



# Broadway in crisis?

How the pandemic has affected  
the US theatre economy in New York and LA

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Kevin Whitlock  
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COVER

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New figures just published by the trade bodies that represent the theatre industries on the East and West coasts of America don't make for happy reading. A perfect storm of Covid-19, staff and skills shortages, inflation, rising fuel and food costs, ill-conceived legislation and, most of all, uncertainty and unpredictable audience behaviour, have all contributed to a very bleak business environment (and let's not forget, in the absence of patronage or government/state funding, US theatre is a business that must make profits in order to develop and grow). But, as everyone was saying at last week's Tony awards, Broadway and LA are highly

resilient, and there are hopes of a bounceback, even if the picture is grim in the short to medium term. So our feature on American theatre's crisis ends on a cautiously optimistic note.

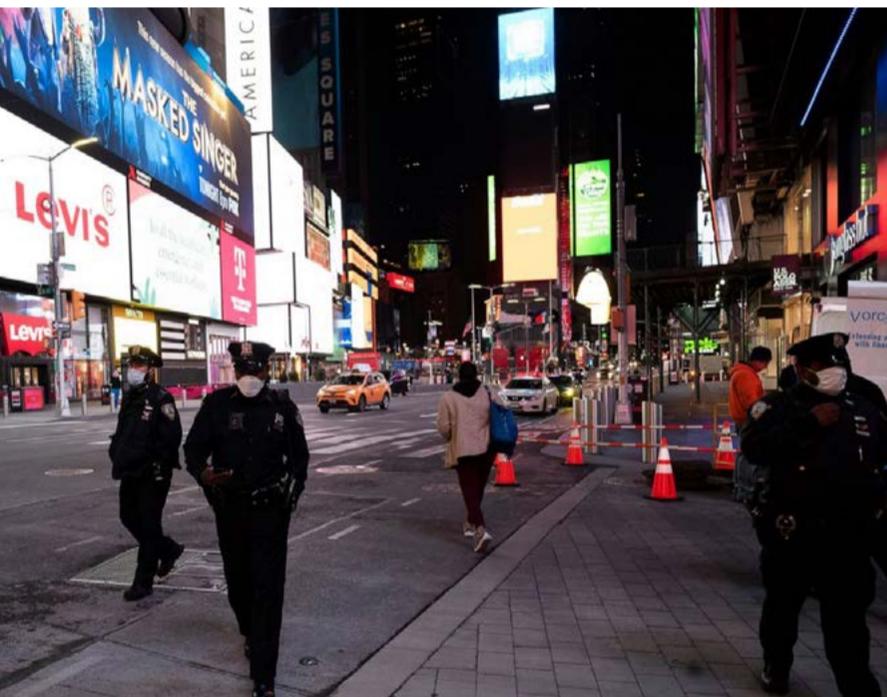
Elsewhere, it's good to hear that music lovers are returning to China's concert halls now that Covid lockdowns in the country are easing (page 9); and I would also commend you the interview (page 17) with Michael Duffy, the ambitious and energetic new head of programming at the Cheltenham Music Festival. CMF has always championed new and contemporary music, but Michael is hoping to add more commissioning and community

engagement to the festival's bow – more cause for optimism I think.

On another note, there are some big changes afoot here at International Arts Manager. We hope to be sharing more on this in the very near future, either within the pages of the magazine or via an email sent to all subscribers. The planned changes are all, I think, positive and you'll be getting more of all the best parts of the magazine. It is, I hope, the start of a whole new era. But more on that later.

In the meantime, stay safe and enjoy whatever performing art(s) you love!

**Kevin**



Are the lights really going out on Broadway? 12



Cheltenham Music Festival's head of programming Michael Duffy speaks 17

05

**News**

- Performers contribute to a successful Platinum Jubilee
- UK arts leaders call for education policy overhaul and better funding for, and greater emphasis on, creative subjects
- 2022 Tony Awards 'demonstrate Broadway's resilience'
- Sage Gateshead to involve its patrons in name change proposals
- New season for Tokyo's Suntory Hall unveiled
- The next NEXT is 2024: Classical:NEXT to skip 2023
- Critics' Circle announces National Dance Awards winners
- The Sarasota Ballet makes last-minute season changes
- Audiences return to China's concert halls as lockdowns ease

12

**Cover feature/Research**

- The numbers are in, and they're pretty grim: New York and Los Angeles' theatre economies have been decimated by a perfect storm of Covid lockdowns, soaring inflation, stagnating wages, staff shortages and more. Is there any cause for optimism?

17

**Feature**

- Michael Duffy is the Cheltenham Music Festival's ambitious new head of programming – he shares his thoughts on, and vision for, this key cultural event, which celebrates the new and contemporary and the local community

21

**Competitions update**

- The latest winners of the most prestigious competitions unveiled

22

**People**

- Two pages of who's moving, and to where

**22**

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## 70 YEARS AND COUNTING... BEATING THE DRUM FOR THE BRITISH MONARCHY

Tens of thousands of performers, creators, administrators and technicians from the British Isles and the Commonwealth were rallied together across the UK earlier this month (5 June) for 'The People's Pageant', a day-long celebration in London of Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom's 70-year reign, and the successful culmination of the four-day Platinum Jubilee public holiday.

More than 6,000 performers took part in the pageant, which was watched by hundreds of thousands of people in London, as well as millions more on television and online across the globe. Organisers of the vent included 'pageant master' Adrian Evans, show director David Zolkwer and event organiser Rosanna Machado.

Here (above), one of those performers takes part in a last-minute rehearsal prior to the event.

© PA Media Group/HM Platinum Jubilee



education

## UK ARTS LEADERS BACK NEW REPORT CALLING FOR MORE FUNDING FOR CREATIVE EDUCATION

Leading UK arts figures including theatre directors Nicholas Hytner and Rufus Norris and prima ballerina Tamara Rojo have contributed to a new commission examining the education system in Britain that is calling for additional funding for schools to spend on subjects such as drama and music. The recommendation comes against a backdrop of declining take up of creative subjects at GCSE-level and as the English Baccalaureate continues to be criticised for its failure to include the arts.

The Times Education Commission has been examining Britain's education system for the past year, with arts figures contributing to the inquiry and backing the report's final recommendations, which were published on Wednesday (15 June). As well as calling on the government to introduce a broader curriculum, the report urges an 'electives premium' to be spent on activities including drama, music, dance and sport as part of a 12-point plan to

transform UK education.

"Sport, music, drama, art, debating and dance should be an integral part of the timetable for all children, not an optional extracurricular add on," the report states, adding: "The best schools already understand that education is about more than academic learning."

A YouGov poll for the commission found that 72% of parents agreed that "all schools receiving extra government funding to provide additional extracurricular activities such as sport, drama, music or dance" was a good idea.

The report points to evidence that taking part in wider cultural activities can also boost academic outcomes, highlighting how SATs results at two primary schools in Yorkshire rose by 20% after they allocated three hours of musical activity every week to singing sessions organised by Opera North. The head teachers said that the "cultural enrichment had created more positive attitudes to learning and boosted

the children's and social skills", according to the report.

The report also highlighted that the Royal Shakespeare Company's programme in schools generated "statistically significant improvements in pupils' attitudes, not just to Shakespeare but to education more generally", with Rojo adding that her own understanding of maths had been aided by her work in dance.

According to the report, private schools understand "all too well that there must be more to education than knowledge, and the independent sector has invested heavily in theatres, art rooms and music studios".

National Theatre director Norris said: "It's very frustrating. If you go to Eton, the theatres are better equipped than our theatres, and that isn't because it's frivolous, it is because the people who are spending a lot of money to send their children there – including many politicians – understand that it's a key part of a rounded education".

Hytner, who runs the Bridge

**"EDUCATION HAS BECOME TOO NARROW AND ONE KNOCK-ON CONSEQUENCE OF THAT IS THAT THE ARTS SECTOR THEN APPEARS TO BE ELITIST IN THE WAY IT GOES ABOUT MAKING PERFORMING ARTS AND IN THE PEOPLE THAT IT ATTRACTS TO THOSE PERFORMING ARTS"**

Theatre in London, said sidelining cultural activities in state schools was exasperating social division: "I think education has become too narrow and one knock-on consequence of that is that the sector that I'm part of then appears to be elitist in the way it goes about making performing arts and in the people that it attracts to those performing arts.

"And it really is not our elitism that is at fault. It is an elitism that is a direct consequence of education policy and education funding," he said, adding: "It's no surprise that the private sector is so good at turning out musicians, actors, playwrights and filmmakers, because the facilities available are so extraordinarily good."

The report underlines how arts subjects are being squeezed in schools, with 90% of state secondary schools having made cuts to the provision of creative subjects. It also points to a 47% reduction in participation in theatre and drama and a 36% fall in music as well as significant drops in pupils taking GCSE-level drama and music.

The report calls for a broader curriculum, offering more academic and vocational qualifications at 18 and slimmed down examinations at 16.

venue

# SAGE GATESHEAD IS CHANGING ITS NAME AND INVITING PATRONS TO GET INVOLVED

This week Sage Gateshead, the premier music venue in the North-East of England, launches a campaign to help create a new name and visual identity. The venue is asking audiences, artists, communities, and all those who feel a connection to the venue and its associated charity to share their thoughts, memories, photos and ideas.

People are invited to join in online or at the Sage Gateshead itself. The #sgchanges campaign will run throughout the summer with stories shared at [sagegateshead.com/changes](http://sagegateshead.com/changes).

The venue's new name will be announced in the autumn – with a new visual identity to



© Jez Campbell/Shutterstock

come in 2023. Sage Gateshead, the largest cultural charity in the region, supports and celebrates music of all types, and for all ages, staging more than 400 performances annually. It is also a home for music learning. A new arena and convention centre is being built at Gateshead Quays and will become 'The Sage', following support from Sage Group plc.

There are three ways people can have their say: Visit [sagegateshead.com/changes](http://sagegateshead.com/changes) to share content on a Story Wall; use the hashtag #sgchanges to add a video message or photo on social media; or visit the Sage building where you can leave a message on a postcard.

Abigail Pogson, managing director of Sage Gateshead and members of Jambone reveal the campaign engaging the public in a new identity for the international music venue. #sgchanges



theatre

# 2022 TONYS 'DEMONSTRATE BROADWAY'S RESILIENCE'

Jukebox musicals and 'reboots' of tried and tested classics were among the big winners at this year's Tony Awards, held earlier this week (12 June).

*MJ*, a jukebox musical built around the music of Michael Jackson, won four awards, while a gender-flipped revival of Stephen Sondheim's classic 1970 musical *Company* and the new play *The*

*Lehman Trilogy* also triumphed.

The awards, held at Radio City Music Hall in New York, and now on their 75th edition, are regarded as a highlight of the theatre year.

Broadway newcomer Myles Frost won best performance by an actor in a leading role in a musical for playing the superstar Jackson. He is the third performer

in four years to win a Tony for playing a pop icon.

The much-hyped *A Strange Loop* (which bills itself as 'The Big, Black & Queer American Musical') picked up just two awards, but one was the night's biggest award – best musical. Michael R Jackson wrote the book, music and lyrics.

*Company* won best revival of a musical for a second time (the first was for a 2007 revival). Two actors from the musical won Tonys: Broadway legend Patti LuPone scooped best featured actress for playing Joanne, a role originated by another Broadway legend, Elaine Stritch; and Matt Doyle won best featured actor for playing Jamie, the gender-switched role originated by Beth Howland (as Amy). This was the third Tony win for LuPone, who

won best actress in a musical in *Evita* and *Gypsy*. Marianne Elliott won best direction in a musical, also for *Company*.

Additional winners included: Simon Hale for best orchestrations for his work on *Girl from the North Country*, a musical of Bob Dylan songs; Sam Mendes won best direction of a play for *The Lehman Trilogy*; *Take Me Out* won best revival of a drama (Richard Greenberg's play about a baseball player's act of coming out, won best play in 2003).

Angela Lansbury, a five-time Tony winner who hosted the Tony telecast five times, received a lifetime achievement award. Lansbury, 96, was not present to accept the award in person.

[www.tonyawards.com](http://www.tonyawards.com)

•See feature, pp12-16



© Craig Schulman

music

# SUNTORY HALL ANNOUNCES SUMMER FESTIVAL 2022

Tokyo's iconic Suntory Hall, one of Japan's leading performing arts venues, has announced details of its 2022 Summer Festival, which will take place on 21–28 August. Initiated in 1987, the festival is an important annual event not only for Suntory Hall, but also for Tokyo's contemporary music scene.

As in previous years, the Summer Festival is formed of three different strands: The Producer Series; Theme Composer (part of the Suntory Hall International Program for Music Composition); and the Yasushi Akutagawa Suntory Award for Music Composition, an award given to the most outstanding work premiered in Japan in the previous year.

This year's programme is as follows: The Producer Series: Klangforum Wien. In this series, each year a different artist/ensemble is invited to curate a series of concerts from their unique point of view. This year's producer is a contemporary music ensemble from Europe, the Klangforum Wien. Since its foundation in 1985, the Vienna-based group is known for "exploring new horizons of artistic creativity together with the most important composers of our time". Klangforum Wien will produce and perform four concerts, two in the Main Hall and two in the Blue Rose. To celebrate the centenary of the birth of the composer Iannis Xenaxis (1922–2001), they will perform his epic

ballet *Kraanerg*, conducted by Emilio Pomàrico. The orchestral concert, entitled *Pioneers of the Future*, will include Japanese premieres of works by Johannes Maria Staud, Eiko Tsukamoto, and Georg Friedrich Haas. In the Blue Rose, they will present two Viennese-themed chamber music concerts: *Family Tree of Klangforum*, which features several composers with whom they have had long-term connections including Beat Furrer, Friedrich Cerha, and Olga Neuwirth, and *Das neue Wien*, in which they will look back at the roots of the Second Viennese school – Schoenberg, Berg, and Mahler – through new chamber arrangements.

The Theme Composer series focusses on German composer Isabel Mundry, of the Musikhochschule München; this will be the first time her music will be featured extensively in Tokyo. In the *Chamber Music Portrait*, five of her compositions for diverse ensembles will be performed by Japanese musicians. In the *Orchestra Portrait* concert, the world premiere of *Gesture* for viola and orchestra will be given by the violist Nils Mönkemeyer with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Michael Wendeborg. Mundry will also lead a public Music Composition Workshop with young Japanese composers.



Isabel Mundry

The Yasushi Akutagawa Suntory Award for Music Composition, is presented to the most notable orchestral work by a Japanese composer premiered during the previous year (January–December 2021). Following the performance of the three nominated works, the jury (Kenji Sakai, Norio Fukushi, and Akiko Yamane) will conduct the deliberations on stage in public. This year, the works of Makoto Ohata, Kohsuke Negishi, and Yuya Haryu are nominated, and will be performed by the New Japan Philharmonic conducted by Yoichi Sugiyama. The concert will be preceded by the world premiere of a work for two pianos and orchestra by Kenta Onoda, the winner of the 2020 award. There will also be an opportunity for the public to vote for their favourite piece. A livestream of the performances and deliberations will be available afterwards.



music

# CLASSICAL:NEXT SKIPS A YEAR, NEEDS YOUR FEEDBACK

More than 900 international music professionals from 50 countries attended the 10th jubilee and first Hannoverian edition of the biggest global gathering for classical and art music, Classical:NEXT, last month.

However, the organisers have

announced there will be no Classical:NEXT edition in 2023; instead, Classical:NEXT will "take time to imagine and to develop a sustainable vision and future-oriented concept that will take the event to the next level, in a collaborative and participatory way". This, says general manager

Fabienne Krause, "will be the next mission, our next 'NEXT'."

To help with the event's reimagining, a delegates survey has been put together and the festival is asking everyone who attended (and those who weren't able to) to take 15 minutes to fill it out online.

"Your feedback is of great value to us. Please complete the survey by Thursday, 30 June 2022," commented Krause. "We look forward to hearing from you!"

**The survey can be completed at: <https://www.surveymonkey.de/r/FJPTQQ>**

music

# AUDIENCES RETURNING TO CHINESE CONCERT HALLS AS LOCKDOWN EASES

On 5 June, six weeks after cancelling its scheduled concerts (more than 140 in all), the China NCPA Orchestra, the resident ensemble at the National Centre for Performing Arts in Beijing, returned with a livestreaming concert at the venue.

The orchestra performed Beethoven's *Third 'Eroica'* and *Fifth Symphonies* under the baton of conductor Lyu Jia. Despite the lack of a physical audience, the concert attracted more than 21 million views via social media.

Gong Jicheng, vice president of the NCPA, said: "We prepared for this concert for several weeks because we knew that one day we would resume our performances."

Lyu, also the NCPA's artistic director of music and the China NCPA Orchestra's music director, said the performances of the Beethoven symphonies were dedicated to audiences who "badly



missed" attending live concerts during the outbreak.

"We've overcome all obstacles to return our lives to normal. In particular, this performance is a salute to the heroes of the outbreak: the medical personnel, delivery riders and others whose jobs suddenly put them at a greater risk," Lyu added.

The online performance officially marked the reopening of

the NCPA to concert audiences the following day – tickets reportedly sold out within four hours.

Gong added: "Virtual concerts cannot replace the joy of attending a live performance."

As entertainment venues in China gradually reopen, music troupes are making a return to live performance nationwide. The NCPA has updated its June performance schedule, including

classical music concerts and ballet. The National Ballet of China has started a run of three works: *Dunhuang*, an original Chinese ballet, and the classic Western productions *Onegin* and *Giselle*.

Many of China's biggest cities, including Beijing and Shanghai, have been subject to stringent lockdowns over the past two to three months, thanks to the government's "zero Covid" policy. During these enforced lockdowns, musicians practised at home or in quarantine hotels, often meeting online. Although the threat of Covid is receding in most of China's large centres of population, sporadic outbreaks do occur (as in Beijing earlier this week), prompting local lockdowns and compulsory mass testing. The world's second biggest economy was hit by lockdowns in April and May, but observers are predicting an economic bounce in June.

theatre

# NIDA WELCOMES ALL TO OPEN DAY

This weekend (18–19 June) Australia's National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) is to host an Open Day at its Sydney campus which aims to welcome visitors who are curious or passionate about the arts and entertainment industries to explore NIDA's educational offerings.

From design, costume-making, singing, set building, lighting, make-up, sound and stage management to acting, writing, directing and musical theatre at NIDA Open Day this Saturday (18 June), guests can go behind the scenes of Australia's leading performing arts education centre.

NIDA offers hands-on, highly personalised training for all areas of the creative industries, no matter where interest across the performing arts lies, and is the only Australian school to rank in *The Hollywood Reporter's*

Top 25 drama schools in the world.

NIDA alumni include film director Baz Luhrmann, actors Cate Blanchett, Sarah Snook, Richard Roxburgh and others.

Visitors to the NIDA Open Day can attend talks by course leaders, industry specialists and NIDA alumni. There are also interactive sessions, guided tours of the campus, demonstrations, free workshops and a foyer full of expert staff sharing their knowledge.

The event focuses on an inclusive environment and the diversity of NIDA's students and staffing, with information on support for First Nations and under-represented artists through scholarships, plus financial and cultural assistance.

Alumni will also speak "to inspire the next generation of students with their stories of experience, hard work and creativity",



according to a spokesperson. The open day also provides an insight into NIDA's one-year intensive diploma-level courses, including Diploma of Musical Theatre, Diploma of Stage and Screen, Diploma of Screen and Media and Diploma of Live Production and Technical Services, with speakers addressing the career opportunities available across the fashion, film, television industry and beyond.

For those unable to attend in person, there's an option to join virtually.

For more details and to register visit: <https://bit.ly/3zK7Ru2>

dance

## UK CRITICS' CIRCLE NATIONAL DANCE AWARDS: 2022 WINNERS REVEALED

Natalia Osipova, Edward Watson, Matthew Bourne and Marianela Núñez were among the big winners of this year's UK Critics' Circle National Dance Awards, which were held in London on Monday (13 June).

Bourne's *The Midnight Bell* (based on novelist/playwright Patrick Hamilton's 1929 work of the same name) picked up two awards, for best modern choreography and outstanding female modern performance – which went to Michela Meazza. The overall best male and female dancer awards were won respectively by Watson, who retired from dancing late last year, and Núñez, both of the Royal Ballet.

Other individual prizes were given to James Vu Anh Pham for Akram Khan's *Outwitting the Devil*, to Osipova for the Royal Ballet's *Giselle* and to Jeffrey Cirio for *Creature* at English National Ballet. English National Ballet was

named outstanding company at the awards, while Ballet Black took home the inaugural best mid-scale company prize. Best independent company was won by Yorke Dance Project.

Elsewhere, the De Valois Award, which celebrates an outstanding achievement in dance, was given to producer and former director of The Place, John Ashford.

The winners in full were as follows: *Dancing Times* award for best male dancer, Edward Watson; Best female dancer, Marianela Núñez; Stef Stefanou Award for outstanding company, English National Ballet; Best mid-scale company, Ballet Black; Best independent company, Yorke Dance Project; Best classical choreography, Valentino Zucchetti for *Anemoui* at the Royal Ballet; Best modern choreography, Matthew Bourne for *The Midnight Bell*; Emerging artist award,



Emily Suzuki; Outstanding female modern performance, Michela Meazza as Miss Roach in *The Midnight Bell* for New Adventures; Outstanding male modern performance, James Vu Anh Pham in *Outwitting the Devil* by Akram Khan Company at London's Sadler's Wells; Outstanding female classical performance, Natalia Osipova as the title role in *Giselle* at the Royal Ballet; Outstanding male classical performance, Jeffrey Cirio as the title role in *Creature* at English National Ballet; Outstanding creative contribution, Thomas Adès for *The Dante Project* at the Royal Ballet; Best dance film, Scottish Ballet for *Starstruck*; De Valois Award, John Ashford.

dance

## THE SARASOTA BALLET ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO UPCOMING SEASON



The Sarasota Ballet (TSB) has announced changes to its 2022-2023 Season. Due to a scheduling conflict, Sir David Bintley's *The Spider's Feast* will be postponed to a future season – but will be replaced by the Company Premiere of Jerome Robbins' *In the Night* (pictured) and the return of the great choreographer's *Fancy Free*.

TSB director Iain Webb said: "We are disappointed that we will not be able to move forward with *The Spider's Feast* this season, but when we do perform it, we are doing Sir David Bintley's choreographic vision justice."

Programme 1 will now also feature a new ballet by Gemma Bond, replacing Asia Bu's scheduled performance. Bond,

an internationally acclaimed dancer and choreographer, has held leading roles with The Royal Ballet in works such as August Bournville's *La Sylphide* and Kenneth Macmillan's *Anastasia*, before joining American Ballet Theatre in 2008. Since 2010, Bond has created three ballets for ABT's Choreographic Institute, as well as works for ABT Studio Company, Atlanta Ballet, Ballet Sun Valley, Intermezzo Ballet Company and New York Theatre Ballet.

Full Season Subscriptions to TSB's 2022-2023 Season are now available, with Four Ballet Subscriptions available on 20 June and single tickets, 8 August.

<https://www.sarasotaballet.org>

business

## UTA BUYS OUT CURTIS BROWN

Talent and literary agency, Curtis Brown Group (CBG) has been acquired by global organisation United Talent Agency (UTA), with plans to 'expand international opportunities for clients'.

The acquisition is being billed as the first time a prominent UK-based literary and talent organisation has joined with a global talent agency. Under the deal, for which the financial terms were not disclosed, all 240 employees of CBG are expected to stay on. CBG, which was founded in 1899, will continue to operate under its current name and management, including chief executive Jonny Geller.

UTA represents artists and creators including athletes, musicians, writers, gamers and digital influencers. The organisation has headquarters in Los Angeles,

with offices in Atlanta, Chicago, Nashville, New York and London.

According to a press statement, "the alliance aims to provide more opportunities for clients and to give Curtis Brown Group the resources to expand its business".

The two organisations have teamed up in the past on projects involving Damian Lewis, Lily James, Alicia Vikander, Bel Powley and Ncuti Gatwa, who has recently been cast as the BBC's next *Doctor Who*.

David Kramer, co-president of UTA, said: "This move is about the vanishing borders of the global entertainment business and our united determination to ensure artists and creators remain at the heart of the opportunities ahead."

Geller said the partnership will enable CBG to "grow and respond to the demands of an increasingly globalised world".

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\*Isabel Debut

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# CAN THE SHOW REALLY GO ON?

**AMERICA'S THEATRE ECONOMY ON BOTH COASTS HAS TAKEN A HAMMERING DURING THE PANDEMIC, NEW FIGURES SHOW. KEVIN WHITLOCK LOOKS AT A TROUBLING SET OF NUMBERS**

Above: Broadway in better days, before the fall  
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**B**roadway's 2021-22 season – 10 weeks shorter than usual, thanks to Covid-19 lockdowns and the cancellations it caused, as well as the tourists who didn't show up – suffered a series of hammer blows at the box office, new data from US theatre trade association The Broadway League (TBL) have revealed.

Although commentators have said that box-office numbers were expected to be down, TBL's figures paint a 'dismal' picture. The industry, an important component of New York City's performing arts economy and a vital draw for both domestic and foreign tourists, took in a total of \$845,354,915 at the box office, down about 54% from the historic high of \$1.83 billion set by the 2018-19 Broadway season (the last full season prior to the 2020 pandemic shutdown).

TBL's figures also show that total attendance for the season was 6,729,143, which is also down 54%

from the 2019 record high of 14,768,254. Despite the year-to-year downturn, the percentage of available seats that were filled during the 2021-22 season was a solid 82%.

The figures are, however, skewed by the fact that start of the season that came to a close on 22 May was delayed by 10 weeks due to the Covid shutdown, meaning the season was only 42 weeks long compared with the usual 52. When Broadway returned last August, production openings were staggered throughout the autumn, and by early November just 30 of the 39 available Broadway venues were occupied (two venues were under construction at the time).

Of the 42 weeks of the season, 16 included cancelled performances due to Covid, including the usually lucrative December and New Year's holidays. In all, a total of 56 shows played on Broadway during the 2021-22 season, including 34 new shows, 17

continuing shows, and five return engagements. The season that just ended – which was celebrated with the Tony Awards on 12 June – closed

out on a positive note, with the 35 current productions grossing a total of \$33,290,185, a 10% upswing from the previous week's tally. Attendance of 257,558 marked a 5% increase over the previous week, with an average ticket price of \$129 up about 5% from the previous week's \$123.

“We had a cancelled January, a great February, and the worst March of any month as an organisation, and I can't explain it. There's no rhyme or reason”

Nearly all the shows saw at least slight increases in receipts over the previous week, perhaps still reflecting the recent 'Tony nominations glow'; and only one production – Lincoln Center Theatre's *The Skin of Our Teeth* – cancelled performances (two) due to Covid (the revival grossed \$164,479 for six performances, filling about 44% of its available seats).

Continuing its upward trajectory following its 11 Tony nominations (plus wins on the night – see story on page 7), *A Strange Loop* was up by \$13,060 to \$703,728, filling 90% of its seats. Other productions surpassing the 90% capacity mark were *Aladdin*, *Funny Girl*, *Hamilton*, *Macbeth*, *MJ*, *Moulin Rouge!*, *Plaza Suite*, *Six*, *Take Me Out*, *The Book of Mormon* and *The Lion King*, with both *Hadestown* and *The Music Man* at SRO.

At the other end of the spectrum were the productions playing to more than a few empty seats (often despite strong critical reviews): *Girl from the North Country* took in \$304,809 with 56% of seats filled; *POTUS* was at 58% of capacity, grossing \$529,449; *Mr. Saturday Night* was at 70% of capacity with \$818,982; *Hangmen*, 49% of capacity, with \$306,868; and *The Minutes*, 70% of capacity with \$342,174. *Paradise Square* was at 57% of capacity, grossing \$241,952. Both the 1970 Sondheim musical *Company* and Ntozake Shange's 1976 dance/poetry piece *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/ When the Rainbow Is Enuf* saw what were, under the circumstances, decent returns, with the former

grossing \$726,010 with 76% of seats filled; the latter at \$339,177 and 72%.

In addition, *Forbes* magazine recently reported that Broadway grosses fell 15% to \$29 million in the last week of April, with attendance taking a nosedive as well, leaving at least one-quarter of all seats unoccupied. Broadway's woes have also been exacerbated by the problems currently affecting many US cities – petty crime, dirt, vacant retail space, homelessness, graffiti, and even drug dealers operating openly – meaning that tourists have become wary of visiting.

Over on the West Coast of the US, the numbers from Los Angeles are equally grim.

A recent study conducted by a group of arts organisations, LA's Performing Arts and Reopening Survey, found three troubling trends: both operating capacity and audience attendance are down to almost 50% of pre-pandemic levels, and ticket revenue is about one-third of what it was before Covid-19 struck. Expenses, in the form of Covid safety, as well as general inflation and rent increases, are also up.

Artistic directors say that this is not sustainable.

“There's a foreseeable financial cliff ahead of us. And I think that's what we're really concerned about,” Gustavo Herrera, executive director of Arts for LA, which advocates for equitable access to the arts throughout the region, told the *LA Times*. Herrera helped to produce the survey alongside various artistic leaders including Leticia Rhi Buckley, chief executive of LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes; Danny Feldman, producing artistic director of the Pasadena Playhouse; and Thor Steingraber,





Above: Still the attraction it once was? © Stuart Monk/Shutterstock

executive and artistic director of the Soraya at Cal State Northridge, with support from the Parsons and Ahmanson foundations.

Many LA arts organisations stayed afloat during the worst of the pandemic shutdowns through government pandemic grants and loans, augmented with generous donor support. That aid has long since dried up, theatre commentators say.

Additional surveys reveal more of the perilous road ahead, including one by the global consulting firm McKinsey & Co, which suggests that it could take more than five years for the most affected sectors of the US economy, including the performing arts, to get back to their 2019-level contributions to national and regional GDP.

Another survey by the National Endowment for the Arts found that in the first year of the pandemic, “few areas of the US economy were hit harder than the performing arts” – and that during that time the arts economy lost more than half a million jobs.

SMU DataArts, a body that seeks to gather information to help the arts and culture sectors with their decision-making processes, found last month that unemployment in the arts doubled the national average during the pandemic, spiking at 30%. The survey also found that BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) and disabled workers in the arts experienced disproportionately higher levels of unemployment.

Steingraber told the *LA Times* that he agreed the arts’ recovery to pre-pandemic levels might take many years, as it did after the financial crash of 2008. Unlike that recovery, which went up in a slow, steady line, the timeline of this recovery (due to various

uncertainties, such as rampant US inflation, the war in Ukraine, energy price hikes, and future Covid outbreaks) is much more uncertain.

“We know it’s [the recovery] coming, but we have no idea when we’re gonna get there. And that makes it even harder in a way,” Steingraber added.

The lack of additional funding comes at ‘a perilous moment’ when operating costs have skyrocketed – a situation that is affecting London’s West End and many other theatre centres in the developed world. Among the factors leading to increasing costs are backstage staff shortages, materials shortages, and, in the US, the extra expense of regular testing for cast and crew, dedicated Covid-19 monitors, additional cleaning and sanitising, increased front-of-house staff and expensive air filtration systems.

Trade organisations in the US have pointed to ‘precipitous rises’ in the price of wood and metal for building sets, along with just about every other item needed to stage a production and operate a venue (materials for costumes, food and drink, furniture, soap, sanitiser and even paper towels) as presenting particular threats.

In addition, and peculiar to Los Angeles, there are financial implications of California Assembly Bill 5 [known as AB 5], which went into effect at the beginning of 2020 and extends employee classification status to some gig workers, including actors and other performing artists.

“AB 5 is crippling the smaller theatres,” Snehal Desai, producing artistic director of East West Players told the *LA Times* last month, adding that he had to hire an additional staff member “just to handle bringing former contractors onto the payroll. As an organisation adds staff, that, in turn, affects its insurance and liability. There are all these administrative issues and hidden costs that really start to pile up.”

Martha Demson, board president of the Theatrical Producers League of Los Angeles (TPLLA), an association for small and midsize non-profit theatres, estimated that for the smallest venues, the cost of payroll under AB 5 has gone up several hundred percent.

In an effort to counteract this well-intentioned but unhelpful legislation, TPLAA, along with the union Actors Equity Association, is co-sponsoring California



Senate Bill 1116 (better known as the Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund), which seeks to establish a grant programme to support small non-profit performing arts organisations by reimbursing their payroll expenses. “I think it [the Senate Bill] will help our organisations get to a place where they can be self-sustaining on their own, and right now they cannot,” says Demson.

However, the hardest issue to tackle, all on both coasts agree, is audience behaviour. Although we have written in *IAM* about audiences’ post-lockdown hunger for live performance, audiences (in the US at least) have proved unpredictable, and many are continuing to stay away, despite the expensive safety measures put in place; and those theatre-goers who do attend, are often buying heavily discounted tickets at the last minute.

East West Players’ Desai believes that habits have changed during the pandemic: “I think what we’re seeing is our audiences are coming back, but they are being really selective, which makes it hard to stage riskier plays or challenging material – or to do new work or introduce new artists.”

Even before the pandemic, a trend was emerging

in LA – mirroring changes in New York and London that have been occurring for a decade or more – in which the hits were getting bigger and attendance to everything else was shrinking. The pandemic has exacerbated that trend so that critically praised, highly anticipated and heavily marketed shows will still attract large audiences.

But predicting what will be a hit – always tricky in theatreland – has become much more difficult, which in turn makes planning and budgeting more uncertain. Producers and managers worry that newer or riskier productions won’t garner the needed buzz to propel a pandemic-weary public out of their homes and into the theatre, forcing them to fall back on tried and tested hits.

The *LA Times* cited Jeremy O Harris’s 2018 work *Slave Play*, which reopened the Mark Taper Forum in February and broke the box-office record to become the highest-grossing, five-week engagement in the theatre’s 50-year history. But this good news for Taper Forum owner Center Theatre Group came just a month after the company was forced to close its run of *A Christmas Carol* at the Ahmanson early due to Covid-19 infections in the cast, resulting in a \$1.5 million loss.

**Above: LA’s Hollywood Boulevard has seen a tumble in tourism**  
© Sean Pavone/  
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## INTERNATIONAL ARTS MANAGER

Steingraber told the *LA Times* that at the Soraya, “We had a cancelled January, a great February, and the worst March of any month as an organisation, and I can’t explain it. Is it just differences in programming? There’s no rhyme or reason.”

Audience hesitancy in California and elsewhere in the US is exacerbated by a lack of cohesive policies on mask and vaccination mandates, resulting in a patchwork of regulations that vary from state to state, city to city and even venue to venue. Consistency in policy would greatly help audiences feel more confident, according to performing arts professionals.

Despite this, there appears to be optimism, with

many arts managers believing that if they can just hang in long enough to see regular full houses, the good times will return. Many believe that audience enthusiasm can be restored up by shifting the conversation away from financial losses to the potential loss of the art form itself and what that would mean for the community.

“There has to be a real narrative about the vital importance of the arts in troubled times, like that of the pandemic,” one LA theatre manager told the *LA Times*. “There is something profound about the communal dynamic of performing arts, and if we start focusing on what we do, and why it’s meaningful and impactful on society, I think we will go a long way toward encouraging a quiet return to the theatre.”

Composer and theatre impresario Andrew Lloyd Webber has described mounting his controversial London production of *Cinderella* during the pandemic as a “costly mistake”, claiming that the musical would have run for longer had it opened “under different circumstances”.

Addressing the audience of the last performance of the musical on Sunday (12 June), via a letter read out by director Laurence Connor, Lloyd Webber said that had the show not been forced to postpone its official opening twice and had to close for a month over Christmas because of Omicron, the production would still be running now.

Lloyd Webber announced that the musical was closing last month, and provoked a storm when it emerged that he had failed to ensure actors who had been due to come into the production had been told ahead of the news breaking in the media. The show first opened in June last year, following more than a year’s worth of Covid delays and received largely positive reviews.

“I keep thinking, if only we had opened three months later, we wouldn’t have had to postpone our opening twice because



of Covid. If only we hadn’t had to close for a month over Christmas and New Year, once again thanks to Covid, and if only we had had a crumb of help from the Culture Recovery Fund, I promise you that we would have been here for a very long while to come,” Lord Lloyd Webber said in his letter.

He added: “We kept the government’s feet to the flame and led the charge to get the West End open again. It might have been a costly mistake, but I am proud that we did and proud of everyone who supported me.”

He praised the “fabulous cast, crew and musicians” and the show’s creative team, as well as the theatre staff at the Gillian Lynne Theatre, for helping to bring the show to life.

When Connor finished reading the letter, there were boos from some sections of the audience.

Defending Lloyd Webber, Connor said: “It is really easy to find a villain in these things. I will say there are a lot of people who have tirelessly done a lot of great work on this show. I feel that we have created something really special and today, watching this final performance with everybody, that is how I want us to go.”

He added that he hoped there would be a future life for *Cinderella*. The musical is due to open on Broadway in February or March of next year.



# PILLAR OF THE COMMUNITY

**THE UK'S ANNUAL CHELTENHAM MUSIC FESTIVAL HAS LONG BEEN A CHAMPION OF NEW AND CONTEMPORARY MUSIC, AND THE EVENT IS BACK NEXT MONTH WITH A NEW AND AMBITIOUS YOUNG HEAD OF PROGRAMMING, MICHAEL DUFFY, AT THE HELM. KEVIN WHITLOCK SPOKE TO HIM**

**T**he Cheltenham Music Festival, one of the highlights in the UK events calendar, returns next month (8–16 July) after a couple of lockdown years – last year's event was a socially-distanced one and this is the first full festival since 2019 – with an intriguing programme featuring both household names like Sheku Kanneh-Mason, London Mozart Players, New English Ballet Theatre, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Tenebrae and The English Concert, Martin James Bartlett, Brodsky Quartet, Ingrid Fliter, Sheku and Isata Kanneh-Mason, Anoushka Shankar and Samuele Telari; as well as new talent including BBC New Generation Artists, all performing in venues around Cheltenham – one of England's most attractive spa towns – and the wider Cotswolds area. The Music Festival has a new Head of Programming, Michael Duffy, who joined the team earlier this year, having worked at the British Library and Spitalfields

Festival in London, among other arts organisations.

Cheltenham Music Festival has long been a champion of contemporary classical music, and this year the line-up features three world premieres as well as a further six through the Composer Academy. The six Composer Academy composers will workshop their works with Daniel Kidane before they are premiered by harpsichordist Mahan Esfahani and other musicians. One of the world premieres is a piece by Conor Mitchell where he has set the correspondence between Benjamin Britten and his partner Peter Pears, celebrating the universality of love through music.

Michael Duffy says of the event: "It's fantastic to be able to fully welcome back audiences to Cheltenham following two years of disruption. As a newcomer to the Festival, I'm hugely indebted to Camilla King, my predecessor, for putting this year's programme together. I hope that audiences will find a rich variety of the familiar and the new, from orchestral spectacles

in Cheltenham Town Hall to more unusual and intimate offerings, international artists and new talent, two new commissions examining the nature of relationships, dance, walks and talks.”

Given the success Camilla King has had helming the festival over the past few years, Duffy (pictured below, right) has big shoes to fill, and so I was intrigued to meet him to find out what he aims to do with the festival moving forward.

**IAM: WILL YOU BE MAKING RADICAL CHANGES TO THE FESTIVAL PROGRAMME NEXT YEAR AND BEYOND, OR IS IT A CASE OF BUILDING ON WHAT'S GONE BEFORE?**

**MD:** I will be carrying on with Camilla's fantastic work and building on the wonderful legacy she has created. I think for me one of the things Cheltenham has always been about is connections – connecting people to music and to extraordinary experiences, but also being able to spot those creative connections where say, two people or organisations that might not know each other can work together to create something new and interesting. There



Above: Composer John Taverner at CMF in 1987 © Hanya Chlala-Arena



Above: Alfred Brendel rehearses for his 1988 CMF performance at CMF © Hanya Chlala-Arena



Pittville Pump Rooms, a favourite CMF venue © Steven McPherson

are organisations that have always been open to change, challenging and questioning the status quo around classical music and trying to broaden horizons – and Cheltenham is one of those. It makes my job exciting!

**IAM: I UNDERSTAND THAT MUSIC EDUCATION IS SOMETHING YOU'RE VERY PASSIONATE ABOUT...**

**MD:** You can't work in this business, especially at an organisation like Cheltenham, which aims to champion new talent, without looking at music education. I think we can all acknowledge the state of music education in this country is in a sorry, sorry, state. I wonder how much great talent goes unheard simply for economic reasons, or the fact that the talent was not spotted or nurtured early on, especially among working class or minority kids.

The days of your local music service, providing free lessons for, say, eight to 18 year olds, are depressingly gone, which means that we're missing a whole load of people who could be the very next best kind of thing. It's very frustrating, but it's also part of a wider conversation about building a fairer, more equal society. I know from speaking to colleagues, there is a growing commitment in our community to work together to find solutions. Now we're emerging from the horrors of the pandemic we have an opportunity to not just reconnect with each other and our audiences, but also to work for change. I think the question 'Do things have to be like this? Can we change things?' is being asked more and more.

“Now we're emerging from the horrors of the pandemic we have an opportunity to not just reconnect with each other and our audiences but also to work for change”



**IAM: WE KNOW THAT THERE IS A HUGE HUNGER FOR THE COMMUNAL EXPERIENCE OF LIVE MUSIC AMONG AUDIENCES, ESPECIALLY AFTER TWO YEARS OF LOCKDOWNS, BUT DO YOU THINK AUDIENCE EXPECTATIONS HAVE CHANGED?**

**MD:** Talking about Cheltenham, there is definitely a real desire among our audience to experience live music again, and our core audience has proved very loyal. I've spoken to people who've been to every single Cheltenham Music Festival since 1945! But we've got to face the fact that disposable income is going down and people are going to be more choosy about how they're spending their money, you know, in the culture of leisure, which creates challenges for organisations and festivals. I tell my team, we're trying to trying to explore the new but at the same time, trying not alienate the audience. We also need to ensure the Festival is for everyone in the town, not just the core audience or the well-heeled. It's about connecting with the community, being part of it, not just kind of imposing yourself on it.

When I look back at other roles I've had at places like Spitalfields, where the organisation had a massive connection to the centre, that's something I would like to carry on at Cheltenham. And I think it's really important that those things that happening on your doorstep, are accessible to all. So we're going to have more free events in open-air spaces for everyone in the town to enjoy, make everything more inclusive. So the idea of being able to, to use or not use, the music festival as a space where more of the local community feel welcome and can relate to it was one of the attractive aspects of taking this job. It speaks very much to my roots.

**IAM: ARE YOU INTIMIDATED BY THE LEGACY OF YOUR PREDECESSOR?**

**MD:** Yes! I am incredibly grateful to my predecessor [Camilla] because she very much did programme for this [2022] festival. I've had the very fortunate position to begin to come in and take the glory and do five per cent of the work, because she did everything so well. And it's really lovely to be able to see the cycle, and how things work, which is really useful grounding for the next festival. I'm already working on the 2023 and even 2024 events, having conversations with about 20 potential artists and ensembles



**Above: Nicola Benedetti, CMF 2014**  
© StillMovingMedia.com



**Above: Sheku Kanneh-Mason, performing at the first Classical Mix Tape session in Tewksbury, CMF 2017**  
© StillMovingMedia.com

because some of the timescales that those people are working on, especially now that things are opening up again, are really long-scale.

**IAM: IS THERE WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL A DNA, OR USP, OF CHELTENHAM THAT NEEDS TO BE PRESERVED?**

**MD:** Definitely. It is interesting how many festivals make it part of their USP that they're either featuring new young musicians, composers, orchestras, whatever. But as well as that you have to focus on how much new work you're commissioning, getting new, up and coming composers' work heard. Commissioning is the very heart of the Cheltenham festival. The reason it was set up in 1945 was to be a 'poster board platform' for contemporary Britain. So it's always been a part of our DNA and I firmly see that as something that we will carry on in the future: the commissioning, and celebrating, the work of new composers as well as platforming young performers. We work closely with the BBC on a 'new generation of artists' series. Thus we are presenting

“I try not to just think in terms of the festival being accessible, but also in terms of being relevant to the community”

the best of the new but also exploring future-facing ideas. One of the things about Cheltenham is that the economy of the town has quite a lot of tech and cyber startups. It's a forward-looking place, despite the genteel spa town image, and so the DNA of the town and the festival mesh together really well. And we are looking at expanding the festival's horizons – creating a kind of multi-discipline space, where we might work with, say, with jazz artists and musicians, or maybe that's looking at fusions of literature and music. Or science and music. And using all the different indoor venues and



open air spaces in the town for different purposes, as appropriate. Cheltenham is quite a small, walkable town, with some remarkable spaces in which to perform, so I believe we can create something truly unique moving forward.

And I try not to just think in terms of the festival being accessible, but also in terms of being relevant to the community. It's a challenge, but it's one I've really enjoyed these past few months. Challenges breed opportunities, and the idea of being creative with those opportunities is one of the things that really makes this job a pleasure.



## HIGHLIGHTS OF CMF 2022

For 77 years, Cheltenham Music Festival has championed new music and ways of engaging with audiences through quality performances and innovation. The 2022 Festival builds on this heritage with concerts from major and emerging musicians, multiple new commissions and a range of events encompassing everything from talks, walks and mindfulness sessions – all presented in superb venues across the Cotswolds.

Highlights this year include:

- Leading international artists including Martin James Bartlett, Brodsky Quartet, Anoushka Shankar and Manu Delago, Ingrid Fliter, and Sheku and Isata Kanneh-Mason;
- *Look Both Ways* on 16 July sees three composers explore the themes of connection and identity. The concert includes two world premieres: Connor Mitchell's settings of correspondence between Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears, and Claire Victoria Roberts' set of works inspired by the letters between Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya, alongside Bobbie-Jane Gardner's arrangement of Odetta's iconic 1970s song 'Hit or Miss';
- Other world premieres include works by Andrew Chen and participants in the Composer Academy;
- Laura Bowler's *Distance*, a ground-breaking

multimedia chamber work, will be performed at Parabola Arts Centre. While soprano Juliet Fraser performs live in Cheltenham, the Talea Ensemble will be livestreamed from New York;

- New English Ballet Theatre celebrates the work of six female choreographers;
- *BBC New Generation Artists* recital series is back with four live lunchtime and four further early evening 'Rush Hour' recitals on the same days, the second of which will showcase a finalist of BBC Young Musician of the Year 2022;
- Also returning are the *Classical Mixtape*, *Composium* and *Music and Mindfulness* sessions. *Composium* explore the dynamics of the composer-performer relationship in the wake of two years of disrupted music-making during the pandemic, with first performances of works by the Composer Academy participants played by musicians including harpsichordist Mahan Esfahani. Will Crawford's *Mindfulness* session will link meditation and the power of music through breathing exercises, and help to manage stress by using specially composed and recorded pieces.
- On 9 July guests can enjoy champagne afternoon tea in The Daffodil as they watch contralto Hilary Summers and pianist

Andrew West take a romp through the wild world of opera where absurd plots, gender fluidity and voice categorisation all come under light-hearted scrutiny in *What's So Great About Opera?*;

- The New English Ballet Theatre presents six inspired new works by female choreographers;
  - Schoolchildren from across Gloucestershire will visit Cheltenham Town Hall during the Festival to participate in Concert for Schools, an interactive concert presented by Musicate musicians to inspire young people's enthusiasm for classical music. Added to this, the Festival's first ever Relaxed Concert for Schools is an adapted performance, devised to welcome children, young people and their teachers from the SEND (Special Educational Need and Disability) sector.
  - The Composer Academy, part of the festival's Spotlight Talent Development Programme, returns this year from 11 – 15 July. The scheme supports early-career composers (aged 18+), offering them professional advice and mentoring from six working composers.
- <https://www.cheltenhamfestivals.com/music/whats-on?page=1>

## competitions update

### FINALLY! THE B&H FINZI TRUST WINNERS ARE REVEALED

Music publisher Boosey & Hawkes and the Finzi Trust have announced the winners of international singing competition Sing Finzi 2021. The winning singer is Kieran Rayner and the pianist, Steven McGhee (below, top).

Launched in 2020 to celebrate Gerald Finzi's 120th birthday year, Sing Finzi 2021 is an online singing competition giving performers the



opportunity to perform for a renowned panel and win a cash prize of £5,000 for first place singer and £2,000 for first place pianist.

The 2021 competition jury included celebrated singers Anne Schwanewilms, Eric Owens and Roderick Williams, leading pianists Iain Burnside and Joseph Middleton, and industry professionals Helen Lewis (Executive Producer at Decca Classics) and Michelle Williams (Head of Casting at the English National Opera).

Entrants were asked to submit videos of themselves performing one or more pieces by Finzi on YouTube. More than 100 entries were received, which were whittled down to 20 finalists (15 singers and five pianists).

Kieran Rayner (left, bottom) is a London-based New Zealand operatic baritone. He is a Britten Pears Young Artist 2021-22, and was an Independent Opera Fellow 2019-20, a Garsington Opera Alvarez Young Artist 2018-19 and 2021, a Verbier Festival Atelier Lyrique Artist 2018, a Samling Artist, an Internationale Meistersinger Akademie Artist, and was a 2012-13 Freemasons Dame Malvina Major Emerging Artist with New Zealand Opera.

Dr Steven McGhee works in the genres of art song and opera as a coach, collaborative pianist and conductor. He is the artistic director and principal conductor for Opera MODO, and Department Collaborative Pianist at the Department of Music at Wayne State University. The work is composed for Aldo and is inspired by Gardner's tune, 'Crooked Shanks.'

For its 54th season, its first since 2019, the Festival will present 24 concerts over 18 days.

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### HAYOUNG CHOI WINS THE 2022 QUEEN ELISABETH CELLO COMPETITION

Following a week of performances from twelve selected finalists, Korean cellist Hayoung Choi was named winner of the competition earlier this month. As the recipient of the International Queen Elisabeth Prize and the Queen Mathilde First Prize, Choi receives €25,000, plus numerous global concert opportunities.

Born in 1998, Choi is a former first prize winner of the 2011 Johannes Brahms competition and the 2018 Krzysztof Penderecki Cello Competition. She studied at the Korean National University of Arts, the Purcell School for Young Musicians, Kronberg Academy and Berlin University of the Arts, counting Wolfgang Emanuel Schmidt, Frans Helmerson, Alexander Boyarsky, Myung-Wha Chung and Hyongwon Chang among her teachers.

She has performed as a soloist with Kremerata Baltica, the Camerata Salzburg, the Frankfurter Opern- und Museumsorchester, the Kraków Philharmonic Orchestra the Olsztyn Philharmonic Orchestra and the Suwon Philharmonic Orchestra.

Choi's final round performance consisted of Lutosławski's *Cello Concerto* and the competition's compulsory piece '5 Albumblätter' by Jörg Widmann. Finalists were accompanied by the Brussels Philharmonic, under the baton of Stéphane Denève.

Other prizes awarded are as follows: the Belgian Federal Government Prize: €20,000, awarded by the Belgian Science Policy to Yibai Chen (b.2001, China); Count de Launoit Prize: €17,000 to Marcel Johannes Kits (b.1995,

Estonia); Prize of the Governments of the Belgian Communities (€12,500, this year awarded by the Government of the Flemish-speaking Community in Belgium) to Oleksiy Shadrin (b.1993, Ukraine); Brussels-Capital Region Prize: €10,000, to Petar Pejčić (b.2002, Serbia); City of Brussels Prize (€8,000) to Bryan Cheng (b.1997, Canada).

Fellow laureates Jeremias Friedl, Stéphanie Huang, Woochan Jeong, Taeguk Mun, Samuel Niederhauser and Sul Yoon each received €4,000. Stéphanie Huang also won the audience-chosen Prix Musiq3 and Canvas/Klara Prijs of €2,500 each.

This year the jury was chaired by Gilles Ledure and comprised Gautier Capuçon, Myung-Wha Chung, Natalie Clein, Roel Dieltiens, Anne Gastinel, Marie Hallynck, Frans Helmerson, Anssi Karttunen, Mischa Maisky, Antonio Meneses, Sharon Robinson, Jian Wang and Sonia Wieder-Atherton. 2022 marks the second edition of the cello discipline for the Queen Elisabeth Competition.



### BERTIE BAIGENT WINS THE FIRST EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONDUCTING COMPETITION ROTTERDAM

UK-born, 27-year-old Bertie Baigent (pictured) has been awarded the Grand Prix of the first International Conducting Competition Rotterdam.

Baigent beat five other young conductors in the finals, conducting the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra in De Doelen, Rotterdam and wins a €15,000 prize.

The Rotterdam competition is unique in that each of the five categories also brought about one winning conductor. The result is noteworthy in that a different conductor excelled in almost each category; the other winners (who

each got €7,500) were as follows: Proms Open Air Concert, Martijn Dendievel; Contemporary Music, Chloe Rooke; Classical Music, Bertie Baigent; Opera, Luis Toro Araya; Great Symphonic Works, Bertie Baigent.

In addition, both the audience in the hall and the thousands of online viewers worldwide were able to vote for their favorite conductor for the Kersjes Audience Award (€10,000), which went to Luis Toro Araya.

A total of 165 young conductors from all over the world applied to the competition, which was judged by 25 renowned conductors, including Lahav Shani, Karina Canellakis, Ton Koopman, Sophie de Lint, Anja Bihlmaier and Ed Spanjaard.

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## people



### STEPHEN HOUGH KNIGHTED IN THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS LIST

The pianist, composer and author Stephen Hough has been awarded a Knighthood for Services to Music, for his 'extraordinary contribution to cultural life', in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. He is the first British-born classical pianist to be made a 'Sir' since Clifford Curzon back in 1977.

One of the most admired British cultural figures, Hough's career has embraced 70 recordings, eight *Gramophone* Awards (including for the Gold Disc-winning set of Saint-Saëns's piano concertos), and 29 Proms appearances. He was also the first artist to broadcast from Wigmore Hall following the famous London venue's forced Covid closure.

As a composer, Hough has written for both Westminster Abbey and Cathedral, the Cliburn Foundation, the Takács Quartet and many others. *Rough Ideas: Reflections on Music and More* won a 2020 Royal Philharmonic Society Award, and his memoir *Enough: Scenes from Childhood* will be published by Faber in spring 2023.



### BOOSEY & HAWKES SIGNS COMPOSER GABRIELA ORTIZ

Acclaimed composer Gabriela Ortiz has signed an exclusive publishing agreement with Boosey & Hawkes to represent her catalogue of works for orchestra, opera and chamber ensemble, which have been championed by major artists and companies around the world.

Winner of Mexico's National Prize for Arts and Literature, and a Guggenheim Fellowship, Ortiz is "one of the most important Mexican composers today", whose international career includes recent commissions from the Los Angeles Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony, and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic.

Ortiz's music embraces folk and jazz, drawing on a musical upbringing by her 'Los Folkloristas' parents. She trained at the National Conservatory of Music (Mexico) with Mario Lavista and at the National University of Mexico with Federico Ibarra, before studying at Guildhall School of Music & Drama, and City, University of London.



### GARRETT MCQUEEN TO 'EQUALISE' THE ACO

American Composers Orchestra (ACO) has appointed Garrett McQueen as its new Director of Artist Equity. McQueen will be responsible for 'ensuring the successful realisation of ACO's national composer advancement programmes and for supporting the organization's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion vision and actions'.

McQueen, who trained as a bassoonist and has a parallel career in broadcasting, will report to ACO president and CEO Melissa Ngan, and succeeds Aiden Feltkamp. He will first join ACO at the 2022 ACO EarShot Readings in New York City this week.

"We are thrilled to welcome Garrett to the ACO family. From his many vantage points as an artist, content creator, speaker and advocate, Garrett has advanced the national dialogue around an expanded definition of American orchestral music, inclusive of the styles, aesthetics and traditions that continue to be born here," Ngan said. "We look forward to Garrett's leadership of ACO's EarShot partnerships with orchestras and music creators nationwide."



### KLAUS MÄKELÄ TO TAKE OVER AT THE CONCERTGEBOUW

Klaus Mäkelä, one of the most talked-about conductors of his generation, will become the next chief conductor of the Royal Concertgebouw, starting in 2027. However his 'long-term collaboration' with the Concertgebouw will begin next season, with Mäkelä joining as artistic partner.

Finnish-born Mäkelä will become the Amsterdam orchestra's eighth chief conductor. He first conducted the ensemble in 2020, and according to Jörgen van Rijen, principal trombone and chairman of the artistic committee: "We wholeheartedly choose for a long-term collaboration with Klaus Mäkelä. Rarely have we experienced such overwhelming support from our musicians for a new chief conductor."

Mäkelä is currently chief conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, music director of Orchestre de Paris and artistic director of the Turku Music Festival. An exclusive Decca artist, he has recorded the complete Sibelius symphonies with the Oslo Philharmonic as his first project for the label.

### ASKONAS HOLT FORGE BOND WITH BARITONE JAMES ATKINSON



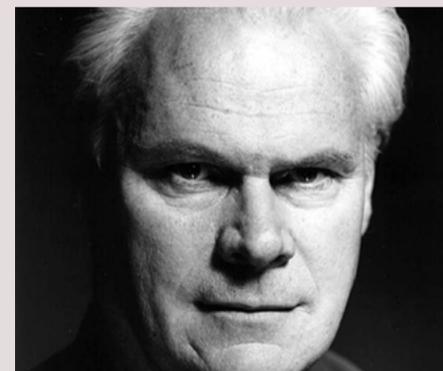
Askonas Holt has signed baritone James Atkinson to its roster for general management. A graduate of the Royal College of Music Opera Studio, Atkinson is a multi-award-winner, including the Maureen Lehane Vocal Awards, the Somerset Song Prize, and the Mozart Competition.

This July, he will compete at Wigmore Hall for the Gold Medal in the Royal Over-Seas League Annual Music Competition after winning their Solo Singer Prize. In summer, he will give recitals at the Lewes Festival of Song, the Gower Festival and North Norfolk Music Festival before appearing at the Wigmore Hall in October.

### OPERA NORTH FOUNDER DAVID LLOYD-JONES DIES

David Lloyd-Jones, the acclaimed conductor and founding Music Director of Opera North, died on 8 June aged 87. With Opera North (launched in 1978 as English National Opera North), Jones helped to create an organisation valued for its musical excellence, but also for having established a leading opera company in a part of the UK not served by one at that time.

Launched as English National Opera North, Lloyd-Jones was the first to lead both the organisation and the associated orchestra, the English Northern Philharmonia (later renamed



the Orchestra of Opera North). In the first season alone he conducted six productions: *Samson et Dalila*, *La Bohème*, *The Magic Flute*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Peter Grimes* and *The Marriage of Figaro*. Between 1978 and 1990, he helped to stage more than 50 productions.

## people



Claire Walker and Hannah Essex

## WALKER & ESSEX TO LEAD UK THEATRE BODIES

UK Theatre and the Society of London Theatre, two of the UK's most important theatre bodies, are to be run by joint chief executives for the first time in their history, following the appointment of Claire Walker and Hannah Essex in what the two companies have called an "innovative job share".

Currently co-executive directors at the

British Chambers of Commerce, the pair are believed to be the most high-profile job share partnership in the UK, and will replace Julian Bird in the role.

SOLT and UK Theatre described the pair, who have more than 40 years' combined experience as senior leaders in a range of business and not-for-profit organisations, as "trailblazers in the concept of co-leadership, proving it can have significant benefits in terms

of innovation, influence and relationships".

"They are regarded as two of the most effective, credible and tenacious influencers in Westminster and were both recently recognised as two of the Top 100 Women in Westminster by House Magazine," the organisations said.

Prior to working at the BCC, they worked together as co-directors of communications for Teach First, and this will be their third role together as a partnership.

SOLT president Eleanor Lloyd said: "They are inspirational leaders who will bring an outstanding combination of experience, dynamism and passion to both organisations and their work at the BCC, especially during the pandemic, puts them in a perfect position to support our members and champion the theatre industry in this new chapter."

Walker and Essex added: "As lifelong theatre fans, we believe passionately that a thriving theatre sector is crucial to improving social, cultural and economic prosperity in the UK. Having supported businesses large and small through the Brexit process and the pandemic, we are familiar with many of the issues facing SOLT and UK Theatre members in these challenging economic times".

They take up their post on 12 September.

## AN ACE SEXTET!

UK Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries has approved six new appointments to Arts Council England's (ACE) National Council, each serving three-year terms from 15 May 2022.

They include double MOBO Award-winning artist Yolanda Brown, Chief Executive of UK Music and campaigner Jamie Njoku-Goodwin and Sage Gateshead's Managing Director Abigail Pogson. They are joined by Chief Executive of Canterbury's The Marlowe Deborah Shaw, former Executive Director of the Premier League Bill Bush and Veronica Wadley (Baroness Fleet), currently Chair of the Advisory Panel for the new National Plan for Music Education. The group of six join an existing nine members of ACE's National Council, chaired by Sir Nicholas Serota.



## AINSLEY TO SUCCEED ZAMBELLO AS GENERAL DIRECTOR OF NEW YORK'S GLIMMERGLASS FESTIVAL

The Glimmerglass Festival has appointed Robert Ainsley, director of the Washington National Opera's Cafritz Young Artists Programme and the American Opera Initiative, as its new director-general. Ainsley succeeds Francesca Zambello, who recently announced that the New York-based company's 2022 season would mark the end of her 12-year tenure.

During his time at WNO, Ainsley was responsible for commissioning, developing and premiering more than 30 new operas, including works by Jerre Dye, A.M. Homes, David Henry Hwang, Marc Bamuthi Joseph, Missy Mazzoli, Royce Vavrek, Huang Ruo, Kamala Sankaram, Carlos Simon, Sandra Seaton and others.

Prior to his work at WNO, Ainsley served as Associate Music Director at Portland Opera,



was Head of Music Staff and Chorus Master at Minnesota Opera and the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, a guest Chorus Master at English National Opera and co-founder and Principal Conductor of the Greenwich Music Festival.

Ainsley is an alumnus of the University of Cambridge, Mannes College of Music, and the Lindemann Young Artist Development Programme at the Metropolitan Opera.

Glimmerglass 2022 takes place from 8 July to 21 August at Cooperstown, NY.

## NIDA OF AUSTRALIA GETS TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Australia's top theatre school, the Sydney-based National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) Board of Directors announced the appointment of two new Board members, Darren Dale (director of Blackfella Films since 2000) and Sophia Zachariou (CEO of Bunya Entertainment).

Dale has produced many award-winning documentary, factual and drama programmes

He is also a Member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences and currently serves on the board of the Sydney Festival.

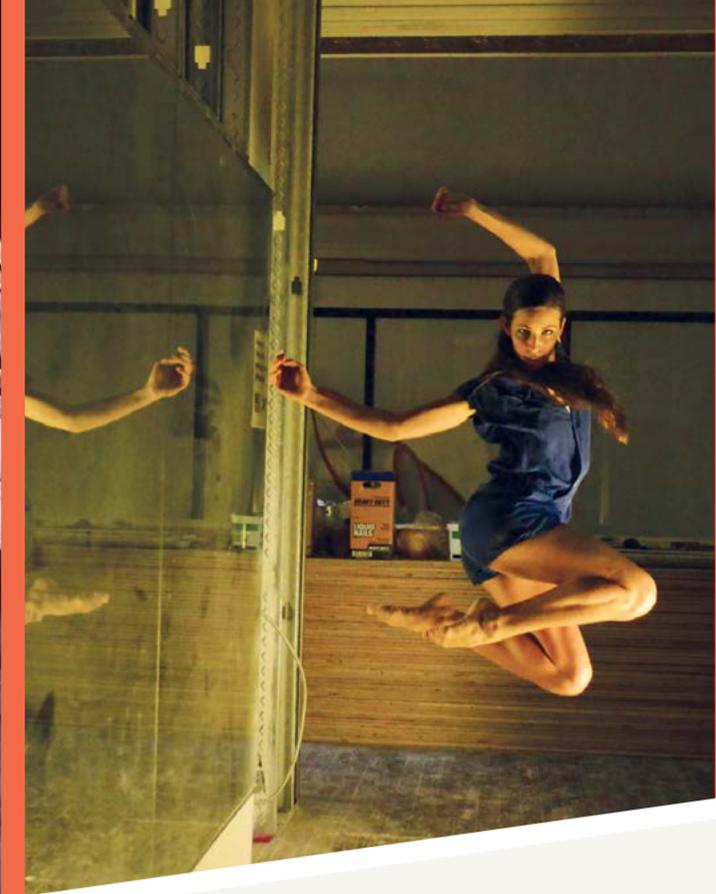
Zachariou was formerly Create NSW Director of Screen Investment, Engagement and Attraction, and was Deputy Head of Entertainment at the Australian Broadcasting Company. Justin Ryan, Dr Sandra Phillips and Ian Collie who have stepped down from the NIDA Board over the last year.



Darren Dale



Sophia Zachariou



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