

Patron: Her Majesty The Queen
Founders: Sir Anton Dolin, Dame Alicia Markova, Julian Braunschweig
Chair: Sir Rupert Gavin
Artistic Director: Aaron S. Watkin
Executive Director: Anu Giri
Chief Operating Officer: Grace Chan
Music Director: Maria Seletskaja

English National Ballet and English National Ballet School present

My First Ballet: *Swan Lake*

Peacock Theatre, London

Wednesday 16 - Sunday 27 April 2025

<https://www.ballet.org.uk/production/my-first-ballet-swan-lake/>

English National Ballet and English National Ballet School present My First Ballet: *Swan Lake*, an adapted version of the iconic ballet designed for children as young as three, making it a perfect day out for families over the Easter period. The production returns to Peacock Theatre, London, from 16 – 27 April.



Campaign image for My First Ballet: *Swan Lake* © Illustration by Mark Ruffle

With an approximate running time of one hour and a half (including an interval) and a narrator to help young audiences follow the story, My First Ballet: *Swan Lake* is the perfect introduction to the magic of ballet. Featuring choreography by Antonio Castilla, and Dramaturgy by Lou Cope, this version follows the familiar story of *Swan Lake*, but tailored to children and families.

The My First Ballet series is performed by students of English National Ballet School, providing them with valuable rehearsal and performance experience within a professional touring company.

Aaron S. Watkin, Artistic Director of English National Ballet, said: “The My First Ballet series is a wonderful opportunity to introduce the magic of ballet to a new generation of audiences. English National

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Ballet's aim is to present this much-loved artform in an accessible and welcoming format, whilst maintaining high standards of artistry and production. I look forward to inspiring and exciting new young audiences at the Peacock Theatre."

Lynne Charles, Artistic Director of English National Ballet School, said: "What I love about the My First Ballet project is that it creates a cohesive community, comradeship, and artistic sharing. Students of the English National Ballet School get the opportunity to be challenged, both in corps de ballet, soloist and principal roles. With 24 performances in just 10 days, the students will learn and experience what a career in a professional dance company is really like. They will come out of this experience ready for the next step of their journey".

Since its creation in 2012, over 350,000 people have enjoyed English National Ballet's My First Ballet series.

Families can also experience the magic of My First Ballet: Swan Lake on stage at the Peacock Theatre in a series of creative ballet workshops, led by English National Ballet's Associate Dance Artists and accompanied by live musicians, with BSL Interpreted and Relaxed Workshops available. Participants will also have the chance to get up close to the beautiful costumes and production scenery.

-ENDS-

For further information, interview requests, and images, please contact Inês Carvalho, Senior Press Officer, on ines.carvalho@ballet.org.uk

Listings:

English National Ballet

My First Ballet: Swan Lake

Peacock Theatre, London

Wednesday 16 – Sunday 27 April 2025

www.ballet.org.uk/my-first-ballet-swan-lake/

Press Performance: Wednesday, 16 April 2.30pm

Relaxed Performance: Thursday, 24 April 1.30pm

BSL Interpreted Performance: Wednesday, 23 April 10.30am

Audio-described Performance and Touch Tour: Thursday, 24 April 12.30pm

Credits:

Choreography: Antonio Castilla

Additional Choreography: Lynne Charles

Music: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Design: Peter Farmer

Dramaturgy: Lou Cope

Narrator: Araminta Wraith

Notes to Editors

English National Ballet is a National Portfolio Organisation supported by Arts Council England.

Ballymore is Principal Building Partner of English National Ballet.

About English National Ballet

English National Ballet has a long and distinguished history. Founded in 1950 as London Festival Ballet by the great English dancers Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin, it has been at the forefront of ballet's growth and evolution ever since.

English National Ballet brings world class ballet to the widest possible audience through performances across the UK and on eminent international stages; its distinguished orchestra, English National Ballet

Philharmonic; its digital platforms Ballet on Demand and BalletActive; being a UK leader in creative learning and engagement practice, building innovative partnerships to deliver flagship programmes such as Dance for Parkinson's; and through talent development initiatives including Ballet Futures which looks to create a more diverse and inclusive future for the artform.

English National Ballet continues to add ground-breaking new works to its repertoire whilst celebrating the tradition of great classical ballet, gaining acclaim for artistic excellence and creativity. 2019 saw the Company enter a new chapter in its history with a move to a purpose-built state-of-the-art home in east London, allowing a renewed commitment to creativity, ambition, and connection to more people, near and far, than ever before.

About English National Ballet School

English National Ballet School is a world-renowned specialist training centre for aspiring and highly talented young ballet dancers aged 16 to 19.

Founded in 1988 by English National Ballet, today the school exists as a separate entity but maintains strong links with its parent company, sharing its commitment to excellence and access. Its mission is to nurture and develop the next generation of world-class dance artists; artists who are confident and versatile, able to push boundaries and bring their creativity to the fore.

Students participate in a three-year programme, validated by Trinity College London, with graduates joining prestigious dance companies worldwide. Currently a third of the dancers at English National Ballet are graduates of the School. The School also offer weekly children's ballet classes, ENBS Juniors, for 3 – 10 year olds.

My First Ballet: Swan Lake - Symbol Resources

English National Ballet are delighted to once again be working in partnership with Widgit to create a range of symbol resources alongside My First Ballet: Swan Lake. These resources aim to make ballet more accessible to children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Widgit symbols support written text to make the meaning clearer and easier to understand. All of these resources are available to download for free (PDF format) and extra activities are printed in programmes. The My First Ballet: Swan Lake Symbol Resources are designed for use before, during and after performances. You can find the Symbol Resources as well as other activities for children on the My First Ballet: Swan Lake Resource Hub: <https://www.ballet.org.uk/my-first-ballet-swan-lake-resource-hub/>

My First Ballet: Swan Lake – Access Events

BSL Performance

Our British Sign Language (BSL) performance is fully interpreted by a theatre specialist and qualified interpreter. They use British sign language to communicate what is spoken by the live speaking narrator on stage during the performance.

Relaxed Performance

A Relaxed Performance is offers a less formal theatre environment experience for anyone who would benefit from a more relaxed atmosphere to enjoy a show. They support noise and movement within the auditorium during a show, re-entry when needed so house lights are left on throughout, and a separate chill-out space for anyone who might need it at any time during their visit. We also provide a Visual Story so people can familiarise themselves with the theatre and key details about the show in advance. These are available on our website and printed versions available at box office.

Audio-described performance and Touch Tour

There are a number of Stalls seats reserved for partially sighted and/or blind patrons, with headsets available for those wishing to listen to the audio description of the performance by VocalEyes.

To accompany the Audio Described performance, visually impaired patrons can go on a Touch Tour before the performance. Your tour guide will take you backstage, or onto the stage itself, to feel costumes and pieces of the set, as well as learning more about the production.