



Northern Ballet

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Northern Ballet's Premier couple to become Resident Guest Artists

Northern Ballet's Premier Dancers Martha Leebolt and Tobias Batley are to take a leave of absence from the Company to pursue new opportunities. The pair, who have formed a dynamic dance partnership under the directorship of David Nixon OBE, will return as Resident Guest Artists to perform in Northern Ballet's *Wuthering Heights* and *Romeo and Juliet* from September – October 2016.

Californian Martha Leebolt joined Northern Ballet in 2001 and worked through the ranks to become a Premier Dancer in 2009. She has created many iconic roles including Daisy (*The Great Gatsby*), Cleopatra (*Cleopatra*), Cinderella (*Cinderella*) and Beauty (*Beauty & the Beast*) and in 2010 won a National Dance Award for Outstanding Female Performance (Classical) for her performance as the Marquise de Merteuil in *Dangerous Liaisons*.

Tobias Batley joined Northern Ballet in 2004 becoming a Premier Dancer in 2012. The British dancer, raised in Rivington, has created roles including Winston Smith (*1984*), Jay Gatsby (*The Great Gatsby*), Mark Antony (*Cleopatra*), and Prince Mikhail (*Cinderella*). He was nominated for National Dance Awards in 2010 and 2012 for Outstanding Male Performance (Classical) and for Best Male Dancer in 2015.

Northern Ballet's Artistic Director David Nixon OBE said of the pair: 'Martha and Tobias have had an extraordinary journey with Northern Ballet from very young dancers in the corps, to the leading artists they are today. Through their hard work and commitment they have made a significant contribution to both my work and the Company as individuals and as a creative and inspirational partnership. There comes a time, especially when a dancer has been in the same place for a long time, that artists need to go out and discover new things which will enrich them and take them to new heights. Both Martha and Tobias are at this place in their

lives and I respect their decision to broaden their life experience. This is not about saying goodbye forever and I am therefore pleased that they will both still be doing some performances with the Company next season. We all wish them the very best.'

Martha and Tobias will perform in *Wuthering Heights* at the West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds in September 2016 followed by *Romeo and Juliet* which tours to Sheffield, Canterbury, Belfast, Woking and Bradford during September – October 2016. Casting will be announced at a later date, see website for updates. For tour dates and booking information see northernballet.com/whatson.

-ENDS-

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Notes to Editors

Martha Leebolt

Martha Leebolt is from California and trained at the Black Mountain Dance Centre and at BalletMet Columbus. She joined Northern Ballet in 2001. Martha won the 2010 National Dance Award for Outstanding Female Performance (Classical) for her performance as the Marquise de Merteuil in *Dangerous Liaisons*.

At Northern Ballet she has created many roles; Cleopatra (*Cleopatra* ch. David Nixon), Beauty (*Beauty & the Beast* ch. David Nixon), Cinderella (*Cinderella* ch. David Nixon), Julia (*1984* ch. Jonathan Watkins), Daisy (*The Great Gatsby* ch. David Nixon), Mistress (*On Such a Night* ch. Gillian Lynne), Pas de Deux (*Yorkshire Trilogy* ch. Jonathan Watkins), Pas de Deux (*Powerhouse Rhumba* ch. David Nixon), Pas de Deux (*The Architect* ch. Kenneth Tindall), *Project #1* (ch. Kenneth Tindall) and *We Never Said* (ch. Kenneth Tindall).

In addition, she has also performed; Juliet (*Romeo and Juliet* ch. Jean Christophe Maillot), Butterfly (*Madame Butterfly* ch. David Nixon), Ondine (*Ondine* ch. David Nixon), Juliet and Lady Capulet (*Romeo & Juliet* ch. Massimo Morricone), Odette and Odilia (*Swan Lake* ch. David Nixon), Nikiya (*Bayadere, Kingdom of the Shades* st. Yoko Ichino), Sugarplum Fairy (*The Nutcracker* ch. David Nixon), Belle (*A Christmas Carol* ch. Massimo Morricone), Mina

and Lucy (*Dracula* ch. David Nixon), Cathy (*Wuthering Heights* ch. David Nixon), Marquise (*Dangerous Liaisons* ch. David Nixon), Anne (*A Simple Man* ch. Gillian Lynne), Pas de Deux (*Angels in the Architecture* ch. Mark Godden), Constance (*The Three Musketeers* ch. David Nixon), Pas de Deux (*Perpetuum Mobile* ch. Christopher Hampson), Gertrude (*Hamlet* ch. David Nixon), Courtesan and Madam Defarge (*A Tale of Two Cities* ch. Cathy Marston), Pas de Deux (*Luminous Junctionure* ch. Kenneth Tindall), Titania and Hermia (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* ch. David Nixon), Solo (*Concertante* ch. Hans van Manen), An American in Paris (*I Got Rhythm* ch. David Nixon), Gypsy Pas de Deux (*La Traviata* ch. Veronica Paeper), *As Time Goes By* (ch. David Nixon), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (ch. Didi Veldman) and *Lambarena* (ch. Val Caniparoli).

Tobias Batley

Tobias Batley was born in Preston and raised in Rivington. He trained at the Hammond School of Dance and The Royal Ballet School. He danced with Jeune Ballet de Cannes before joining Northern Ballet in 2004. He was nominated in 2010 and 2012 for a National Dance Award for Outstanding Male Performance (Classical) and in 2015 for Best Male Dancer.

At Northern Ballet he has created many roles; Jay Gatsby (*The Great Gatsby* ch. David Nixon), Mark Antony (*Cleopatra* ch. David Nixon), Winston Smith (*1984* ch. Jonathan Watkins), Charles Darnay (*A Tale of Two Cities* ch. Cathy Marston), Prince Mikhail (*Cinderella* ch. David Nixon), Pas de Deux (*The Architect* ch. Kenneth Tindall), *Pas de Deux* (*Powerhouse Rhumba* ch. David Nixon), Pas de Deux (*Yorkshire Trilogy* ch. Jonathan Watkins), *Project #1* (ch. Kenneth Tindall), Pas de Deux (*Luminous Junctionure* ch. Kenneth Tindall) and *We Never Said* (ch. Kenneth Tindall).

In addition, he has also performed; Hamlet (*Hamlet* ch. David Nixon), Romeo (*Romeo and Juliet* ch. Jean Christophe Maillot), Dracula (*Dracula* ch. David Nixon), Romeo (*Romeo & Juliet* ch. Massimo Morricone), Anthony (*Swan Lake* ch. David Nixon), Albrecht (*Giselle* st. Yoko Ichino), Cavalier (*The Nutcracker* ch. David Nixon), Heathcliff (*Wuthering Heights* ch. David Nixon), Brandt (*Ondine* ch. David Nixon), Valmont (*Dangerous Liaisons* ch. David Nixon), Pas de Deux (*Concertante* ch. Hans van Manen), Pinkerton (*Madame Butterfly* ch. David Nixon), Bob Cratchet and Young Scrooge (*A Christmas Carol* ch. Massimo Morricone), Demetrius, Lysander and Oberon (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* ch. David Nixon), Prince (*Beauty & the Beast* ch. David Nixon), Pas de Deux and Solo (*Perpetuum Mobile* ch. Christopher Hampson), Three Preludes, I Got Rhythm and Rhapsody in Blue (*I Got Rhythm* ch. David Nixon), Aramis (*The Three Musketeers* ch. David Nixon), *Angels in*

the Architecture (ch. Mark Godden), *As Time Goes By* (ch. David Nixon) and *A Simple Man* (ch. Gillian Lynne).

Northern Ballet

For more details of Northern Ballet's tour, on sale dates and booking information, please visit northernballet.com/whatson.

Nominated for Outstanding Company at the 2015 National Dance Awards and voted Best Company at the Taglioni European Ballet Awards, Northern Ballet is one of the UK's five large ballet companies. Based in Leeds it performs throughout the UK as well as overseas. Northern Ballet's productions mix classical dance and theatre, embracing popular culture and taking inspiration from literature, opera, or giving a unique interpretation of popular classical ballets.

Northern Ballet is the busiest touring ballet company in the UK and is typically on the road for around 32 weeks of the year. The Company of 45 dancers tours a combination of full-length new work and established repertoire to cities throughout the UK. Northern Ballet also tours widely with its ballets for children, all four of which have been adapted for TV by CBeebies, and also performs a mixed programme showcasing the versatility of its dancers.