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## Sadler's Wells announces seven new Associate Artists

Sadler's Wells today announces the appointment of seven new Associate Artists, who represent a wide range of dance styles and are among the most exciting talent working in dance today.

Newly appointed Associates are **Jules Cunningham, Dan Daw, Oona Doherty, Michelle Dorrance, Seeta Patel, Alesandra Seutin** and **Botis Seva**.

The appointments were made by Sadler's Wells' Artistic Director and Co-Chief Executive, Sir Alistair Spalding CBE, and Associate Artistic Director Rob Jones.

**Alistair Spalding** said: *"I'm so pleased we're adding to our fantastic roster of Associate Artists with these exceptional talents. While they all work in different choreographic styles, they are at the top of their game, creating bold and exciting works."*

**Rob Jones** said: *"The naming of these new Associate Artists marks a new chapter in Sadler's Wells' history. As we move into the future, growing our organisation and broadening the scope of the dance we support and present, I am so excited for us to follow and support these incredible artists and for us to be part of their journeys."*

Associate Artists are at the heart of Sadler's Wells' artistic vision. Sadler's Wells commissions new work from its Associate Artists, helps them develop their ideas, and provides them with resources and technical expertise. The first group of Associates Artists was appointed by Sir Alistair Spalding in 2005. This played an important role in transforming Sadler's Wells into an organisation that makes new work, as well as presenting it, and helped it become the world-leading dance institution it is today.

**Jules Cunningham** said: *"I have benefited so much from my association with Sadler's Wells over the last years and so this onward validation from the great team here is really heartening. I'm thankful to be supported and I acknowledge the privilege of being in this position as we have an extraordinary community of UK dance artists and it's an ongoing struggle to keep living and working as independent artists. I will keep offering as much work as I can to collaborators and continue to make within healthcare settings as well as the big stages."*

**Dan Daw** said: *"It came as quite the surprise being invited to be an Associate Artist and it comes at the perfect time as I embark on making my first large scale piece of work. It means the absolute world to me that the work I do resonates deeply enough that Sadler's Wells want to foster this longer-term relationship with me, as an artist, and us as a company. I'm immeasurably excited about this next chapter for all involved and what we can make possible."*

**Michelle Dorrance** said *“Some of my favourite memories performing have been at Sadler’s Wells and it is a gift to be supported by such a powerhouse of dance and culture. I am honoured and thrilled to be joining a group of creators I admire so deeply as an Associate Artist.”*

**Seeta Patel** said: *“I am truly thrilled to be invited to be an Associate Artist at Sadler’s Wells. It’s such an incredible honour and I’m so grateful to all those who have championed and supported me over the years to reach such a milestone in my career. I look forward for the chance to grow and bring others on this journey with me.”*

Jules Cunningham (they/them) is a National Dance Award-winning dancer based in South London and originally from Liverpool. Their teaching and performance work is informed by solo and collaborative movement exploration, queerness, lived experience of mental illness, disability and exclusion based on Jules’ working-class background and non-binary identity.

Dan Daw is the Artistic Director/CEO of Dan Daw Creative Projects, a disabled-led company that works collaboratively with a growing network of companies and artists to develop and tour new performance work that blurs the divide between theatre and dance. Dan’s work explores what it means for his disabled body to occupy, and be unapologetic in, non-disabled space

Oona Doherty is a choreographer who creates intense, compelling works that appeal for societal change. She has forged a wide range of artistic relationships locally and internationally. Doherty’s distinctive and visceral choreography has sparked international attention and won her numerous awards.

Michelle Dorrance has pushed tap dance choreography into dialogue with the international cultural landscape. At once a composer and a choreographer, she is known for deeply musical, highly physical, and emotionally compelling work that lives at the intersection of innovation, tradition, and risk.

Seeta Patel is an award-winning choreographer and dancer who has, in a career spanning two decades, transformed the South Asian dance world in the United Kingdom. Her choreographic output is deeply influenced by her roots and training in Bharatanatyam, with each production mining its rhythms, musicality and expression in a unique way.

Botis Seva is a unique and seminal choreographic voice rooted in Hip Hop dance theatre but inspired by a freeform approach to choreography. His work is grounded in real life and captures his own stories, as well as those around him, whilst borrowing techniques from film, text, art and other dance languages to continuously reinvent his approach to creativity and the stage.

Alesandra Seutin is an award-winning multidisciplinary performance artist and creator, whose focus is exploring movement as a foundation for theatre, media and site-specific works. As co-Artistic Director and a former student of the École des Sables, Seutin is a worldwide ambassador and teacher of the Acogny technique.

Sadler’s Wells Associate Artists in full are **Balletboyz, Matthew Bourne, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Jules Cunningham, Jonzi D, Dan Daw, Oona Doherty, Michelle Dorrance, Sharon Eyal, Sylvie Guillem, Michael Hulls, Michael Keegan-Dolan, Akram Khan, Russell Maliphant, Wayne McGregor, Seeta Patel, Crystal Pite, Kate Prince, Nitin Sawhney, Alesandra Seutin, Botis Seva, Hofesh Shechter, and Jasmin Vardimon.**

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### **About Jules Cunningham**

Jules Cunningham (they/them) is from Liverpool and has worked professionally as a dancer for over twenty years, recognised for Outstanding Modern Performance by the Critics Circle National Dance Awards, 2014. After training at the Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance in London, they worked with Ballett der Stadt Theater Koblenz in Germany, Merce Cunningham Dance Company in New York, and Michael Clark Company in London, and in projects with Boris Chartmatz, Thick & Tight, Anne Carson, and Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz across Europe. Jules was in residence for Haroon Mirza's exhibition at ACCA as part of Melbourne International Festival in 2019.

Jules has presented work in the UK and internationally, alongside choreographic research and extensive teaching. They were one of 10 commissioned artists for Art Night 2019 in London and a recipient of the 2021 Founders Prize Award at the Bethlem Gallery for their visual art work currently exhibited at the Long Gallery, Maudsley Hospital.

Jules founded Julie Cunningham & Company in 2017, to create and present work that combines clarity of form and attention to detail with an interest in gender identity, the body & its emotional states and mental health. Jules is developing a movement language that draws on their technical training, expanding and queering it collaboratively, working between sound, text and visual art.

JCC was launched at the Barbican and was associate company of Rambert in 2017. Jules has created 13 works for the company which have toured in the UK and Europe.

Jules made their main stage debut at Sadler's Wells as a New Wave Associate in 2018 with *m/y*, commissioned as part of the theatre's 20th anniversary celebration. Sadler's Wells subsequently commissioned *how did we get here?*, a work for Jules, Harry Alexander and Spice Girl Melanie Chisholm, which was presented in Sadler's Wells Theatre across 11 nights in January 2023.

Jules has an established teaching practice, working as a guest lecturer for Trinity Laban over many years, as well as guest teaching and choreographing at Rambert School, The Place, Glasgow Clyde College, Glasgow School of Art, and ZHdK in Zurich. Jules is increasingly committed to working in healthcare settings undertaking JCC residencies at Bethlem Royal Hospital with Bethlem Gallery and also as an independent artists with Dulwich Picture Gallery and Siobhan Davies Studios at the Tessa Jowell Health Centre.

### **About Dan Daw**

Dan is the Artistic Director/CEO of Dan Daw Creative Projects. Dan Daw Creative Projects is a disabled-led company that works collaboratively with a growing network of companies and artists to develop and tour new performance work that blurs the divide between theatre and dance.

Dan Daw Creative Projects have presented their work at British Dance Edition (UK), Swedish Performing Arts Biennale (SWE), Sydney Festival (AUS), Sophiensaele (DE), SoHo Playhouse (USA) and Sadler's Wells (UK).

Dan's work explores what it means for his disabled body to occupy, and be unapologetic in, non-disabled spaces. He is interested in the function access, care, consent and interdependence has in those spaces.

Dan began working as a performer with Restless Dance Theatre (AUS) in 2002, and since then has gone on to work with Australian Dance Theatre (AUS), Force Majeure (AUS), FRONTLINEdance (UK), Scottish Dance Theatre (UK), balletLORENT (UK), Candoco Dance Company (UK), Skånes Dansteater (SWE) and National Theatre Scotland (UK).

Throughout his performance career, Dan has worked with Kat Worth, Garry Stewart, Kate Champion, Janet Smith, Adam Benjamin, Wendy Houstoun, Sarah Michelson, Rachid Ouramdane, Nigel Charnock, Matthias Sperling, Marc Brew, Claire Cunningham, Martin Forsberg, Carl Olof Berg, Charlotte Spencer and Javier de Frutos.

Working as Internationale Tanzmesse NRW Associate Curator (2021 – 2024), Associate Artistic Director of Candoco Dance Company (2021), Sadler's Wells Summer University Artist (2015 – 2018) and Associate Director of Murmuration (2015 – 2022), Dan continues to work at the forefront of disability-led performance making and international performance programming.

### **About Oona Doherty**

Oona Doherty was born in 1986 in London. Doherty moved to Belfast when she was 10 and studied at St Louise's comprehensive college in Belfast, The London School of Contemporary Dance, University of Ulster and LABAN London. From 2010 she performed with various companies, including: TRASH (NL), Abattoir Fermé (BE), Veronika Riz (IT), Emma Martin/United Fall (ROI), Enda Walsh & Landmark Productions (ROI).

Doherty created her first solo work *Hope Hunt* and *the Ascension into Lazarus* in 2016. With this performance, she was awarded the "Tiger Dublin Fringe Festival Best Performer Award" in 2016 and the winner of the "Total Theatre Dance Award" at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2017 and the 1st Audience place and judge's 1st place at Reconnaissance in Grenoble in 2017, which was voted "No. 1 British dance performance of 2019" by the Guardian. In 2019 she created *Lady Magma: The Birth of a Cult*. That same year, her work was highlighted at the rencontres chorégraphiques de Seine Saint Denis, (FR).

Doherty's distinctive and visceral choreography has sparked international attention, earning multiple awards, amazing reviews and prestigious artistic opportunities both in Ireland, Europe and worldwide. She creates intense, compelling works that appeal for societal change. She has forged a wide range of artistic relationships locally and internationally.

In August 2022, Doherty created her first major group piece, *Navy Blue* for 12 dancers, a ballet with music by Sergei Rachmaninov and original creation by Jamie xx. In July 2023, Doherty moved to Marseille and her company The OD Works also moved. Doherty is currently working on a new piece on the border between dance, theatre and performance: *Specky Clark - A series of theatrical images*. It is due to premiere at the Pavillon Noir in November 2024.

Doherty will be associate artist of the CCN d'Aix-en-Provence - Pavillon Noir, for the 2024/25 season, and is Guest Artistic Director for this year's National Youth Dance Company.

Doherty was awarded the Venice Biennale Silver Lion in 2021 and was one of the Aerowaves 2017 selected artists, an Associate Artist at Maison de la Danse de Lyon (FR) in 2017/18, Doherty was Dublin Dance Festival Artist in Residence in 2020/22 and a Big Pulse Dance Alliance Artist in 2021/23.

### **About Michelle Dorrance**

Michelle Dorrance is "one of the most imaginative tap choreographers working today" (The New Yorker) and has pushed tap dance choreography into dialogue with the international cultural landscape like no artist before. At once a composer and a choreographer, she is known for deeply musical, highly physical, and emotionally compelling work that lives at the intersection of innovation, tradition, and risk.

Raised in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Dorrance was mentored by groundbreaking youth tap educator, Gene Medler and studied under many of the last hoofers of the jazz era. A New York City-based artist for over 25 years, she performed with notable tap companies and productions including Savion Glover's *ti dii* and Off-Broadway sensation, *STOMP*.

In 2011, she founded Dorrance Dance with the mission to help audiences view tap dance in a new and dynamically compelling context while honouring the Black American legacy of the art form. The company's inaugural performance earned Dorrance a "Bessie" Award and the company has since performed over 20 of Dorrance's original works nationally and internationally to great critical acclaim.

A lover of collaboration and rebellion, Dorrance has created work with a unique range of artists including Dormeshia, Derick K. Grant, Nicholas Van Young, Bill Irwin, Lil Buck, Tiler Peck, Jillian Meyers, Ephrat Asherie, and Toshi Reagon. Michelle made her Broadway choreographic debut in James Lapine's *Flying Over Sunset* in 2021. Other commissions include Martha Graham Dance Company, The Joyce Theater, New York City Center, Vail Dance Festival, American Ballet Theatre, and Works & Process at the Guggenheim.

A 2018 Doris Duke Artist, 2017 Ford Foundation Art of Change Fellow, 2015 MacArthur Fellow, and 2012 Princess Grace Award winner, Dorrance has been acknowledged and supported by Jacob's Pillow, the Alpert Awards, United States Artists, The Field, and the American Tap Dance Foundation. Dorrance holds a B.A. from New York University.

### **About Seeta Patel**

The award-winning choreographer and dancer Seeta Patel was born in London and began her training under the guidance of Kiran Ratna in 1990. Over a career spanning two decades, she has transformed the face of the South Asian dance community in the UK. She has since worked with a range of Bharatanatyam and contemporary dance professionals including Mavin Khoo, Pushkala Gopal and Liz Lea. She has also performed and toured with a number of companies such as DV8 Physical Theatre, Shobana Jeyasingh Dance Company, David Hughes Dance Company and Gandini Juggling.

Seeta has presented solo and ensemble works at the Southbank Centre Purcell Room, Royal Opera House, ROH2 and Sadler's Wells such as: *Cycle of Change* (2005), *She Was Still* (2005-6), *Alter Ego* (2007), *Shringara* (2009), *Last One Standing* (2010) and *First Light* (2014). Her solo classical London debut, *Shringara: Journey of Desire*, was performed to a capacity audience at The Clore Upstairs, Royal Opera House (June 2009), and then toured around the UK in 2010/11. She subsequently presented solo classical works *Dancing My Siva* and *Something Then, Something Now* to sold out audiences at Sadler's Wells and the Purcell Room (Darbar Festival).

Over the past 20 years, Patel has received numerous awards and bursaries for her creative and professional development. She was awarded the Lisa Ullmann Travel Scholarship to study in India (2005) and at the New York Film Academy (2013). In 2017, she received the Washington S&R Award for her work championing Bharatanatyam in the diaspora.

Seeta worked as a choreographic collaborator with the world-renowned contemporary circus company, Gandini Juggling, for their production *Sigma* which premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2017 before touring in 2020 and subsequently won the Archangel Award, Total Theatre Award, and Asian Arts Award, and in 2016 choreographed a new play at the Theatre Royal Stratford East entitled *The House of In Between*.

Alongside her choreographic and performing work Seeta has worked in film, TV and theatre. She produced a multi award-winning short dance film, *The Art of Defining Me* in 2013, which gained national and international acclaim. A fervent supporter of emerging talent in dance, she was a judge, mentor and advisor for the inaugural BBC TV Young Dancer Competition and reprised her role in 2022.

Seeta's contemporary work in collaboration with the Australian choreographer and performer Lina Limosani is the one-woman show, *Not Today's Yesterday* which takes a dramatic look at the whitewashing of history around the world. The show was a recipient of the Adelaide Artist Fringe Fund and premiered successfully at the Adelaide Fringe Festival in 2018 where it won Best Dance and the Peace Foundation Award. The production toured around the UK in 2018 and 2019, including the Edinburgh Fringe as part of the British Council showcase. During the tour Seeta curated a series of lively and interesting post-show talks in association with a range of activists, historians and artists. The work went on to tour internationally including Australia, India, Italy and Egypt.

Most recently, Seeta Patel's critically acclaimed Bharatanatyam version of the iconic ballet, *The Rite of Spring*, toured the UK through 2019-2021, winning the 2020 Eastern Eye Arts, Culture and Theatre Award in the Dance Category and being nominated for best stage production by the Asian Media Group in 2019. The work was developed with an extended cast and full orchestra, premiering at Sadler's Wells in 2023 to tremendous reviews from publications such as The Observer, The Financial Times, The Telegraph and the Times, before touring the UK. The projection mapped immersive version featuring Seeta Patel herself has been transforming heritage sites around the country.

In 2022, Seeta Patel's company Seeta Patel Dance became a National Portfolio Organisation with Arts Council England, and is excited to develop more exciting projects in the coming years. The constantly evolving world of South Asian Dance is developing as an integral part of the international dance landscape and Seeta Patel is a vital part of this growing business; she mentors and supports up-and-coming dancers and produces high quality work which entertains and engages an increasing audience both in the UK and abroad.

### **About Alesandra Seutin**

Alesandra Seutin is an award-winning multidisciplinary performance artist and creator, whose focus is exploring

movement as a foundation for theatre, media and site-specific works. The daughter of South African and Belgian parents, Alesandra was born in Harare, Zimbabwe.

An inspirational leader with a multifaceted career spanning two decades, she has reached global audiences through her work as an artistic director, choreographer, performer, mentor, teacher, movement director, dramaturg and writer for performance and music.

Alesandra Seutin is the Co-Artistic Director of École des Sables alongside Wesley Ruzibiza since 2020. Having further trained at the school herself under Germaine Acogny, Seutin is a worldwide ambassador and teacher of the Acogny technique. In collaboration, Wesley and Alesandra both direct the development of the internationally renowned training programme and performance companies, Jant-Bi Germaine Acogny and Jant-Bi II.

Alesandra earned her training at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance and Middlesex University in London. The world is her muse and through her creations she comments on social, political, and economic reality with dance, song, and music. The notion of "getting or taking a place" is central to Seutin's work, as is finding your place in major cultural institutions: the spaces that are not obviously 'yours'.

She founded her company Alesandra Seutin (formerly Vocab Dance) in 2007 and has steadily built its reputation for creating high-quality, artistic performance. Renowned for their distinctively theatrical choreography and blend of movement vocabulary, text and dance, the Company's work is focused on the exploration of subjects which impact our society, and with this capture their audience in a journey of compelling and outspoken dance theatre. Alesandra Seutin's repertoire is diverse with over eleven productions within its catalogue, ranging from solos to ensemble pieces for indoor stages and site specific settings.

Alesandra Seutin's work has toured across the UK, Europe and internationally and she has received over 20 choreographic commissions including Sadler's Wells, KVS, Merce Cunningham Company, Wellcome Collection, Channel 4, Phoenix Dance Theatre and National Youth Dance Company.

She was also guest director for the National Youth Dance Company from 2019-2021.

In addition to her work on and off stage in performance and writing, Alesandra Seutin spends much of her time mentoring and developing the careers of future generations of makers and creatives.

### **About Botis Seva**

Botis Seva is a unique and seminal choreographic voice rooted in Hip Hop dance theatre but inspired by a freeform approach to choreography. His work is grounded in real life and captures his own stories, as well as those around him, whilst borrowing techniques from film, text, art and other dance languages to continuously reinvent his approach to creativity and the stage.

Botis' passion from a young age was music, he'd spend time at his local youth club making beats and MC'ing. When he was 15 years old he was introduced to dance at secondary school and it was here Botis decided to pursue a choreographic career outside of mainstream educational pathways. He founded his Hip Hop dance theatre company Far From The Norm aged 19 in Dagenham, London, with friends that shared his passion for experimenting with the Hip Hop form.

In his early choreographic years, Botis honed his craft and skills through mentorship and artistic development opportunities with Breakin' Convention at Sadler's Wells, which gave him the confidence to apply for various platforms and slowly build up his language and portfolio.

From here, Botis' work started to take flight across the stage, outdoor and dance film circuits. Since, he has been the recipient of numerous awards including Bonnie Bird Choreography Fund, Marion North Mentoring Award (2015), Copenhagen International Choreography Competition (2016), Choreography 30 Hannover (2016), Olivier Award for Best New Dance Production for *BLKDOG* (2019), nominations for Black British Theatre Award and Dance Critics National Dance Awards (2022), CHANEL Next Prize (2022) and Carmen Mateux Best Choreographer Award (2023).

Botis has also worked on numerous film commissions including *Inside The Blind Iris* with director Douglas Bernadt (2023), a collaboration with Director Freddie Leydon and Christies on *Santo* (2022), BBC Arts x Space *CAN'T KILL US ALL* (2020) and Channel 4 Random Acts *REACH* (2018). His film work has won Vimeo Best of the Year Awards (2023), Kinsale Sharks (2023), San Francisco Dance Film Festival (2018) and nominations include Cannes Lion Award (2023) and Young British Arrows (2023).

His other stage commissions include Scottish Dance Theatre, Rupert Goold, National Youth Dance Company, Wayne McGregor and Robin Friend, Battersea Arts Centre/Suri Krishnamma and upcoming commissions include Acosta Dance and NDT.

### **About Sadler's Wells**

Sadler's Wells is a world-leading dance organisation. We strive to make and share dance that inspires us all. Our acclaimed year-round programme spans dance of every kind, from contemporary to flamenco, Bollywood to ballet, salsa to street dance and tango to tap.

We commission, produce and present more dance than any other organisation in the world. Since 2005, we have helped to bring more than 200 new dance works to the stage, embracing both the popular and the unknown. Our acclaimed productions tour the world. Since 2005 we've produced 64 new full-length works and performed to audiences of more than two million, touring to 51 countries.

Each year, over half a million people visit our three London theatres - **Sadler's Wells Theatre**, **Lilian Baylis Studio** and **Peacock Theatre**. Millions more attend our touring productions nationally and internationally or explore our digital platforms, including Sadler's Wells Digital Stage.

### **Sadler's Wells East**

In 2024 we're opening a fourth London venue in Stratford's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

**Sadler's Wells East** will house a 550-seat mid-scale theatre, as well as facilities for the new Rose Choreographic School and the hip hop theatre training centre, Academy Breakin' Convention.

Sadler's Wells East joins the rich cultural heritage of Stratford, opening in London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park as part of the East Bank development alongside the BBC, UAL's London College of Fashion, UCL and the V&A. Sadler's Wells East will support artist development and training, and the creation of new work. It will build the infrastructure for dance and make it accessible to more people. Sadler's Wells East will house a flexible theatre presenting a wide variety of dance performances. Community will be at the heart of Sadler's Wells East with a large open foyer that can be used by everyone as a meeting or performance space. There will also be dance studios and world-class dance facilities for dancemakers to train, create and rehearse productions.

### **Supporting artists**

Supporting artists is at the heart of our work. We have associate artists and companies, which nurture some of the most exciting talent working in dance today. We host the National Youth Dance Company, which draws together some of the brightest young dancers from across the country. Sadler's Wells Breakin' Convention runs professional development programmes to champion and develop the world's best hip hop artists, as well as producing, programming and touring groundbreaking hip hop performances.

### **Learning and community links**

Around 30,000 people take part in our learning and engagement programmes every year. We support schools local to our theatres in Islington and Stratford, designing experiences for children and young people to watch, explore and critically engage with the arts. We also run Company of Elders, a resident performance company of dancers aged over 60 who rehearse with renowned artists to make new work for public performances locally, nationally and internationally.

Sadler's Wells is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

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