



**Media release**

**\*\*STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 10AM SATURDAY 5 NOVEMBER, 2016\*\***

## **NATALIA OSIPOVA & GUESTS**

**A SADLER'S WELLS LONDON PRODUCTION**

**VENUE:** The Civic

**DATES:** 24-26 March, 2017

**CHOREOGRAPHERS:** Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Russell Maliphant, Arthur Pita

**ARTISTS:** Natalia Osipova, Sergei Polunin, Jason Kittelberger and James O'Hara

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Dance lovers will delight in the news that the magnificent Russian prima ballerina Natalia Osipova is coming to the Auckland Arts Festival 2017. They will also be thrilled to know that in this brand-new work, *Natalia Osipova & Guests*, the first ever commissioned by her, the multi award-winning dancer has ventured into a new realm of artistic expression; contemporary dance.

Osipova is a superstar of dance, with a ballet pedigree that includes The Bolshoi, American Ballet Theatre and the Royal Ballet. She is a force of nature, celebrated for her brilliant technique, vivid characterisation and electrifying energy.

The three-part AAF 2017 programme comprises work inspired by her unique abilities, by three contemporary choreographers: Artistic Director of The Royal Ballet Flanders Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui (*Babel*), the innovative Russell Maliphant and the imaginative and much sought-after Arthur Pita.

In Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui's *Qutb*, Osipova is joined on stage by contemporary dancers Jason Kittelberger and James O'Hara. In Russell Maliphant's *Silent Echo* and Arthur Pita's *Run Mary Run*, she performs with real life partner Sergei Polunin, who is also considered somewhat of a ballet 'rock star' (*Take Me To Church*).

Osipova is currently a Principal dancer with the UK's Royal Ballet. Among many others, her roles have included Giselle, Kitri (*Don Quixote*), Sugar Plum Fairy (*The Nutcracker*), Juliet (*Romeo and Juliet*) and the lead, Anna Anderson, in *Anastasia*, which opened this month at the Royal Opera House.

Born in Moscow, Osipova began dancing at the age of five. She studied at Mikhail Lavrosky Ballet School and Moscow State Academy of Choreography. On graduating, she entered the corps of the Bolshoi Ballet and was promoted to Principal in 2010. Her Bolshoi repertoire included, among others, Kitri (*Don Quixote*), Giselle, Esmerelda, Princess Aurora (*The Sleeping Beauty*) and Swanilda (*Coppélia*). She went on to become a Principal of American Ballet Theatre, where she created the title role in Alexei Ratmansky's *The Firebird*.

Sergei Polunin is a Ukrainian ballet dancer of Russian background who was formerly a Principal with The Royal Ballet and is currently a Principal with Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Moscow Academic Music Theatre, and the Novosibirsk Opera and Ballet Theatre. He made headlines in 2012 when, aged 22, he walked out of his Principal role during rehearsals at the Royal Ballet and never returned.



Originally from New York, Jason Kittelberger has performed with Eastman, Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet, Rochester Ballet, Carolina Ballet and Hubbard Street II among other roles as choreographer and director.

James O'Hara is an Australian dancer who, aside from working with dance companies all over the world including Cherkaoui's Eastman, has spent a bit of time in New Zealand, performing (*Babel* at the 2013 Auckland Arts Festival), as a guest tutor at NZ School of Dance in 2015 and this year with Ross McCormack.

*visceral, emotional intensity blended with impressive technical excellence* – Huffington Post, USA

## PERFORMANCE DETAILS

<b>TICKETS</b>	Premium \$89   A Res \$75   A Res Conc \$69   B Res \$59   B Res Conc \$53   C Res \$45
<b>WHEN</b>	Fri 24 Mar – Sat 25 Mar 7.30pm, Sun 26 Mar 5.00pm Talk: Sat 25 March
<b>WHERE</b>	ASB Theatre, Aotea Centre
<b>BOOKINGS</b>	ticketmaster.co.nz   09 951 2501
<b>DURATION</b>	Act I: 34mins   Interval 20mins   Act II: 24mins   Interval: 20mins   Act III: 23mins
<b>MORE INFO</b>	<p><b>Natalia Osipova Bio:</b>  <a href="http://www.roh.org.uk/people/natalia-osipova">http://www.roh.org.uk/people/natalia-osipova</a></p> <p><b>Interviews (Osipova and Polunin):</b>  <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/may/08/natalia-osipova-and-sergei-polunin-interview">https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/may/08/natalia-osipova-and-sergei-polunin-interview</a>  <a href="http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/you/article-3765557/Passion-deux-explosive-chemistry-Royal-Ballet-superstar-Natalia-Osipova-bad-boy-dancer-Sergei-Polunin.html">http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/you/article-3765557/Passion-deux-explosive-chemistry-Royal-Ballet-superstar-Natalia-Osipova-bad-boy-dancer-Sergei-Polunin.html</a></p> <p><b>Video - Take Me to Church (Sergei Polunin):</b>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-tW0CkvdDI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-tW0CkvdDI</a></p> <p><b>About Sadler's Wells:</b>            Sadler's Wells is a world-leading dance house, committed to producing, commissioning and presenting new works and to bringing the best international and UK dance to London and worldwide audiences. Under the Artistic Directorship of Alistair Spalding, the theatre's acclaimed year-round programme spans dance of every kind, from contemporary to flamenco, Bollywood to ballet, salsa to street dance and tango to tap.</p> <p>Located in Islington, north London, the current theatre is the sixth to have stood on the site since it was first built by Richard Sadler in 1683. The venue has played an illustrious role in the history of theatre ever since, with The Royal Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet and English National Opera all having started at Sadler's Wells.</p>
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<b>ABOUT THE AAF</b>	Taking place annually in March, the Auckland Arts Festival is a globally recognised event that celebrates people and culture, and showcases the unrivalled location, cultural diversity and vibrant energy of New Zealand's largest city. Over 1.6 million people have attended the Festivals to date.



	<p>Auckland Arts Festival is governed by the Auckland Festival Trust. Trustees are John Judge (Chair), Rick Carlyon, Evan Davies, Sarah Judkins, Tarun Kanji, Margaret Kāwharu MNZM, Jim Moser, Ben Taufua and Fred Ward.</p> <p>The Trust receives core funding from Auckland Council through the Auckland Regional Amenities Funding Act, and Creative New Zealand through the Toi Tōtara Haemata programme.</p> <p>Significant support for AAF 2017 is received from Foundation North, Pub Charity, NZ Community Trust and The Lion Foundation.</p>
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