

21-29 Feb 2020

Isadora Now: A Triple Bill

Viviana Durante Company

'Don't

let

them

tame

you'

Isadora Duncan

barbican



Welcome

Welcome to the Barbican for this exciting new production, *Isadora Now* by Viviana Durante Company. The centre-piece of our 2020 annual theme *Inside Out*, which looks at the relationship between our inner lives and creativity, this triple bill is a celebration of the fearless feminist icon Isadora Duncan, performed by an all-female ensemble. We warmly welcome Viviana Durante and rising-star Joy Alpuerto Ritter who choreographs the finale – a world premiere and Barbican co-commission with specially composed live music by Lih Qun Wong – as well as all the talented dancers, as we consider Isadora's legacy and how she continues to inspire new generations of artists and audiences.

We hope you enjoy the show.

Toni Racklin

Head of Theatre and Dance

On behalf of Viviana Durante Company, I warmly welcome you to *Isadora Now*.

Isadora Duncan was a pioneer of modern dance, an outsider who spurned the conventions and gendered roles of classical ballet and insisted on a woman's right to express herself physically on her own terms. She was not trying to be brave or radical, though she was both, but simply demanded to be allowed to be herself.

Over time, her story was reshaped to cast her as the fallen woman who died as sensationally as she lived, strangled by her own scarf on the French Riviera. Our starting point was to rediscover Isadora the artist, whose quicksilver variety of expression and ability to summon pure feeling from music entranced her contemporaries and still influences the way we think about dance today.

We begin with Isadora's own *Dance of the Furies*, which retains a primal power after more than a century. Her profound influence on classical ballet is represented by Frederick Ashton's *Five Brahms Waltzes in the Manner of Isadora Duncan*, created fifty-five years after he fell under her spell as a teenager. Finally, we present the world premiere of a new work by Joy Alpuerto Ritter, which draws inspiration from Isadora while remaining, as Isadora would have wanted, entirely her own.

We are delighted to return to the Barbican and are grateful to Toni Racklin and her team for their generous support.

Viviana Durante

Artistic Director, Viviana Durante Company



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Isadora Now: Triple Bill

Viviana Durante Company

21 — 29 Feb 2020

Dance of the Furies

Original choreography by **Isadora Duncan**
restaged by **Barbara Kane** and **Viviana Durante**

Music **Orfeo ed Euridice** by
Christoph Willibald Gluck

NBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by **Arturo Toscanini**, **Nan Merriman** and **The Robert Shaw Chorale**. RCA Red Seal, 2017.

Dancers:

Begoña Cao
Christina Cecchini
Nikita Goile
Charmene Pang
Serena Zaccagnini

Five Brahms Waltzes in the Manner of Isadora Duncan

Choreography **Frederick Ashton**

Dancer **Viviana Durante**

Piano **Anna Geniushene**

Repetiteur **Camille Andriot**

Costume **David Dean**

Music **Waltzes, Opus 39 (1865): Nos 1, 2, 8, 10, 13, 15** by **Johannes Brahms**

Five Brahms Waltzes in the Manner of Isadora Duncan is just one of over one hundred works created by Frederick Ashton (1904-1988). The Frederick Ashton Foundation, a registered charity, working independently of, but in close association with The Royal Ballet, exists to enrich the legacy of Frederick Ashton and his ballets.

For further information visit:

www.frederickashton.org.uk

Unda

Choreography **Joy Alpuerto Ritter**

Original music composed and performed by
Lih Qun Wong

Dancers:

Begoña Cao
Christina Cecchini
Nikita Goile
Charmene Pang
Joy Alpuerto Ritter
Serena Zaccagnini

Creative team

Artistic Director **Viviana Durante**

Producers **Farooq Chaudhry** and **Viviana Durante**

Set Design **Fabiana Piccoli** and **Marie Cantenys**

Studio, with the participation of **Margaux Lalanne**

Costumes **Marie Cantenys Studio**, with the

participation of **Margaux Lalanne**

Lighting Design **Fabiana Piccoli**

Sound Design **Fred DeFaye**

Production Manager **John Valente**

Stage Manager **Sarah Seymour**

Lighting Technician **Douglas Finlay**

Wigs **Janey Gage**

Scenic painter **Tony Fleming**

Production photography **David Scheinmann**

Ballet class teacher **Alessandra Masoera**

Masseur **Wilson Wong**

Floor **British Harlequin**

Water equipment **Brandwacht en Meijer BV**

General Manager **Nigel Cliff**

Project Manager **Gabriel Szalontai**

Legal **Irving David** for **DWFM Beckman**

Accountancy **Julian Flitter** for **Goodman Jones**

Presented by the Barbican

Unda by Joy Alpuerto Ritter co-commissioned by Viviana Durante Company and the Barbican

1 hour 10 mins/including an interval

Events

Post-show talk **Thu 27 Feb**

Production acknowledgments

Principal Sponsors

This production was made possible with the generous support of:

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and others unnamed

Special thanks to

Toni Racklin
Dorée Seligmann
Barbara Kane
and **Mark Baldwin**

Thanks to

Leanne Cosby
Angela Dias
Patricia Doyle
Chiara Galvan
Su-Man Hsu
Dickson Mbi
Juncal Roman Pastor
Anthony Russell Roberts
Thanh Thi Tran and Genevieve Tawiah
at Physio ED
Freddie Todd Fordham

Programme acknowledgements:
programme compiled and edited by Emma Gosden;
design by Clare Nicholson.

With special thanks to Dorée Seligmann, Nigel Cliff,
Viviana Durante and Joy Alpuerto Ritter.

Part of Inside Out

A year exploring the relationship between our inner lives
and creativity.

Throughout 2020, Inside Out will showcase the work of
artists who have found pioneering ways to articulate their
innermost thoughts, feelings and desires, and how this can
help us to better understand ourselves and empathise with
each other's experience of the world.

The programme will interrogate themes such as identity,
self-expression and how we shape our private selves in a
world in which we are more socially connected than ever.
It will highlight courageous artists and individuals who have
challenged society's definition of them, including those
that have found ways to express themselves during times
of censorship.

Viviana Durante Company

Viviana Durante Company brings together the finest artists
to create innovative dance theatre programmes for a wide
audience. We embrace a broad variety of dance, reviving
rarely seen classics as well as commissioning new work
from today's most exciting choreographers. By working
with a diverse pool of dancers, we enable them to expand
their repertoire. Our mission is to enrich the range of
dance works available to British audiences, inspiring and
illuminating newcomers as well as enthusiasts, by curating
masterworks of the future in dialogue with those of the past.
For further details visit www.vivianadurante.com

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Isadora Duncan

by Dorée Seligmann

Isadora Duncan, a woman, independent, mother, artist, and thinker, changed the course of society, theatre, fashion, art and, of course, dance simply through her own life and work. She did not do this by accident, she set out early on with purpose and ideas. Rodin would call her 'the greatest woman the world has ever known.' Her reach was vast, from royalty and the elite, to the intelligentsia and the working classes, to big cities and rural towns. For those who saw her on stage, she was unforgettable.

She inspired multitudes of artists and influenced trends for the ages. But she was also an early and powerful example of an emancipated woman who inspired girls to take charge of their own bodies and destinies.

Isadora lived her life without apology. She defied social norms, loved both men and women, had children on her own terms, dressed and acted as she pleased. Her appetite for life was great and she lived it large for all to see. Even today women are still brutally criticised for much less. Isadora broke barriers, and indeed felt it was her right to do so, becoming a cultural icon and the embodiment of a free spirit.

It is hard to comprehend what was in the mind of a young girl from California in the late 1800s to so boldly take agency over her own creativity and life.

The Duncan home was a highly unconventional environment to grow up in. From an early age Isadora was awash in art, music, words, singing, and theatre. Her mother, Dora Gray Duncan, deeply unsatisfied with her marriage, took the unfathomable step for the time to divorce her husband. A newly-minted single mother, she courageously set out to raise her four children alone. She instilled in them the notion of endless possibilities. All the Duncan children were teachers and artists and helped supplement their mother's income by teaching dance and staging performances: Elizabeth, the eldest, was a dancer and teacher; Augustin, the actor and director would spend his life in the theatre; and Raymond the philosopher/poet practised his actionism in a wide array of artistic and social activities. And then there was Isadora, born in 1877, the youngest, whose talent was *sui generis* – a genius who made dance her medium. She began dancing barefoot on the sands of the Pacific coast and the movement of the sea would inspire her throughout her life.

The Duncans were a fun, charming, and witty clan. There was a wonderful undercoating of joy in their lives. That joy freed them from worrying what others thought and allowed them not to take themselves too seriously or to suffer fools. Being with the Duncans meant never having a dull moment: the conversation was always sparkling, and the free exchange of ideas ensured there was always fervent debate. And if there was no dancing that evening, there was certainly singing and always plenty of music.

It became clear to Dora that her children would have a much better chance to fully thrive if they left the socially restrictive United States. Soon they all found themselves in Europe. In London, Paris, Berlin, and Athens, Isadora and Raymond would dance in the early mornings in parks and ruins, and scour the museums and libraries in the afternoons, sketching and studying Grecian art. They both sought out and were in turn sought by the artists, writers, scientists, and philosophers of the time.

In a few short years Isadora took Europe by storm, and her performances sold out. She was the template for the first 'rock star' and quickly became one of the most famous Americans in Europe. Crowds would rush out, forming mobs on the streets to see her; in Germany students took the place of the horses they unhitched from her carriage to pull her like a queen through the streets.

So much of what she did was new and different, and unsurprisingly, it was met with constant opposition. This did not deter her, instead it spurred her on. Her dance movements presented a new vocabulary (the critics would ask if it could even legitimately be considered dance), and her body – completely untethered and free in flowing tunics – with bare legs, arms, and feet (then the critics questioned her morality). She danced, not to 'dance music' but to great classical music played by orchestras and accomplished musicians (some critics and some of the musicians themselves claimed the music was diminished by her dance); she also danced to compositions by emerging composers, ancient music, and even the spoken word. Her stage sets consisted of floor-to-ceiling light blue drapes, blue rugs, with lighting illuminating her form and creating space in shadows and light (in sharp contrast to the heavily costumed and ornate sets of ballets and plays of the day). She was hounded by imposed scandal her entire life because she danced young, she danced pregnant and, of course, most horrifyingly of all to her critics she danced while no longer young and an ingénue.



Isadora Duncan

Going wildly against convention, Isadora developed a completely new dance, first inspired by nature and later grounded in philosophy.

I spent long days and nights in the studio seeking that dance which might be the divine expression of the human spirit through the medium of the body's movement. For hours I would stand quite still, my two hands folded between my breasts, covering the solar plexus. My mother often became alarmed to see me remain for such long intervals quite motionless as if in a trance — but I was seeking and finally discovered the central spring of all movement, the crater of motor power, the unity from which all diversities of movements are born, the mirror of vision for the creation of the dance [My Life]

Isadora's dance evolved over the course of her life but remained experimental throughout. The evolution of her work can be classified as first lyrical (1877-1903), then theatrical (1903-1913), and later, subsequent to the devastating accident that caused the death of her two children and the general suffering that came with the wars of the time, as heroic (1913-1927). Her repertoire included Strauss, Chopin, Schubert, Brahms, Bach, Gluck, Wagner, Liszt, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, and Scriabin.

Isadora often concluded her performances with a speech explaining her theory of Dance while also seeking funds and support for her schools. She envisioned schools filled with girls who would find and internalise the freedom of dance that would later enable them to create a better, more beautiful world.

My intention is, in due time, to found a school, to build a theatre where a hundred little girls shall be trained in my art, which they, in their turn, will better. In this school I shall not teach the children to imitate my movements, but to make their own. I shall not force them to study certain definite movements; I shall help them to develop those movements that are natural to them. [The Dance of the Future 1903.]

Isadora's first school opened in Grunewald in Germany, in 1904 with her sister Elizabeth in charge. The top pupils, later known as the Isadorables (Anna, Irma, Maria-Teresa, Lisa, Gretel, Erica), would perform and teach. Elizabeth would found her own school in Darmstadt and elsewhere, but Isadora's school in Bellevue outside of Paris would be short-lived, interrupted by World War One. Remarkably, in 1921 she was invited to create a school on a grand scale in Russia: Anatoly Lunacharsky, the Russian Commissar of Education and no ordinary bureaucrat, cabled Isadora, 'COME TO

MOSCOW. WE WILL GIVE YOU YOUR SCHOOL AND A THOUSAND CHILDREN. YOU MAY CARRY OUT YOUR IDEA ON A BIG SCALE.' Isadora, along with Irma, would open the school later that year. On her return to Moscow in 1924 Isadora was greeted by the dramatic scene of 500 children in red tunics. They were the children of workers who had been taught dance by the pupils of the Duncan School. Inspired by this, Isadora would then devote herself to composing dances specifically for her pupils.

While her own dances to Scriabin's music expressed the sufferings and anger of a mature woman, such as the harvest and hunger dances inspired by the famine in the Volga region; for the girls, Isadora chose a group of revolutionary songs. These dances while often harsh and sad in subject matter, shared a theme of hope and ultimate triumph over adversity. In the decades to come, dancers of social commentary and political protest would look to Isadora's work for inspiration [Life Into Art: Isadora Duncan and Her World]

It was in 1903, when challenged by critics to explain her dance, that Isadora gave a lecture on 'The Dance of the Future' at the Berlin Press Society. Once printed, it became a manifesto for modern dance and feminism.

She begins:

The movement of waves, of winds, of the earth is ever in the same lasting harmony. We do not stand on the beach and inquire of the ocean what was its movement in the past and what will be its movement in the future. We realize that the movement peculiar to its nature is eternal to its nature. The movement of the free animals and birds remains always in correspondence to their nature, the necessities and wants of that nature, and its correspondence to the earth nature. It is only when you put free animals under restrictions that they lose the power-of moving in harmony with nature and adopt a movement expressive of the restrictions placed about them. ...the dance of the future will have to become again a high religious art, as it was with the Greeks. For art which is not religious is not art, it is merchandise....

And she concludes:

The dancer of the future will be one whose body and soul have grown so harmoniously together that the natural language of that soul will have become the movement of the body. The dancer will not belong to a nation but to all humanity. She will dance not in the form of nymph, nor fairy, nor coquette, but in the form of woman in her greatest and purest expression. She will realize the mission

of woman's body and the holiness of all its parts. She will dance the changing life of nature, showing how each part is transformed into the other. From all parts of her body shall shine radiant intelligence, bringing to the world the message of the thoughts and aspirations of thousands of women. She shall dance the freedom of woman.
[The Dance of the Future 1903.]

Dance of the Furies: Gluck, Orfeo ed Euridice

Isadora's *Furies* marks a pivotal point in Isadora's dance and modern dance in general; here the movements were not meant to be pleasant or pleasing, but rather weighty and ugly. Isadora was familiar with Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* since her mother often played it on the piano, but it was not until 1911 that Isadora would complete the opera with the *Dance of the Furies* – first performed at the Théâtre du Châtelet Paris. 'Her portrayal of the damned and demonic Furies was unlike any dance seen on stage before. Sweeping the stage with her hair, clawing the air with contorted fingers, mouthing unutterable screams, vainly writhing in hideously reptilian postures, she was repulsive to behold, the personification of impotent evil. This was dance at its ugliest – a terrifying portrayal of the dark side of soul. This was Modern Dance, unafraid of the reality. Even the once uncertain American audiences appreciated her work.' [Life Into Art: Isadora Duncan And Her World]

All their [the Furies] movements express tremendous force under constraint, conveying a sense of greater inner than outer speed...The characteristic style of the modern dance, with a stress on tension and the overcoming of resistance, made its first fledged appearance in the Dance of the Furies. [Frederika Blair, Isadora]

© Dorée Seligmann, February 2020

Dorée Duncan Seligmann is the grand niece of Isadora Duncan. After stints in the arts, notably theatre in Paris, she earned a degree in Anthropology from Harvard and a PhD in Computer Science from Columbia. Her work focused on merging art, technology, and the human experience – culminating in over 85 patents. Now a sommelier in NYC, she creates alcoholic sorbets. Her book, *Life Into Art: Isadora Duncan and Her World* (with Cynthia Splatt and Carol Pratt) chronicles Isadora's life with over 250 family images.

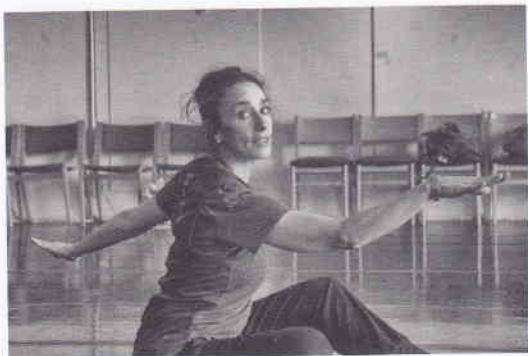
Books quoted in this article include *My Life* by Isadora Duncan (first published 1927); *Life Into Art: Isadora Duncan and Her World* by Dorée Seligmann, Cynthia Splatt and Carol Pratt (first published 1993); *Isadora: Portrait of the Artist as a Woman* by Frederika Blair (first published 1987).

In Conversation:

Viviana Durante and Joy Alpuerto Ritter introduce *Isadora Now*

***Isadora Now*: where did the idea come from, and why 'now'?**

VD: In today's dance world, there's such a focus on dancers being athletes, on the physicality of dance. That can be wonderful in its way, but it can also distract us from where the movement really comes from – from the soul – and what it actually means to dance, that joy of dancing. That was what Isadora Duncan was about, and why she's still so relevant now. I wanted to remind people of this, by exploring Isadora's influence and her legacy today.



Viviana Durante

Can you describe the programme?

VD: We're presenting three pieces in chronological order; *Isadora* is the thread throughout, but the pieces are deliberately quite different.

I wanted to start by bringing back Isadora's own work, to try to recapture what it was that stirred so many people when she expressed herself in seemingly natural movement, from her soul outward. Isadora made *Dance of the Furies* in 1911 as a solo; it was then performed as a threesome and expanded further by later Isadora dancers under the guidance of the Isadorables (students of Isadora). I've now restaged it with Barbara Kane, who studied with the pupils of Isadora Duncan and their pupils and passes on the tradition. This is Isadora at her most dramatic and dance at its ugliest, unfazed by expressing dark realities – yet in the end seduced, as we all are, by the beauty of music.

We then go forward to the 1970s, and Frederick Ashton's *Five Brahms Waltzes in the Manner of Isadora Duncan*. Fred was mesmerised by Isadora when he saw her as a teenager. The piece captures the contrasting light, lyrical side of Isadora. It reminds us of the influence she had on ballet as well as, more obviously, as a founder of modern dance.

And finally, we move to the present day, with Joy creating her own reflection on what Isadora means now, how she feels about Isadora and her legacy as a woman.

JAR: In my piece we have six dancers – including me – with a musician/composer. It has been interesting to watch the older, original pieces in order to inspire me with what I can take from them and what I can transform into my own.

VD: For the *Dance of the Furies* we have recorded music, for the Ashton there'll be a brilliant young pianist on stage and for Joy's piece there'll be original music created and performed by Lih Qun Wong. Isadora took her musical inspiration wherever she found it, not caring for what was accepted. I want the stage to be completely open, to give a sense of Isadora liberating herself, getting rid of clutter.

JAR: It was important for us to keep the essence of Isadora in all the pieces, but in different colours. You're shown different perspectives of her.

Why is performing at the Barbican, or in London, significant – and is it good to be back, Viviana?

VD: I love the Barbican. I love the family, the diversity, the energy of the place. I can't imagine it being anywhere else: I find it so inspiring.

JAR: I am happy to be able to work as a choreographer in London, as I have been dancing a lot for other companies, including Akram Khan. To be able to present my own choreographic work with Viviana Durante Company and for the Barbican – my first time dancing and choreographing here – is a great opportunity and an exciting challenge.

Could you describe Duncan's technique and how you approach recreating it, particularly *Dance of the Furies*?

VD: Isadora was very in touch with nature. She saw her dancing as recovering the natural principles of motion, which is why Greek culture fascinated her. Movements come from within, not from the outside: an expression of thought is portrayed through physical movement. She wasn't afraid of gravity. She met life head on and expressed it in all its ecstasy and tragedy, trying to turn it into universal feeling. That's what can get lost in ballet, when we can be so stressed about physicality and comparing ourselves to athletes. But we are not athletes – we are artists. With Isadora, the meaning comes from within and goes into the step.

We're all reading a lot about Isadora Duncan in rehearsals, and Joy sends us Isadora quotes every morning!

JAR: It was interesting to research Isadora Duncan's life and philosophy and connect to her a hundred years later as a woman with a totally different background and ethnicity. I always have a dialogue in my head about who I am as a woman, a choreographer and dancer – and who she is, in order to make decisions about how I choreograph the piece and what style I take. What would Isadora do? What would I do? Can we find an agreement? There are parts where we are different, and others where I can really connect to her. That was quite a challenge in the beginning, but then I tried to follow my intuition and trust myself and her influence on me to find the things that feel right.

Her way of moving and her life itself was quite tragic, but also beautiful and intense. That gave me hints to how I could create the piece. Although it's beautiful and light, there is also a lot of darkness and struggle. I needed to create that dramaturgy for this piece.

VD: I worked with Barbara Kane a lot before we started. With her lifelong experience of Duncan dancing, she introduced me to Isadora's style. *Dance of the Furies* was my choice from Isadora's work because it grabbed my attention: the music and drama of it, experiencing these kinds of movements which come from feelings of frustration, anger or joy. Like all Isadora's dances it's been passed on, not written down, so we have the freedom to make it our own – which is very much what Isadora wanted for her dancers. Then we go to the softness of Ashton's Isadora, and Joy's new work. We're not imposing who Isadora was, which would go against what she stood for. I like to leave a gap for the audience to interpret what they're watching, to make their own connections.

How far reaching is Duncan's influence in modern dance, and for female dancers?

VD: She was the pioneer of contemporary dance, she started the whole thing.

JAR: She was the first one dancing barefoot, no tights, showing her bare legs. She really believed in this kind of free spirit and she initiated it in her art. That message moved on until many were inspired by the same philosophy.

VD: She was so aware of her body and the sensual feeling of the body, of the skin.

JAR: She was very confident in who she was as a woman. Nobody was able to tell her how to move – she could move how she wanted and how she felt, and that's the special thing about Isadora. Nowadays, women are

more confident about who they are, how they look, in dance and in general.

VD: Her influence was also in having a voice. She felt it was her right to express herself, and that's reflected today in what's happening to women's voices. We are celebrating freedom of expression. This is not a political piece: we are celebrating the enjoyment of being a woman and being heard.

JAR: Isadora was never political, but by her being she influenced the politics of art.

What began this collaboration between you?

VD: My co-producer Farooq Chaudhry suggested Joy to me, and I saw her in a piece, she was amazing. The way she moved reflected exactly how I wanted this show to finish.

JAR: Farooq has been guiding me as a choreographer and dancer. It was interesting for me as I have more of a ballet background. I started with ballet and Philippian folk dance, but I needed to do something else to liberate myself. I went into urban dance in which I found my freedom. It inspired my form of freestyle improvisation: I just listen to the music and dance. Ballet was my beginning and base; it's very technical, and it is a part of me. I still love ballet and take class.

In this piece, we work with ballet dancers and contemporary dancers with different backgrounds to find their own voices, but also gather them as a group. I give them my material and we see how it works, whether it represents them as women and also as a community celebrating Isadora's philosophy.

VD: I liked the idea of bringing classical and contemporary dancers together. We're quite different in approach. As a classical dancer, the fact that Isadora didn't like classical ballet is interesting and challenging – trying to understand her spirit and transform it to me has been quite a journey. My piece is Frederick Ashton's interpretation of Isadora, which is still playing with classicism but with a freedom of movement that I love.

It's fascinating seeing these different genres coming together; even down to the way we warm up in the morning. We do classical class, and some of the other dancers also need to do a different kind of movement in order to warm up. For myself, I need to do what I do in order to go into this other world.

Viviana, how does it feel to be approaching your first solo performance in a decade?

VD: It only works if I don't *think* about going back on stage! It's almost a reflection of what happened when I was six and did my first show in my little school in Italy. I was on the stage and I came off because my tutu was so tight that I felt I was suffocating, and my mum helped me backstage. Without thinking I just went back on and carried on dancing. And then it happened again when I was 19 and had to replace the principal dancer in the Royal Ballet production of *Swan Lake* – I wasn't even covering the piece and hadn't learnt the role. Anthony Dowell, who was director at the time, asked me go on, and I quickly said, 'Yes! I can carry on with the show!'

For various reasons on a recent show, my company board members asked me to go back on stage. My husband thought they were crazy – though he really wanted me to – but without thinking, I said yes. I'd not done very much in the intervening time – I'd been training, but not rehearsing – and yet I was on stage within three days. The choreographer, Javier De Frutos, was great and completely ignored the fact that I had been off for ten years. He never went to that place – we just worked and did it.

Coming back after ten years was quite traumatic – it's not just your body reacting differently, it's your mind as well. But once I'd got the bug back, I looked forward to dancing in *Isadora Now*, which is all about freedom of expression and is not so constricted by technique.

If I'd thought about it too much, I might not have gone ahead with it. Doubt and negativity creep in.

Joy, what is your choreographic process?

JAR: I've been watching Viviana's solo, and the Ashton choreography, and her process. Watching the *Furies* was very helpful, to find out where it came from.

We use the powerful element of water as inspiration. It was a big part of Isadora's life. The ocean was an inspiration, as were nature and wind, and water also killed her own children (they both drowned). There are parts in the piece where the movements reflect the ocean, the waves, always moving, coming back. I thought, if she was inspired by the water, how does it inspire me? How can we connect? What does she feel when she dances on the ocean? She had traumatic experiences we cannot even imagine – how can I express those emotions and images in dance?

I also look back at pictures – there's no recording of Isadora dancing, but we have many pictures of her. I tried to feel those images and connect them with my own

interpretation. I also look at her, and I have that sense in my piece of looking at statues or Isadora's images, and then really going through spiritual waves, water, life, and that transforms into a cycle, into the earth, and from there it resurrects. For me, even though her traumatic experiences were ongoing, she still believed in her art. She had students, and her legacy and philosophy continued after everything that happened to her. There was a sense of the future. That had an impact on the future of dance. And nowadays, the empowerment of women, of female dancers, was the message I wanted to put in my piece. It's a childlike feeling, she experiences her senses in a very pure way.



VD: I love the fact she did so much charity work. She was expressing her feelings, she wanted to talk to the world, and involve people around her. She had a great love for children, I share that with her. The worst tragedy that could happen to

a woman is losing her children. The compassion she had for other people and children was quite amazing. It's good to celebrate that spirit, not just remember her personal difficulties and tragedies.

JAR: The lightness she has in her dance doesn't mean that it's easy. Even though we say it is light and it's freedom, it's our own physicality, which is not always easy to achieve if you've had a different training. It's just another view of where it starts.

VD: I've been working a lot on that. It's been quite a process through my career of trying to understand that the movement is not just the arm coming up – I was never about that anyway – but it's the intensity of trying to understand it. This programme is a celebration, really. We are not trying to be Isadora, we are celebrating her spirit, her courage, her strength as a woman, her courage to go on. I'd like to have met Isadora. We like her, we stand with what she stood for.

Isadora Duncan. Photo © Alamy Stock Photo

Viviana Durante

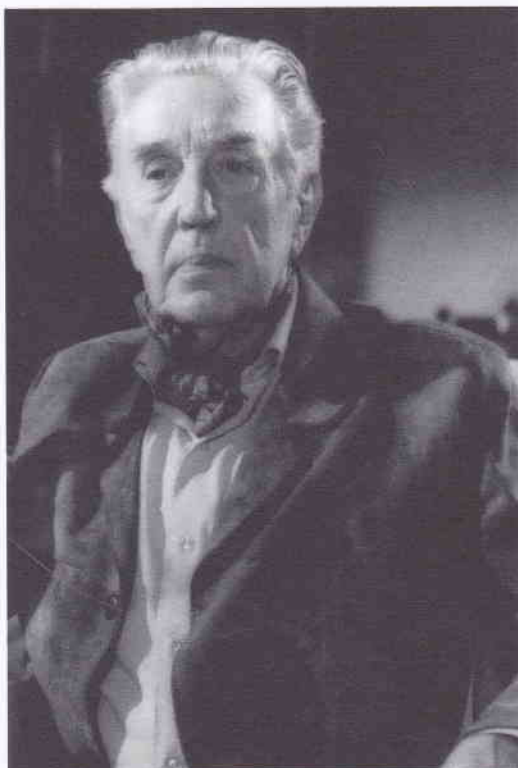


Viviana Durante is Artistic Director of Viviana Durante Company and Director of Dance at English National Ballet School, combining those roles with a return to active performing. One of the foremost dance artists of her generation, she was born in Rome where she trained until she was invited to join The Royal Ballet School aged 11. She joined The Royal Ballet aged 17 and two years later attracted national press coverage when she took over as Odette/Odile in *Swan Lake* in mid-performance, never having been taught the role. Promoted to Principal Dancer at 21, she danced all the major roles, winning equal acclaim for her technique and artistry in the classics and her dramatic ability in ballets by MacMillan, creating roles in his *Winter Dreams* and *The Judas Tree* among many new works. She guested with leading companies worldwide and, after leaving The Royal Ballet in 2000, was a principal dancer with American Ballet Theatre, La Scala Milan and Japan's K-Ballet while also acting on stage and screen. The youngest ever recipient of the Evening Standard Award, she has been honoured with many other international awards and was named Dancer of the Year in four countries.

Most recently, Viviana Durante has been a regular guest coach for The Royal Ballet and has also coached for English National Ballet and American Ballet Theatre. She holds diplomas in dance teaching from The Royal Ballet School and Trinity College London and has taught internationally. She is a frequent judge at competitions including Lausanne and Beijing and in 2019 opened the Belgrade Festival as its guest of honour. She was consultant editor of the 2018 DK book *Ballet: The Definitive Illustrated Story* and is a regular guest on radio and TV arts programmes. In 2017 she founded Viviana Durante Company, with a mission to bring both neglected ballet masterpieces and exceptional new dance works to a wide audience. She produced and directed *Kenneth MacMillan: Steps Back in Time* at the Barbican Pit in 2018, the following year presenting a programme of Kurt Weill in song and dance at Wilton's Music Hall. In 2019 she was appointed Director of Dance at English National Ballet School.

Sir Frederick Ashton

Frederick Ashton is credited with creating what has come to be called 'the English style', a distinct branch of classical ballet, imbued with a wonderful sense of musicality, intertwining of steps and extensive use of 'port de bras'. Active until his death in 1988 at the age of 84, he created a vast repertoire of ballets which are performed around the world. He was born in Ecuador in 1905 but was raised in Peru. After moving to England at the age of 18, he began studying with the great dancer and choreographer Léonide Massine and with dancer/teacher Marie Rambert at the Rambert Dance Company. It was Ms. Rambert who discovered Ashton's talent for choreography and helped him earn his first commission in 1926, *A Tragedy of Fashion*. He created over a hundred works, the best-loved being *Birthday Offering*, *Daphnis and Chloë*, *The Dream*, *La Fille mal gardée*, *A Month in the Country*, *Monotones I and II*, *Rhapsody*, *Scenes de Ballet*, *Symphonic Variations*, *Tales of Beatrix Potter*, *The Two Pigeons*, *La Valse*, his solo, *Five Brahms Waltzes in the manner of Isadora Duncan* and his pas de deux, *Meditation from Thais* and *Voices of Spring*. Toward the end of his life, Ashton embarked on a number of projects, including revivals of his older works, some thought to be lost, including *Romeo and Juliet* for English National Ballet and *Capriole Suite* for Ballet Rambert and Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet. He also revived two of his full-length ballets, *Cinderella* and *Ondine* for The Royal Ballet and contributed to Natalia Makarova's production of *Swan Lake* for English National Ballet. After his death there were hugely successful revivals of *Marguerite and Armand* and *Sylvia*. Frederick Ashton received a CBE in 1951 and was knighted in 1962. In 1970, he was made a Companion of Honour and in 1977 was awarded an Order of Merit, a select honour in the personal gift of the Queen. France admitted him to the Legion d'Honneur in 1962 and Denmark made him a Commander of the Order of Dannebrog in 1963. Recognition of his achievements within the dance world came when in 1959 he received the Queen Elizabeth award from The Royal Academy of Dancing. In 1972 he was awarded a Gold Medal from the Carina Aria Foundation in Sweden. He has honorary Doctorates of Letters from the Universities of Durham (1962) and East Anglia (1967) and Doctorates of Music from the Universities of London (1970) and Oxford (1976).



Frederick Ashton © Alamy Stock Photo

Joy Alpuerto Ritter



Joy Alpuerto Ritter was born in Los Angeles and grew up in Freiburg in Breisgau (DE). In her youth she trained in ballet, jazz, Philippine and Polynesian folk dance and graduated from the Palucca School in Dresden. She started working as a contemporary freelance dancer with choreographers like Christoph Winkler, Milan Gervais (Human Playground), Oxymoron Dance company, Heike Hennig and Yui Kawaguchi. For a while she started focusing on urban dance styles like hip hop, breakdance and voguing and was active in the urban dance battle scene in Europe. In 2011, she joined Cirque du Soleil as a dancer and aerial artist in the Michael Jackson *Immortal* World Tour.

Since 2013 she has been a dancer and rehearsal director at the Akram Khan Company and she has danced with the Wangramirez company, with which she continues touring around the world. She has been nominated as an 'outstanding female dance' for Khan's *Until the Lions* by the National Dance Awards (UK).

In her own solo work *BABAE*, which was part of *Portrait in Otherness*, she has found international response as a choreographer, and is one of the Aerowaves artists 2020. Further shows followed such as *Alter Egos*, *Teenage Widerstand* and *Heimkehr*. Joy Alpuerto Ritter has been collaborating as an associate choreographer with Chen Shi-Zheng, the indie rock band Florence and the Machine, as well as creating performances for the Salzburg Experimental Academy of Dance (SEAD), and Dance Arts Faculty Rome (DAF). She was part at the UK Arts Cross Exchange at the Beijing Dance Academy.

Begoña Cao

Begoña Cao is a British ballerina born in London to Spanish parents. She trained at the Arts Educational School and London's Royal Ballet School, obtaining scholarships to both. Previously a principal ballerina of English National Ballet, Begoña Cao has danced almost every major classical role from Sir Kenneth MacMillan to Balanchine, Rudolf Nureyev to Roland Petit and many contemporary works. She has performed on many of the world's greatest stages in London, Paris, Madrid, Barcelona, Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Athens, Sydney, Tokyo, Beijing, and Singapore, touring extensively throughout South East Asia and North America.

She has danced the title role in both Rudolf Nureyev's and Derek Deane's *Romeo and Juliet*, Mary Skeaping's *Giselle*, Sir Kenneth MacMillan's *Sleeping Beauty* (as Aurora) and *Manon*, and Roland Petit's *Carmen*. She has also performed leading roles in Nijinsky's *L'après-midi d'un Faune*, Michel Fokine's *Schéhérazade*, George Balanchine's *Apollo Calliope*, *Polyhymnia*, *Terpsichore* and *Who Cares!*, Roland Petit's *La Chauve-Souris*, Derek Deane's *Swan Lake* as Odette/Odile and *Strictly Gershwin*, Wayne Eagling's *The Nutcracker* as Sugar Plum Fairy, and in contemporary ballets by Jerome Robbins, Ben Stevenson, William Forsythe's *In The Middle Somewhat Elevated*, *Approximate Sonata* and *Jiri Kylian*, among others.

She has been partnered by world-renowned dancers Irek Mukhamedov OBE, Vadim Montagirov and by special invitation Carlos Acosta CBE, touring extensively in the UK and internationally. Begoña Cao has been nominated for the prestigious Moscow-based Benois de la Danse in the category for Female Dancers, and twice for Best Female Dancer by the Critics' Circle National Dance Awards (UK). She was awarded the Royal Ballet School's teaching diploma, has judged in dance competitions, and was a mentor for television's *BBC Young Dancer 2019*.

'The real revelation is Begoña Cao. As a classical dancer, Cao has a quiet, tremulous beauty... The work unlocks her, and she's amazing.'

The Observer and Guardian



Biographies

Christina Cecchini Dancer

Christina Cecchini was born in Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada and began her ballet training at The Dance Gallery with Maureen Duggan. At thirteen she was accepted into the Professional Ballet Program at Canada's National Ballet School where she graduated from the Professional Program and Post Secondary Program. Since 2007 she has toured western Canada with The National Ballet of Canada and was chosen to represent Les Grands Ballets Canadiens at The Banff Centre. She has danced with Ballet Kelowna, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, New English Ballet Theatre, English National Ballet, Tivoli Ballet Theatre and Viviana Durante Company. She has danced principal and soloist roles such as Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, Aurora in *Sleeping Beauty* and Sugar Plum Fairy in *The Nutcracker*. As well as the classics she has been involved with many creations by choreographers including Simone Orlando, Shawn Hounsell, Gioconda Barbuto, Andrew McNicol, and Erico Montes among many others. She is also a Pilates, barre and ballet instructor.

Nikita Goile Dancer

Originally from Reunion Island, Nikita Goile studied at the National Superior Conservatory of Music and Dance in Paris. After spending time in Israel, she returned to France in order to study for a teaching diploma before joining with the National Dance Company of Malta, ZfinMalta, where she had the chance to collaborate with Mavin Khoo and Jose Agudo. She then started to develop her own work, choreographing and making video dance while freelancing with companies as Ballet Preljocaj and Ikari before joining the National Dance Company of Wales in December 2017. She choreographed a duet called *Ecrit* which premiered

last June and toured last autumn as part of NDC Wales Repertoire. She is currently working as a guest performer with Sebastian Mullaert on his project *Circle of Life*.

Charmene Pang Dancer

Charmene Pang was born and raised in Geneva into a family from Hong Kong. She started studying dance and music at a very young age at the Conservatoire Populaire de Musique, Danse et Théâtre de Genève. She then pursued her professional studies at the Salzburg Experimental Academy of Dance and graduated in July 2018. Since November 2018, Charmene Pang has been a dancer/performer at Iceland Dance Company under the artistic direction of Erna Omarsdottir, where she appeared in a creation by Pieter Ampe and in numerous works by Erna Omarsdottir, followed by international tours in Hong Kong, Sweden and Spain. Alongside her work as a company member, she also continues to work with various choreographers on numerous projects including Jan Lauwers/NeedCompany for the Salzburg Festspiele, Kadir Mernis Company and SHALALA (Erna Omarsdottir and Valdimar Johannson for Steirischer Herbst) in Graz. Charmene Pang is also developing her own work and collaborates with artists from various arts fields from performing arts to fashion design.

Serena Zaccagnini Dancer

Serena Zaccagnini was born in 1995 in Rome, Italy, where she studied dance from the age of five, taking classes from her mother. She was trained in ballet, modern, contemporary, and hip hop. Later, she studied at the Accademia Nazionale di Danza di Roma directed by Margherita Parrilla, before moving to Florence to study at the Balletto di Toscana directed by Cristina Bozzolini, where she joined

the junior company Antitesi directed by Arianna Benedetti. In 2017 she joined Spellbound contemporary ballet directed by Mauro Astolfi, having the opportunity to tour around the world and perform in some of the most prestigious theatres. She has collaborated with choreographers such as Mauro Astolfi, Sang Jijia, Dunja Jovic (and the pianist Tomoko Mukaiyama), Tiziana Bolfe Briaschi and Masako Matsushita. Work in 2019 included performing as a freelance dancer at the Italian Pavilion for the 72nd Festival de Cannes; as a guest for the RUFA contest in Rome, opening the night before the speech of the photographer David La Chapelle; dancing for Septext dance company directed by Helge Letonja in *Zwei Giraffen Tanzen Tango*; and working in Rome with the choreographer Francesco Nappa on a new work.

Anna Geniushene Musician

Born in Moscow in 1991, Anna Geniushene began her career as a solo performer at the age of six. She graduated from the Moscow State Conservatory in 2015 and completed her Masters with Distinction and Advanced Diploma Degree from the Royal Academy of Music (London) in 2018, under the tutelage of Professor Christopher Elton. During this period she gained a great success on the international stage: in September 2018, she was a Finalist of the Leeds Piano Competition and in 2019 she reached the semi final of the XVI Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, which was broadcast on medici.tv. In 2017 she gained Third Prize at the Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition, also winning three additional prizes in chamber music, the audience and Junior Jury prizes, the latter of which offered her a chance to perform regularly in Europe. Highlights of her performances include solo and chamber recitals in venues including the Great Hall of Moscow

Conservatory, the Town Hall in Leeds, the National Concert Hall in Dublin, Teatro Massimo in Genova, Wigmore Hall in London, Museum of Arts in Tel-Aviv, Parc du Florans in La Roque d'Anthéron, Salle Cortot in Paris, Sala Greppi in Milan and Chamber Hall of Berliner Philharmonie in Berlin.

Anna Geniushene has appeared with numerous orchestras including the Halle Orchestra, Svetlanov State Symphony Orchestra of Russia, the Haydn Orchestra, Lithuania State Symphony Orchestra and many others. She was selected to take part in the International Musicians Seminar at Prussia Cove (2017) and Lake Como Academy (2019) where she continues to train with renowned artists. Her piano career is increasingly versatile with chamber music as a central focus, including close collaboration with Quartetto di Cremona and a piano duo with her husband, Lukas Geniushas. She also runs 'NikoFest', her own annual festival in collaborative music-making in Moscow.

Lih Qun Wong Composer and Musician

Lih Qun Wong is a Berlin-based Australian musician, composer and electronic music producer. A classically trained cellist and pianist, she is sought after in the contemporary circus and dance theatre world for her work and experience in the collaboration between physical movement, imagery and dramaturgy. As a performer, she uses electronic equipment to create compositions that explore the full vocal and percussive range of the cello. She creates neo-classical pieces that combine intricately shifting textures, cinematic orchestration with electronic beats, soundscape, and vocal textures. Drawing on her studies in creative writing, Lih Qun Wong, with the Bob Collective company, began to

use storytelling and spoken word within her soundtracks and musical performances. Her voice, in combination with electronic beats or soundscape has added another dimension to recent productions such as *Bob for Bob* Collective at Pfefferberg Theatre; *Dolores* for Theatre de Jugend Welt in Leipzig; and for the Cie Omkara production *Vacio*. For *Vacio* she worked closely with the aerial artist Oskar Mauricio, and visual artist Max Mittermeier to create a music score that shifts and flows cohesively between worlds and mediums.

Lih Qun Wong has composed and performed live soundtracks for dance theatre and new circus productions all over Europe and in Asia, working with the famous choreographer Yan Li Ping to create the Chinese/Berlin fusion show *Dynamic Huang Shang*. She works with a large musical palette that shifts between cinematic modern classical, sonic environment and electronica.

Camille Andriot Répétiteur

Camille Andriot trained at the Conservatoire de Chalon-sur-Saône and at the Conservatoire National Supérieur Musique et Danse in Lyon. Her first projects included the Jeune Ballet de Lyon, Aalto Ballett in Essen and Introdans in Arnhem. In 2004 she joined Martin Schläpfer's ballettmainz, and in 2009 Ballett am Rhein. Besides the numerous roles devised especially for her by Martin Schläpfer, she has danced in ballets by George Balanchine, Maurice Béjart, Regina van Berkel, Christopher Bruce, Nils Christie, Merce Cunningham, Nacho Duato, William Forsythe, Kurt Jooss, Hans van Manen, Amanda Miller, Jerome Robbins, Twyla Tharp, Marco Goecke, Paul Taylor, Terence Kohler and Natalia Horecna, and Martha Graham among others; and had a great success with her interpretation

of Frederick Ashton's solo *Five Brahms Waltzes in the Manner of Isadora Duncan* – a choreography which she also staged for The Royal Ballet in 2014.

Barbara Kane Stager

Barbara Kane discovered the dance of Isadora Duncan in 1968 via Irma Duncan's technique booklet. She then studied in New York City with Lillian Rosenberg from 1969 to 1974, with Julia Levien from 1976 to 1998 and with Hortense Kooluris from 1976 to 1991. Barbara Kane performed with the Isadora Duncan Centenary Dance Company from 1976 to 1979 before moving to England in 1979. In 1985 she set up the Isadora Duncan Dance Group which has performed throughout Europe, Russia, Japan and USA.

Barbara Kane had a curiosity for all developments in Duncan's dance in Europe and she sought out and took classes with pupils of Lisa Duncan in Paris, with pupils of the Elizabeth Duncan School in Munich and, from 1990 to 93, with Isadora and Irma Duncan's Moscow pupils.

Barbara Kane continues to teach and coach others in the technique and dance of Isadora Duncan.

Farooq Chaudhry Producer

Born in Pakistan, Farooq Chaudhry enjoyed an international professional dance career in the 1980s and '90s. He was awarded an Asian Achievement Award for his work as a dancer in 1988.

After retiring from dancing in 1999 he completed an MA in Arts Management from City University. A year later he teamed up with Akram Khan and co-founded Akram Khan Company. As the company producer, Farooq Chaudhry puts creativity at the heart of his leadership style, forming innovative

business models to support Khan's artistic ambitions. Their partnership has made the company one of the world's most foremost and successful dance companies. In addition to his work for Akram Khan Company, Farooq Chaudhry became the International Creative Producer for China's national dance icon Yang Liping since January 2016. He was also Creative Producer for English National Ballet in October 2013-2017 and was instrumental in supporting Tamara Rojo in shaping her vision.

He is a witness of the School for Social Entrepreneurs. The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs acknowledged him in a list of the world's top hundred cultural actors and entrepreneurs. He is also on the advisory board of Global Future, an independent think tank campaigning for Britain to be a vibrant and open nation that reaches out to the world. Chaudhry is a regular guest speaker in cultural entrepreneurship including Goldsmiths University and the London Business School. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from De Montfort University for his services to dance in 2014. In 2018 Chaudhry became the Course consultant for the new MA Dance Producing and Management at London Studio Centre, and in the same year became the Co-Artistic Director of PECCA (Prakriti Excellence in Contemporary Dance Awards) in India. In 2019, as part of the Queen's New Year's Honours, Farooq Chaudhry was awarded an OBE for his services to Dance and Dance Production; and he was also appointed a Tate Artist Trustee.

Marie Cantenys Studio Set and Costume Design

Through creative direction, costumes and set design, Marie Cantenys Studio develops visual stories for the dance and art world. This creative studio is building on its fashion background to explore and define new relationships between body,

fabric, movement and space; and their collaborations with industry leaders include Tim Yip Studio and Akram Khan Company.

Margaux Lalanne, a Central Saint Martin's alumnus, is the studio's main collaborator to date. Trained at Sonia Rykiel and Kenzo, she works as a freelance designer and is currently involved in several projects for Marie Cantenys Studio.

Marie Cantenys is a designer working between Art and Fashion. She founded Marie Cantenys Studio in 2016 and was awarded best new talent by Dutch Design Week shortly after her debut. She is a designer at Louis Vuitton, alongside directing her studio. Marie Cantenys is also a visiting fashion tutor at Central Saint Martin's.

Following partnerships with Sadler's Wells and the Southbank Centre, Margaux Lalanne and Marie Cantenys have joined forces again to create the visual design for *Isadora Now*.

Fabiana Piccioli Lighting and Set Design

Fabiana Piccioli won the Knight of Illumination Award for Opera in 2018 (with *Eugene Onegin* for Scottish Opera) and for Dance in 2017 (*Echos*) and 2013 (*iTMOI*).

Born in Rome, she trained as a dancer and graduated in Philosophy. She joined Akram Khan Company as Technical Director and Lighting Designer in 2005, touring with the company worldwide. Since 2013, she has collaborated with international artists and choreographers as light and set designer, and currently works on a range of different projects for dance, theatre, concerts and opera. Her work as a lighting designer includes: *Alice's Adventures Underground* by Antony McDonald for the Royal Opera House; *ghost* by Kim Brandstrup for New York

City Centre's Fall for Dance Festival; *Sleeping Beauty* for Oper Leipzig; *Invisible Cities* for Manchester International Festival; *Indian Queen* for Opéra de Lille; *Sciamachy* for Finnish National Ballet; *Powder her Face* by Antony McDonald for Northern Ireland Opera, Scottish Opera and Irish National Opera; *Eugene Onegin* for Scottish Opera; *Rigoletto* for Nevill Holt Opera by Oliver Mears; *Go Down Moses* by Romeo Castellucci for Théâtre de la Ville, Paris; *Ophelia's Room* and *Schlafende Manner* by Katie Mitchell for Schaubühne Berlin; *Le Nozze di Figaro* by Frederic Wake Walker for Teatro alla Scala, Milan; *Bagaar, Grensgeval & Vergeef Ons* by Guy Cassiers for Toneelhuis Antwerp; *Transfigured Night* by Kim Brandstrup for Rambert; *The Bayadere – The Ninth Life* by Shobana Jeyasingh for Royal Opera House; *Romeo and Juliet* by Sophie Gilpin for the Rose Theatre; *Dust* by Akram Khan for English National Ballet and *iTMOI* by Akram Khan for MC2 Grenoble. As lighting and set designer: *Qutb* by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui for Sadler's Wells; *Requiem* and *Fall*, both by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui for Royal Ballet Flanders; *Harbour Me* by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui for LA Dance Project, Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris; and *Variations for Vibes Pianos and Strings* for Akram Khan Company and the London Sinfonietta Orchestra.

Fred DeFaye Sound Design

Fred DeFaye learned his trade as a recording engineer in Paris and has mixed and recorded albums for music artists including the Eurythmics, Bob Dylan, The Prodigy, Depeche Mode and David Gray. He has designed sound for theatrical experiences created by Punchdrunk, Burberry, and Philipp Plein Fashion Show. His composition credits include *Alone Together* and *Pull Me Closer* for Levy Dance Company at the San Francisco

International Dance Festival. He has toured as a live sound engineer for the choreographer Lea Anderson with the Featherstonehaughs, Patti Smith, The KLF, Yang Liping Dance Company on the Under Siege international tour and *Rite of Spring* and for the past ten years has worked with Shobana Jeyasingh Dance.

**John Valente
Production Manager**

After studying Architecture, John Valente has become known as a skilled technical leader with over a decade's experience in West End and regional producing theatres and on multiple high-profile national and international tours as a freelance technical manager and production chief. He has worked on numerous productions across musical theatre, repertory theatre, circus, opera, contemporary and classical dance,

corporate events and large-scale outdoor festivals. He is currently the Production Manager for international tours of Akram Khan's *Xenos*, and Yang Liping's *Rite of Spring*, as well as Technical Producer for a new work coming to London and the international stage. Recent credits also include the *Bodyguard* musical, Cirque du Soleil's *Sep7imo Dia*, Matthew Bourne's *Red Shoes* and the new West End production of *Prince of Egypt*.



Charmene Pang, Serena Zaccagnini, Christina Cecchini, Begonia Cao and Nikita Goile. Rehearsal photo by David Scheinmann