

SCOTTISH BALLET

The Snow Queen

Choreography: Christopher Hampson CBE

Design: Lez Brotherston OBE

Lighting Design: Paul Pyant

Music: Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Music Arrangement: Richard Honner

Inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's *The Snow Queen*

Accompanied by The Scottish Ballet Orchestra

Running time:

Approximately one hour 45 minutes including one 20-minute interval.

Edinburgh, Festival Theatre
27 November – 7 December 2025
capitaltheatres.com

Glasgow, Theatre Royal
3 – 17 January 2026
atgtickets.com/glasgow

Aberdeen, His Majesty's Theatre
21 – 24 January 2026
aberdeenperformingarts.com

Inverness, Eden Court Theatre
28 – 31 January 2026
eden-court.co.uk

Scottish Ballet is supported by



Scottish Government
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Scan the QR code or visit scottishballet.co.uk/casting to find out which dancers are cast in this performance. You can also find printed cast sheets in the foyer.

(The information in this publication was, to the best of our knowledge, accurate on the date of publication. However, Scottish Ballet reserves the right to change content without notice.)

#SBSnowQueen

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Hello & Welcome

Whether you're here with family, friends, or on a solo adventure, we're so glad you could join us. *The Snow Queen* is a ballet about family, friendship, and community. It's a celebration of everyone who brings Scottish Ballet to life, including you, our audiences.

Our tale starts in a city — not too unlike Glasgow — where the excitement of a festive carnival leads our heroines, Lexi and Gerda, on an unexpected quest. They journey through a forest, where a company of Travellers help them, and finish in the spectacular Kingdom of the Snow Queen.

The vivid music you will hear has been adapted from works by orchestral master Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov — much of it taken from his operas (including *The Snow Maiden*). Each note propels us further through fantastical lands filled with wonderful and wintry characters — all cleverly created by designer, Lez Brotherston and a long line of talented makers.

If you'd like to know more about the Scottish Ballet family, please join our community of 71,000 Free Friends. It truly is a joy to be with you at this time of year — and we'd like to keep in touch.

Christopher Hampson CBE
CEO/Artistic Director

It's with immense pride and gratitude that the company reflects on a year of extraordinary artistic achievements, and remarkable connections with audiences across Scotland, and beyond.

One of the highlights of the year was Scottish Ballet's historic return to Aotearoa New Zealand in the spring, our first visit since 1974. The company was overwhelmed by the warmth of the welcome we received in Auckland and Wellington, a memory the company will forever cherish.

This year has also seen the premiere of our fifth and final Five in Five Campaign ballet, *Mary, Queen of Scots* — a significant collaboration with Scottish Ballet's Resident Choreographer, Sophie Laplane and Co-Creator, James Bonas. The production was named Best International Festival Show at The List Festival Awards 2025, a great honour for the company.

My sincere gratitude goes to our generous corporate partners, and the many individuals and organisations who support us — including our major partner, the Scottish Government. Heartfelt thanks to our loyal, enthusiastic audiences — your generosity and spirit inspire us to seek the very best in ourselves. Thank you for being by our side.

Jim Pettigrew
Chair

Synopsis

Act 1

The Enchanted Mirror

The young Snow Queen and her sister, the Summer Princess, live in an isolated Ice Palace. The Summer Princess longs to leave and begs the Snow Queen to use her enchanted mirror to show the future. Looking through the mirror, the Summer Princess can see herself, many years later, embracing a handsome stranger. Unwilling to wait a moment longer, she decides she must leave to find him.

The Snow Queen pleads with her to stay, but the Summer Princess disguises herself and flees, leaving the Snow Queen alone. The Snow Queen grows angry as she contemplates a life alone and, in her rage, she shatters her enchanted mirror and vows to bring her sister back to the Ice Palace.

The Busy Marketplace

The Summer Princess lives for many years on the outskirts of a busy town. She is known locally as Lexi, a dangerous pickpocket armed with a shard of glass from the enchanted mirror.

One crisp winter's day, handsome Kai proposes to his beloved Gerda and they become engaged. Watching on, Lexi recognises Kai as the stranger she saw in the mirror and waits for her moment to meet him.

Never one to miss an opportunity, Lexi works the crowd but gets caught in the act. Kai, feeling sorry for her, helps her avoid capture with an embrace. Gerda is rightfully suspicious of Lexi's intentions.

A travelling circus arrives led by Zach and his wife, Mazelda, a fortune teller. The circus entertains the gathering crowd with acrobats, clowns, a strongman and a ballerina.

Suddenly, time freezes and the Snow Queen appears. She begs her sister to return with her. Lexi refuses and the Snow Queen snatches her shard of glass and blows the crystals into Kai's eye, causing him to see all that is beautiful as ugly.

He becomes mean and spiteful as the shards find their way to his heart, turning it to ice. The Snow Queen waits for her opportunity to steal Kai ensuring her sister's return but unwittingly sets in motion a quest for Gerda to win Kai back with the help of an unlikely ally in Lexi.

Act 2

The Traveller's Camp

Lexi leads Gerda far away, deep in the forest to visit Mazelda, the fortune teller. Mazelda reveals that Kai has indeed been stolen away by the Snow Queen and is now bewitched to forget his true love. Lexi tells Gerda there is no hope of getting him back, she knows her sister's powers. Gerda will not give up and she sets out alone to find him.

The Forest

As Gerda travels through a wintry forest, the Snow Queen tries to block her path: Jack Frosts, Snowflakes and Snow Wolves surround her, but she battles on to reach the Ice Palace.

The Ice Palace

At the Ice Palace, Gerda finds Kai bewitched by the Snow Queen; he no longer recognises her. The Snow Queen looks to attack Gerda but is interrupted by the arrival of Lexi who transforms back into the Summer Princess, willing to substitute her place with Kai and return to her sister forever. The Snow Queen's spell is broken, and Kai and Gerda are reunited.

Tumble Behind the Curtain with Hannah & Melissa

The Snow Queen has returned to Scotland for its winter tour, but behind the scenes, preparations have been in motion for quite some time...

Flicking through *The Snow Queen* photoshoot images during an interview at Scottish Ballet HQ, Hannah Cubitt, Artist with Scottish Ballet says, 'We actually did the photoshoot back in summer 2024. Look how tanned I am — I'd just come back from the Caribbean! It wasn't a serious photoshoot where we had to nail a perfect pose. The acrobats are a bit wacky, so it was more playful,' Hannah laughs.

Soloist, Melissa Polson adds: 'As acrobats, we've got ribbons, tricks and silly movements. We just have fun with it.' She laughs, looking at a photograph that was taken after the shoot — peeking out from the lift, with messy hair and CEO/Artistic Director Christopher (Chris) Hampson with his lunch in his hand — a candid peek behind the scenes.

The easy rapport between Hannah and Melissa reflects years of shared experience with the company. Melissa first joined Scottish Ballet in 2015. 'This is my 10th anniversary year — it's gone so fast! I auditioned while I was still a student and got

a temporary contract in Glasgow. I had this odd feeling and strong sense that I'd be back someday.' After some time with the National Ballet of Portugal, she attended an audition with Scottish Ballet whilst the company was touring in London. 'I was very lucky to be offered a job. Ten years later, I'm still here — and it feels like home.'

Hannah's Scottish Ballet journey began even earlier, with roots that run deep. 'I was a Senior Associate from the age of 13. My home is the Kingdom of Fife, and my parents would drive me from Kirkcaldy to Glasgow every

weekend. At 15, I auditioned for The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and got in — I felt so lucky.’ During her third year at RCS, she was invited to perform with Scottish Ballet on a winter tour. ‘When the tour arrived in Inverness, Chris met with me and offered me a full-time contract. It felt out of the blue, but I was thrilled.’

Between them, the pair have clocked up countless winter tours, each production demanding something different. For Melissa, winter tours always bring fresh challenges. ‘I love performing *The Nutcracker*, and each time I’ve had a new role to perform. The Snowflakes scene is classical, technical, and exhausting — we call it “puffy” because it makes us feel out of breath, like huffy and “puffy!”’ *The Snow Queen* tests her in different ways. ‘Mazelda’s solo (the fortune teller) is all grand allegro, so big jumps, also what we would call a “puffy” one! Lexi is more about the acting — she’s such a strong character.’

Hannah remembers *The Snow Queen*’s 2019 premiere as her first winter tour as part of the company. ‘I love performing Mazelda. Each dancer plays her differently, so it’s a unique role, full of personality. She and Lexi have a great dynamic.’

Hannah also adores dancing *Cinders*: ‘As a step-sister, you can be messy, skip around, fall over — and it’s all in character!’

Beyond the performances themselves, touring creates its own special friendships. Weeks on the road together mean relying on each other. ‘We really bond,’ Hannah says. ‘We need each other for support. And the older you get the closer to the front of the tour bus you want to sit!’ laughs Hannah.

Each city has developed its own traditions over the years. ‘In Inverness, we often end up at Johnny Foxes bar for karaoke,’ Melissa says. ‘In Aberdeen, it’s bumper cars and laser tag at the arcade. In Edinburgh, there was this amazing bagel shop near the theatre — we went there every lunch break,

and miss it so much now it's closed. And our Glasgow audiences, they are always so full of life.'

'Being at home in Glasgow is the best,' Hannah agrees.

'Nothing beats going back to your own bed after a show.'

Of course, life on stage doesn't always go according to plan. 'Hannah, were you there when someone slipped after Snowflakes in Aberdeen?' Melissa recalls. 'That was me!' Hannah laughs. 'We all ran off stage in a line, I slipped, then the next person, then Melissa — like dominoes! And just ten seconds later we had to be back on stage.'

Wig malfunctions feature heavily in their collection of backstage mishaps. 'In Glasgow, the Ringmaster's wig got caught on an acrobat's wig mid-roll,' Melissa remembers. 'He had none, she had two — we were in fits!'

'When there are laughs on stage, it's the best,' says Hannah. Props can often provide a source of entertainment. 'As a townspeople, I had to swing my handbag at the thief character,' Melissa laughs. 'Each night I made it bigger, and more dramatic. I loved that little bag.'

The company's youngest performers provide their own unscripted magic and mischief. 'In The Nutcracker, the children have these dolls to carry. One time on-stage, a doll's head fell off and began rolling towards the orchestra pit. We had to think fast to catch it before it fell in!' Melissa giggles. The bonds formed can be so special. 'Some of those young performers have later gone on to join the main company,' she smiles. 'It's such a full-circle journey.'

The winter season brings festive touches both on and off stage. 'We decorate the changing rooms,' Melissa says. 'On Christmas Eve, pianist Michael Barnett plays all the classics during company class.' Hannah smiles and adds, 'He brings bells, maybe a tambourine, and everyone wears tinsel. We look forward to it every year!'

So what should audiences look out for in the The Snow Queen? 'There's real fire on stage,' Hannah reveals. 'It's so exciting — and of course, we're all told to be very careful near it! Also Gill, (Gillian Risi, Sub-Principal) our violinist, performs live on stage with her own costume and in character.' Melissa adds: 'She follows our tempo and moves between us on-stage while playing flawlessly. She has so much to navigate in that busy scene, she's incredible.'

'And the music is just phenomenal,' Hannah smiles.

Kirsty MacIntyre is Press and Communications Officer at Scottish Ballet.

Little Toy Bells

Why two glockenspiels are better than one. ‘Glockenspiel’ means ‘little toy bells’ in German. The high-pitched, toy-box shimmer of just one glockenspiel easily cuts through a massive orchestral sound, so why does Scottish Ballet need two for *The Snow Queen*?

All of the music you will hear in *The Snow Queen* was composed by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908). Christopher Hampson, choreographer of *The Snow Queen*, says, ‘Rimsky-Korsakov was such a theatrical writer, he was an obvious choice for this production. Most of the music was taken from his opera *The Snow Maiden*, but parts of our story needed something different, so we borrowed from his catalogue of orchestral suites and operas. The final musical arrangement for the ballet leads us through three different worlds: the Snow Queen’s palace, the fanfare of the circus, and then the deepest, darkest, woods.’

Rimsky-Korsakov was a master of orchestration with an exceptional skill for considering the unique forces of each instrument. The metallic sounds of trumpets, piccolos, and cymbals send shivers out from the Snow Queen. Yet, the brightness of the glockenspiel is double-edged, a warning that everything is about to change. One moment we share joy for the happy couple, Kai and Gerda. Gerda shows her engagement ring to onlookers, her happiness swells as she turns and leaps in Kai’s arms, sleigh bells ring out along with the twinkling glockenspiel for extra winter charm. Suddenly, the temperature drops — the snow wolves strut onto the stage, a precursor for the Queen’s arrival. Time stops. The Queen investigates the scene and plans her revenge.

The glockenspiel is commonly heard in orchestral music, but scores requiring two glockenspiels are rare. Scottish Ballet’s Music and Orchestral Services Manager, Martin Willis, explains, ‘Rimsky-Korsakov’s

scores included one glockenspiel, but it's too fast to be played by one player.' Sub-Principal Percussion, Owen Williams, adds that originally glockenspiels were a collection of bells struck by hand. 'At the end of 17th century, the instrument evolved to a small keyboard instrument, like a piano, where the musician would sit down to play using all ten fingers. The modern-day orchestral glockenspiel is an open table of rectangular tuned steel typically played with up to four mallets,' says Owen. Whilst the open bars produce a louder, more brilliant, and natural sound, it does mean fewer notes can be played at once.

Martin was responsible for finding a solution so that the percussionists have enough time (and free hands!) to play Rimsky-Korsakov's score. 'The glockenspiel plays a quick semiquaver pattern, and each semiquaver has two simultaneous notes (the technical name for this is 'double-stopping'). The musical notes are so quick and close together we need two glockenspiels, otherwise the percussionists end up "fencing" each other with their mallets!' says Martin.

What's the effect? Owen says, 'The difference in sound is quite amazing. Because the glockenspiel has many overtones you get this strange ethereal sound which adds to wonderful overall harmonics.' This adds to the icy powers of the Snow Queen. In contrast, the character Lexi (the Summer Princess in disguise) takes on earthier sounds. The tick-tocking of the xylophone reveals her panic when her sister, the Snow Queen, has discovered her whereabouts.

Fragments of the Snow Queen's enchanted mirror can be heard throughout the ballet. During the circus scene, the Snow Queen turns a shard of mirror to dust in her fist and blows the splinters into Kai's eye. Listen out for Rimsky-Korsakov's zippy *Flight of the Bumblebee* (originally written for his opera *The Tale of Tsar Saltan*) which adds to the feeling of Kai and Gerda's confusion.

In the deepest, darkest woods of Act Two, a company of Travellers is revealed under the light of a full moon. A drum roll from the orchestra announces a cadenza from a violinist onstage — a breathtaking solo requiring exceptional technical skill. Sub-Principal Violinist, Gillian Risi explains, ‘The solo begins with a quadruple chord and links into a series of triple chords and arpeggios ending in a very high harmonic. It’s so dramatic, I am immediately inspired by the atmosphere and the incredible artistry of the dancers around me.’

The strings of the Traveller camp are a beautiful, earthy contrast to the metallic sounds of the Snow Queen’s palace. This section of music comes from Rimsky-Korsakov’s orchestral suite *Capriccio Espagnol*. Christopher Hampson points out, ‘The sound of the camp expresses humanity, a group who are about living life. It’s why Lexi takes Gerda there. The scene builds when the violin becomes the haunting voice of the fortune-teller, showing Gerda that the Snow Queen has put a spell on her fiancé, Kai. This news offers Gerda encouragement to keep going with her quest,’ says Chris.

Further into the forest, the Queen’s magical forces glisten — dancing Snowflakes, Jack Frost and The Four Winds encircle her — the Snow Queen is in her element. An enchanted Kai is at her every beck and call, ‘Their duet is more like a partnered solo. Watch how the Snow Queen initiates every lift and turn, and Kai must serve her. Eventually, Kai becomes a husk of a man,’ says Chris. The bittersweet glockenspiel shimmers again. Is this love? As we all know, an enchanted love does not last. After the spell is broken, Kai dances alongside Gerda again.

‘They are symbiotic, responding to each other in each moment, a true partnership,’ says Chris — just like our glockenspiels in the pit with all the players of the Scottish Ballet Orchestra.

Sarah Potter is Senior Copywriter at Scottish Ballet.

Every Step of the Way

How Scottish Ballet's talent programmes offer different pathways for young people

One of the first questions you might ask a dancer is 'when did you start dancing?' The answer may be, 'three, four, five... years old' — like Scottish Ballet Senior Associate, Chloe MacDuff. 'I was four years old when I started a dance class at a gym,' says Chloe. 'I was keen to dance more, so my next-door neighbour suggested I join a dance school in Clydebank.'

Yet for many, the opportunity to discover talent might not come until later. Scottish Ballet Youth Exchange graduate, William Buckly, was interested in dance from a young age but the local dance schools in Kilmarnock weren't what he was looking for. 'My first experience of a dance class was at the afterschool club run by my PE teachers. One teacher suggested I join the freestyle dance group in my local community hall.'

The belief that early formal training leads to success has seen children choosing residential dance schools from age 11. Staying home was an important choice for Chloe and her family, 'I like my school and all the subjects, particularly History and English, I have interests other than dance,' says Chloe.

Chloe will gain a qualification in Higher Dance during her Associate training. Scottish Ballet's Head of Associate Programme, Kerry Livingstone, says the profession is changing. 'The quality of pre-vocational dance training opportunities in Scotland means that families have options and don't need to make the difficult all-or-nothing decision. Young people can attend local dance classes and top-up with advanced training, without giving up normal family life, school, and other hobbies.'

Although William finally found his groove, not in his wildest dreams had he considered a career in dance. 'I never believed a Kilmarnock boy could

become a dancer.’ During his training at Dance Studio Scotland at Glasgow Clyde College, William took part in one of Scottish Ballet’s workshops. ‘We noticed William’s technique, creativity, and positive attitude, and suggested he auditioned for the YEX programme,’ explains Taylor Han, Scottish Ballet’s Engagement Creative Artist. The YEX programme simulates a company — young dancers take part in an international exchange, performance opportunities, and are introduced to pathways across the dance industry whilst being encouraged to develop new skills skills. ‘William was the Lead Dance Artist within the YEX company. It’s been inspiring to watch him grow as a leader and an artist,’ says Taylor.

William reflects, ‘YEX took me out of my comfort zone. I learnt so many dance styles, how to dance with different people, and performed in unique locations — Dumfries House, Scottish Parliament, and I attended Vienna’s international dance festival, ImPulsTanz. Each opportunity opened my mind to what dance could be.’

Chloe has been part of the Associate Programme since she was nine years old. ‘The training takes you to the fundamentals of ballet technique. Teachers give individual feedback, helping you grow at your own pace. Being in a class where everyone has a passion for ballet is a fantastic community to be part of.’

The Associate and YEX programmes are directly supported by CEO/Artistic Director, Christopher Hampson. Students attend professional performances and rehearsals, where they can be inspired by the world of theatre and dance. ‘Our winter performances are such a vital part of cultural life in Scotland — when I meet dancers all over the world, they cite being taken to a winter ballet as the moment that inspired their career in dance.’

Each year, Associates are invited to audition for the winter production. Chloe danced the role of Clara in *The Nutcracker* and danced in *The Snow*

Queen. 'Performing with the company was an incredible experience and showed me what dancing professionally could be like,' says Chloe. Chris adds, 'Seven of Scottish Ballet's professional dancers came up through the Associate Programme — proof of the power of an opportunity to dance alongside professionals.'

We wish William every success at Addict Dance Academy, Leicester, where he will study BA (Hons) Dance Performance. And best wishes to Chloe, who will be auditioning for vocational ballet schools next year.

Sarah Potter is Senior Copywriter at Scottish Ballet.

Scottish Ballet is hugely grateful to the generosity from trusts, foundations and patrons who make it possible to offer bursaries for both Associate and Youth Exchange students. With thanks to The John Mather Charitable Trust, Leverhulme Trust, Castansa Trust, CMS Charitable Trust, and The Wendy Hamilton Fund.

Creative Team

Christopher Hampson CBE Scottish Ballet CEO/Artistic Director

Christopher trained at The Royal Ballet School and danced with English National Ballet.

Christopher has created many award-winning productions including: for ENB *Double Concerto*, *The Nutcracker*, *Perpetuum Mobile*; for Ballet Black *Sextet*, *Storyville*; for the Royal New Zealand Ballet *Romeo & Juliet*, *Cinderella*; for Czech National Ballet *Giselle*; for Atlanta Ballet *The Rite of Spring*, *Sinfonietta Giocosa*; for Scottish Ballet *Hansel & Gretel*, *The Snow Queen*, *Cinders* and credited with directing and co-creating Peter Darrell's production of *The Nutcracker* and Gene Kelly's love letter to ballet, *Starstruck*. More recently he has been co-director for a new film for Scottish Ballet, *These Violent Delights*.

Christopher joined Scottish Ballet as Artistic Director in 2012, becoming CEO in 2015. Since then, the company has performed across the world and he has brought in significant dance creators including Crystal Pite, David Dawson, Helen Pickett and Matthew Bourne, while developing in-house talent. In 2017, he curated the world's first Digital Season — dance to be experienced through digital platforms and has since brought more Scottish Ballet repertoire to screens including the creation of his first award-winning feature film, *The Secret Theatre*, and *Starstruck*. He chairs the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion steering group at Scottish Ballet; he established the Dancers' Education Group and is a passionate advocate for dancer career transition and creative leadership.

Christopher is on the boards of Scottish Ballet, Central School of Ballet and Ballet Black.

He was awarded CBE for services to dance in the 2023 King's Birthday Honours and received an honorary doctorate from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. In 2025 he was elected as a Fellow to the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

Les Brotherston OBE

Designer

Lez is an Associate Artist of Matthew Bourne's company New Adventures.

Dance credits include a long collaboration with Matthew Bourne: *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Red Shoes*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Edward Scissorhands*, *Lord of The Flies*, *Swan Lake*, *A Play Without Words*, *Highland Fling*, *Dorian Gray*, *Cinderella* and *The Car Man*.

He designed, co-wrote and co-directed *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* with Adam Cooper (Japan/Sadler's Wells).

Theatre/Musicals/Opera: *Malory Towers* (Bristol Old Vic); *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Rover*, *The Empress*, *Much Ado About Nothing* (RSC); *Me and My Girl*, *Fiddler on the Roof* (Chichester); *Twelfth Night*, *Romantics Anonymous* (Shakespeare's Globe); *Flowers for Mrs Harris*, *Showboat*, *Pride and Prejudice* (Sheffield Crucible); *946* (Kneehigh/Globe Theatre); *Oh What A Lovely War* (Stratford East/West End), *Hysteria* (Hampstead Theatre); *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, *Umbrellas Of Cherbourg*, *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*, *Under The Blue Sky* (West End); *Sister Act* (West End/ Worldwide); *Women Beware Women*, *Really Old Like 45* (National Theatre); *Hedda Gabler*, *Design For Living*, *Dancing at Lughnasa* (Old Vic); *Duet For One* (Almeida/West End); *My City*, *Measure For Measure* (Almeida); *L'Elisir d'Amore* (Glyndebourne).

Awards: *Swan Lake*, New York 1999, Tony Award; *Cinderella*, 1998, Olivier Award Critics' Circle; Ninette de Valois award for outstanding contribution to dance.

Paul Pyant

Lighting Designer

A graduate of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (1973) in London and for almost 50 years working in Opera, Ballet, Musicals and Theatre worldwide including London's West End and on Broadway in New York.

Paul has long associations in the UK with Glyndebourne Opera, English National Opera, The Royal Opera Covent Garden, National Theatre, English National Ballet, Chichester Festival, Donmar Warehouse and The Almeida Theatre.

Work worldwide includes productions in America: (Metropolitan Opera, Los Angeles, Houston, Seattle, San Francisco, Washington, Australia, Austria, Denmark, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Holland, Hong Kong, Israel, Italy, Japan, Monte Carlo, New Zealand, Russia (Bolshoi and Mariinsky), Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Composer

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov was a Russian composer, teacher, and editor. At the age of six he began piano lessons before soon shifting his efforts to composing despite preferring literature at the time. It was his contact with mentor Mily Balakirev that inspired him to start composing seriously.

He had a significant naval career in line with family tradition, during which he deepened his appreciation and skill for composition, writing the beginnings of his symphony in E-flat minor throughout this period. Rimsky-Korsakov frequently used fairy tales and folk lore as subjects for his work; *Scheherazade* and *The Snow Maiden* being examples of this.

Other notable compositions among his 15 operas, 90 songs and 20 orchestral works include his *Trombone Concerto* and *Capriccio Espagnol*,

the *Russian Easter Festival Overture*, now considered staples of the classical music repertoire.

Martin Yates

Principal Guest Conductor

Having studied as pianist, composer and conductor, Martin Yates made his conducting debut with Israel National Opera, conducting *La Traviata*, *La Bohème*, *Tosca* and *Madama Butterfly*. He has conducted in opera houses of Gothenburg, Stockholm and Rome, and made his Edinburgh Festival debut conducting Leonard Bernstein's *On the Town*.

He has worked as guest conductor with UK orchestras including London Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Royal Scottish National Orchestra. He has worked extensively in Scandinavia with orchestras including Gothenberg Symphony Orchestra, Malmö Symphony Orchestra, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Swedish Chamber Orchestra. Internationally, he has conducted Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, China Philharmonic Orchestra, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

Ballet has become significant in Yates' career. He has conducted Orchestra of the Royal Opera House regularly at Covent Garden for Royal Ballet since February 2004, undertaking tours of the U.S, Asia and Europe. Martin Yates is Principal Guest Conductor of Scottish Ballet Orchestra and works internationally with companies including National Ballet of Japan and Paris Opera Ballet.

Yates has recorded over 80 CDs with orchestras including Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Gothenberg Symphony Orchestra.

Robert Baxter

Guest Conductor

Robert has collaborated as Guest Conductor with Scottish Ballet in productions of *Cinderella*, *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, *Coppelia*, *The Scandal at Mayerling*, *Dextera*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Snow Queen*, *The Crucible*, and *Mary, Queen of Scots*.

Graduating as a trumpet player he has performed, recorded and toured with every orchestra in Scotland and further afield has performed with the Mahler Chamber, Singapore Symphony and Birmingham Royal Ballet to mention a few. While working he studied conducting with Ilan Volkov and Christian Kluttig. He has conducted the Royal Scottish National Orchestra in many performances including the British premiere of Gavin Bryars viola concerto, *John Williams — Night at the Oscars*, and has conducted numerous film sessions including the Netflix series, *Life on Our Planet*. He recently conducted the RSNO in a recording of Dimitri Tiomkin's film score, *Stranger on a Train*. He's conducted the Lithuanian State Symphony and the Auckland Philharmonia, the latter on Scottish Ballet's tour to New Zealand. He's been Musical Director for diverse groups including Colours Classical, Belle and Sebastian, and Celtic Connections for BBC TV.

He is director and founder of Kessington Hall, a rehearsal and performance space in Glasgow and is chair of Scottish Schools Orchestra Trust. Robert was appointed Artistic Director of St Mary's Music School, Edinburgh in 2024.

Yi Wei

Guest Conductor

Yi Wei is a Chinese conductor based in London. In the 2025/26 season, he will make his debuts with The Royal Ballet and Opera, Scottish Ballet, and Northern Ballet, and will return as a guest conductor to Birmingham Royal Ballet. He was recently appointed Assistant Conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C.

Yi has conducted orchestras across the UK and internationally, including the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Royal Ballet Sinfonia, Northern Ballet Sinfonia, The Kennedy Centre Opera House Orchestra, the Band of His Majesty's Royal Marines Scotland, and Orchestra Academia China.

From 2023 to 2025, Yi was the Constant Lambert Conducting Fellow with The Royal Ballet and Opera and Birmingham Royal Ballet. He made his debut with Birmingham Royal Ballet and the Royal Ballet Sinfonia in *Luna*, and went on to conduct performances of *The Nutcracker* and *Cinderella* in major theatres across the UK, including the Royal Albert Hall. As a Fellow, he also worked extensively as Assistant and Cover Conductor on productions such as *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and many others.

Yi has served as Assistant Conductor in programmes with the BBC Philharmonic, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, collaborating with conductors including Sir Andrew Davis, Andrew Manze and Andrew Litton.

He studied conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music with Mark Heron and Clark Rundell, graduating in 2022 with one of the highest final recital scores ever awarded and receiving the Brierley/Kershaw Prize. In 2024, he was awarded an Associate Membership of the RNCM (ARNCM). He has also previously earned his Bachelor's degree in Conducting at the China Conservatory of Music under Youqing Yang.

Richard Honner **Music Arranger**

Richard was born in London and studied at London University, The Royal College of Music and the London Opera Centre. Before joining Scottish

Ballet in 1986 he worked with The Royal Opera House, The Australian Opera and Scottish Opera.

He was a guest conductor with San Francisco Ballet and Opera Hawkes Bay in New Zealand, he led the musical preparation of productions for English National Opera and Frankfurt Opera, conducted operas at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland between 1990–1992, and between 1989–1999 he was a guest conductor with The Hong Kong Ballet, The Hong Kong Sinfonietta and The City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong. In 1979 he was an official accompanist for the Sofia International Singing Competition.

In his 33 years with Scottish Ballet Richard conducted well over 2000 performances as well as writing and broadcasting on behalf of the company. The Snow Queen is his second collaboration with Christopher Hampson creating a new ballet, the first being *Hansel and Gretel* in 2013.

Since retiring, Richard has continued to teach on the Piano for Dance course that he set up with the RCS in 2006.

Oliver Rydout

Deputy Artistic Director

Oliver trained at the Hammond School and The Royal Ballet School. Upon graduation he joined Scottish Ballet and danced many soloist and leading roles.

After six years with the company, he took a leave of absence to dance with the Asami Maki Ballet and New National Ballet, Tokyo, performing Principal roles in much of the classical repertoire.

After four years in Japan, Oliver re-joined Scottish Ballet and danced leading roles in ballets by Balanchine, Van Manen, Ashton, MacMillan and Forsythe.

Oliver is a qualified Gyrotonic and Gyrokinesis instructor and gained a

Post-Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Arts Education. Oliver was a founding member and lecturer on the BA Modern Ballet programme at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Oliver has assisted and staged works for Arias, Darrell, Dawson, Hampson, Laplane, Macmillan, Mbi, Lopez-Ochoa, Pickett, Preljocaj, Runacre-Temple/Wright, Soto and Van Manen.

In 2025 Oliver was promoted to Deputy Artistic Director.

Tamarin Stott **Artistic Coach**

Tamarin trained in Devon with Rosemary Gillet and is a graduate of the Royal Ballet Upper School.

She performed with City Ballet of London, Birmingham Royal Ballet, K-Ballet and English National Ballet, dancing in all their classical productions, as well as roles with choreographers Christopher Hampson, Cathy Marston, Hans Van Manen, Russell Maliphant and Akram Kahn.

Tamarin's own choreography has been performed at The Place, The Print Room and Queen Elizabeth Hall. She was commissioned for a short film by Channel 4 which was nominated for an award at the Cinedans Film Festival.

She retired after over 20 years of professional dance and West End theatre experience to pursue a new role with Scottish Ballet.

Since joining Scottish Ballet, she has staged work by Christopher Hampson, Helen Pickett, David Dawson, Gene Kelly, Sir Kenneth Macmillan, Peter Darrell and Sophie Laplane. Tamarin has also assisted Dickson Mbi, Ivgi and Greben, and Jess & Morgs.

Sarah Medley-Marchand **Artistic Coach**

Sarah trained at The Royal Ballet School in London. In 2001 she joined the Royal Swedish Ballet, and in 2006 was awarded Gallodier Stipendier. In 2007, she joined Les Ballets de Monte Carlo as a First Soloist, re-joining the Royal Swedish Ballet in 2012 as a Principal Soloist.

Sarah has danced and worked with leading choreographers such as Jean Christophe Maillot, Maurice Bejart, Johan Inger, William Forsyth, Jiri Kylian, Twyla Tharp, Alonso King, Emio Greco, Marcia Haydee, Sharon Eyal, Jo Stromgren, Olivier Dubois, Alexander Ekman, Pär Isberg, John Cranko, Christopher Wheeldon, Krzysztof Pastor, John Neumeier, Mario Bigonzetti, David Dawson and Sir Peter Wright.

Sarah's guest performance highlights include the International Gala Tribute to the San Francisco Ballet, *The Reed Warbler* (Choreography Jerome Marchand), and *Mats Ek: Juliet and Romeo* at the Palais Garnier and Sadler's Wells, London.

Sarah is an owner of ArtEastDance Studio.

Ashley Dixon

Artistic Coach

Ashley is from Hull and trained at Central School of Ballet. Before joining Scottish Ballet in 2024, he was Principal Character Artist and Assistant Rehearsal Director at Northern Ballet. In 2013, Ashley achieved joint third place in Dance Europe's top 100 dancers.

Ashley's favourite roles include Peter (*Peter Pan*), Mercutio (*Romeo & Juliet*), Oberon and Demetrius (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Nutcracker Prince (*The Nutcracker*), Heathcliff and Young Heathcliff (*Wuthering Heights*), Harker (*Dracula*), Hamlet (*Hamlet*) and Mark Antony (*Cleopatra*).

Ashley's career highlight is creating the role of Beast in *Beauty & the Beast* with David Nixon, which had a glowing critical reception and became a firm favourite among audiences.

Scottish Ballet Orchestra

Principal Guest Conductor

Martin Yates

Guest Conductors

Robert Baxter

Yi Wei

Solo Violin (onstage)

Gillian Risi

First Violins

Robert Gibbs *Guest Leader A, G, I*

Róisín Verity *Guest Leader E*

Stewart Webster *Associate Leader*

Seonaid Aitken

Sian Holding *E, G*

Tom Hankey *E, G*

Fiona Murdoch

Joe Hodson *A, E, G*

Jane Reid *E, I*

Julie Reynolds

Sarah Perricone

Tessa Henderson

Stephanie Brough *E, G*

Emma Baird

Second Violins

Alan Mason

Emma Pantel

Kirsty Main *E*

Colm O'Braoin

Serena Whitmarsh

Rachel Culpan

Seona Glen

Julia Lungu *E, G*

Emily Birse *E, G*

Freya Hall *G*

Violas

Ian Anderson *E, G*

Zoe Matthews *I*

Liam Brolly

Emma Connell-Smith

Maggie Montgomery

Sasha Buettner

Aaron Morrison *E, G*

Cellos

Mark Bailey

Susan Dance

Rosie Townhill

Elias Rooney

Miranda Phythian-Adams *E, G*

Andrew Huggan *E, G*

Clea Friend *E*

Double Basses

Rick Standley

Chris Sergeant

Daniel Griffin

Joe Standley *E, G*

Flutes

Frederico Paixão
 Michelle McCabe
 Daniel Swani E
 Alba Vinti *A, G, I*

Oboes

Ruth Contractor
 Catherine Earnshaw
 Louisa Gawn
 Kirsty Logan *G*

Cor Anglais

Mary James

Clarinets

Robert Fairley
 Janet Laird
 Robert Digney

Bassoons/Contra Bassoon

Patrick Bolton *A, E, I*
 Charlotte Cox *G*
 Alex Walker
 Heather Brown
 Iona Garvie *G, I*

Horns

Helena Jacklin
 Christine McGinley
 Diana Scheach *E*
 Hayley Tonner *A, G, I*
 Jamie Shield *E, G, I*

Rachel Brady *A, E, G*
 Ian Smith *E, G*

Trumpets

Brian McGinley
 Sandy McGrattan
 Robert Baxter
 Andy Connell Smith *A, E, G*

Trombones

Paul Stone
 Richard Leonard
 Alan Adams
 Owen Pickering *E, G*

Tuba

Jonathan Gawn
 Kenneth Brown *E, G*

Harp

Meredith McCracken

Keys

Brian Prentice

Timpani

Peter Evans

Percussion

Simon Archer
 Owen Williams
 Lauren O'Malley
 Alasdair Kelly
 Peter Murch *E*

<p><i>A</i> = Aberdeen <i>E</i> = Edinburgh <i>G</i> = Glasgow <i>I</i> = Inverness</p>
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Dancers

Principals

1. Marlen Fuerte Castro
2. Jessica Fyfe
3. Roseanna Leney, *sponsored by Hamilton & Inches*
4. Evan Loudon, *sponsored by Artemis*
5. Bruno Micchiardi

Soloists

6. Thomas Edwards
7. Grace Horler
8. Yuri Marques
9. Rimbaud Patron, *Scottish Ballet Artist in Residence, Photographer*
10. Melissa Polson
11. Gina Scott
12. Claire Souet, *kindly supported by Fiona & Ian Russell*
13. Kayla-Maree Tarantolo

First Artists

14. Andrea Azzari, *kindly supported by Jamie & Kyle Anderson-Weir*
15. Rishan Benjamin
16. James Garrington
17. Alice Kawalek
18. Harvey Littlefield, *kindly*

supported by Jamie & Kyle Anderson-Weir

19. Benjamin Thomas
20. Anna Williams, *kindly supported by Jim Pettigrew & Joanna Lawson*

Artists

21. Charley Austin
22. Antonia Cramb
23. Hannah Cubitt, *kindly supported by Fiona & Ian Russell, Scottish Ballet's Young Friend Ambassador*
24. Harvey Evans
25. Theo Greenfield
26. Mackenzie Jacob, *Scottish Ballet's Young Friend Ambassador*
27. Hamish Longley
28. Danila Marzilli
29. Annabelle McCoy
30. Alfie McPherson
31. Mayu Takata
32. Urara Takata
33. Claire Tjoe-Fat
34. Elizabeth Williams
35. Seira Winning

Student Dancers

Student dancers appear with the kind permission of Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Please see the cast sheet for full details.

Children Performing in The Snow Queen

Children performing in The Snow Queen appear courtesy of Scottish Ballet's Junior Associate Programme.

Please see the cast sheet for full details.

With thanks to Head of Associate Programme, Kerry Livingstone, chaperones Chloe Brown and Alison Marshall-Black and guest teacher Georgina Morphet.

Are you interested in supporting a dancer? Please contact Antonia Brownlee (Director of Philanthropy) on 0141 331 2931 or email **antonia.brownlee@scottishballet.co.uk**

Dancer Spotlight: Gina Scott

Soloist

Joined Scottish Ballet: 2023

Training: Wendy Sharpe and Sharon Potter School of Dance, Elmhurst School for Dance, The Royal Ballet School.

What career moment are you most proud of?

Dancing my first Principal role aged 20 in my second season at the Semperoper Ballett as Nikiya in *La Bayadere*. I only found out on the morning of the stage call and was performing the next day due to a dancer being injured.

What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?

Whatever you experience is yours forever, no-one can ever take that away from you.

What's your favourite ballet to watch?

Kenneth McMillan's *Manon*. The physical and emotional demand from this ballet — it covers everything.

What's your favourite ballet to perform?

David Dawson's *Giselle* — I performed the role of Myrtha. The breath and movement that can be developed is never-ending. I always find new things to explore for myself every time I dance this piece.

What's the funniest thing that's happened on stage or in the studio?

Falling flat on my face within the studio and on stage. Not so funny at the time but later down the line I can laugh.

How did it feel to play Elizabeth I in the recent production of *Mary, Queen of Scots*?

Portraying Young Elizabeth was a deeply fulfilling experience. I was given the creative freedom to explore and interpret the role in my own way, bringing a unique perspective to the character. The moment I stepped onto the stage, fully transformed through costume, hair, and makeup, the emotions were heightened, and the world of the performance felt very real. From performing in pointe shoes to walking on stilts and ultimately being pushed to the floor — each physical challenge strengthened my emotional connection to the role and deepened my understanding of Young Elizabeth's journey. It has been an honour to witness the evolution of this character and to contribute to her growth.



Get to know all the dancers by visiting **scottishballet.co.uk/dancers** or scan the QR code.