Brian Elias  
Designer Jock McFadyen  
Lighting designer Mark Henderson

### **SONG OF THE EARTH**

Choreography Kenneth MacMillan  
Music Gustav Mahler  
Designer Nicholas Georgiadis  
Lighting designer John B. Read

### **CLORE STUDIO UPSTAIRS**

#### **JEUX**

Choreography Wayne Eagling, after Kenneth MacMillan  
and Vaslav Nijinsky  
Music Claude Debussy

#### **SEA OF TROUBLES**

Choreography Kenneth MacMillan  
Music Anton Webern and Bohuslav Martinů  
Designer Deborah MacMillan  
Lighting realization Adrian Plaut

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