



Benois de la Danse winner - Hannah O'Neill. Photo: Emma Kauldhar

# PEOPLE

**W**inners of this year's Benois de la Danse were announced on 17 May

in Moscow as follows: Best Choreographer - **Yuri Possokhov** (Bolshoi Ballet) and **Johan Inger** (Nederlands Dans Theater); Best Ballerina: **Alicia Amatriain** (Stuttgart Ballet) and **Hannah O'Neill** (Paris Opera); Best Dancer: **Kimin Kim** (Mariinsky Ballet); Best Scenographer to **Ren Dongsheng** (Beijing Dance Academy).

Royal Ballet principal **Vadim Muntagirov** has been invited to guest with the Paris Opera for the first time. He will dance Albrecht opposite **Dorothee Gilbert's** Giselle on 2 and 7 June.

**Chinara Alidade** and **Dawid Trzensimiech** (formerly with the

Ballet of Opera National Bucharest) have joined the Polish National Ballet.

When **Gillian Murphy** had to pull out of her scheduled performance in *Sylvia* with ABT on 12 May, the casting for the evening was changed as follows: Act I featured **Isabella Boylston** as Sylvia and **Marcelo Gomes** as Aminta; Act II's *Sylvia* was danced by **Maria Kochetkova**; and Act III saw **Hee Seo** and **Roberto Bolle** as Sylvia and Aminta respectively.

**Clinton Luckett**, ballet master and former dancer at American Ballet Theatre, has been appointed assistant artistic director of the company, effective from August 2016. English National Ballet has announced **Patrick Harrison** as the company's new executive director, commencing on 27 June 2016.

**Polina Semionova** is on medical leave and has withdrawn from all her performances scheduled during American Ballet Theatre's Spring season at the Metropolitan Opera House. **Gillian Murphy** will replace Semionova in *Swan Lake* on 13 June; **Isabella Boylston** will replace her in the same ballet at the matinee on 18 June, and **Hee Seo** will replace Semionova in *Romeo and Juliet* on 24 June.

After over twenty years on the stage, **Jayne Smeulders** is retiring. Her final performance will be as La Fée Magnifique in West Australian Ballet's production of David Nixon's *Beauty & the Beast* on 28 May.

BalletBoyz founders **Michael Nunn** and **William Trevitt** are to become new artistic directors, and **Kerry Whelan** executive director, of the British Ballet Organisation as the company undergoes a major rebrand. BBO is being renamed Bbodance, to coincide with its move to new premises in Battersea, London.

Northern Ballet principal dancers **Martha Leebolt** and **Tobias Batley** are to take leave of absence in order to pursue new opportunities.

However, they will be returning to the company periodically as resident guest artists. See the interviews on page 22.

Stuttgart Ballet principal dancer **Constantine Allen** will be making his company debut with English National Ballet during ENB's season of *Swan Lake* at the Royal Albert Hall in June.

Nominees in the dance category for this year's South Bank Sky Arts Awards, celebrating its 20th anniversary, are: *Woolf Works* choreographed by **Wayne McGregor** for The Royal Ballet; *1984* choreographed by **Jonathan Watkins** for Northern Ballet and *Paradise Lost (lies unopened beside me)* performed by **Lost Dog**. Hosted by **Melvyn Bragg**, the Awards Ceremony will take place on 5 June 2016.

The Carina Ari Medal for 2016 has been awarded to **Ohad Naharin** for his invaluable contribution to Swedish dance. There are strong ties between Ohad Naharin and Sweden – dating back from his early collaborations with the Cullberg Ballet and the Jewish Theatre to the present day. The Medal Committee comprises **Gunilla Jensen**, dance critic and dramaturge, **Ana Laguna**, professor and Royal Court Dancer and **Rennie Mirro**, dancer and actor.

The Joffrey Ballet, led by artistic director **Ashley Wheater** and executive director **Greg Cameron**, have announced that the Joffrey Academy of Dance, Official School of The Joffrey Ballet, is to receive a \$200,000 challenge grant from the **Reva & David Logan Foundation** expressly to support a new initiative enabling annual funding of more than \$400,000 in scholarships for talented students at the Joffrey Academy of Dance.

Commissioned by Northern Ballet artistic director **David Nixon OBE**, **Kenneth Tindall** will be creating *Casanova* for the company. This will be the choreographer's first full-length ballet and the premiere will take place at Leeds Grand Theatre on 11 March 2017.