Media release

**ENGLISH NATIONAL BALLET’S NEW *GISELLE* HEADLINES**

**AUCKLAND ARTS FESTIVAL 2018**

In March 2018, English National Ballet’s stunning new reinterpretation of the classic romantic ballet *Giselle,* choreographed by dance superstar Akram Khan, is coming to New Zealand exclusively for the Auckland Arts Festival.

One of the most famous ballet companies in the world, English National Ballet has undergone a spectacular artistic resurgence under powerhouse Artistic Director [Tamara Rojo](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/20/arts/dance/tamara-rojo-the-woman-who-has-transformed-english-national-ballet.html). The New York Times called the Spanish arts visionary “the woman who transformed English National Ballet.” She has rejuvenated the ballet canon with her bold new commissions of the classics, most significantly, *Giselle*.

At the beating heart of this brilliant ballet is the edgy, big-thinking choreographer, dancer and director, [Akram Khan](http://www.akramkhancompany.net/company-profiles/akram-khan/), whose work is venerated across the world. Auckland audiences may remember him from 2015, when his company performed *iTMOI (In The Mind of Igor)* at the Auckland Arts Festival.

In 2016, Rojo commissioned Khan to undertake his largest ever project; to choreograph his first full-length ballet with a classical ensemble. His response was a phenomenal re-creation of the 1841 classic, which was a huge success everywhere it went, flooring audiences and delighting reviewers who breathlessly declared it “sensational,” “beautiful and intelligent” and “a masterpiece.” Also, “The best work Khan has ever created.” (New York Times)

The tour de force of ballet won the South Bank Sky Art Award for Best Dance Production and Manchester Theatre Award for Best Dance Production.

It is the first time the epic production has left the United Kingdom. Auckland Arts Festival’s new Artistic Director Jonathan Bielski secured the exclusive five-performance season between runs at West End theatre, the London Coliseum, and the world’s great dance house, Sadler’s Wells.

He says, “Everyone wanted Akram Khan’s new *Giselle* and we had stiff competition from the great cities and festivals of the world, but I am thrilled we could secure the international premiere of this work for the 2018 Auckland Arts Festival.”

This classic story of love, betrayal and redemption tells of an outcast migrant factory worker who dies from grief after discovering her lover is betrothed to another woman. She joins a group of ghosts who seek revenge for the wrongs done to them to take revenge on him, but their love overpowers her and he is released, forgiven.

Fresh from their success at the 2017 Olivier Awards, English National Ballet brings to Auckland from London a huge team of nearly 100 performers and crew.

Travelling with them is a monumental set, with a revolving motorised wall as its centerpiece, which was designed by Tim Yip, whose work for the 2000 film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* earned him an Academy Award for Best Art Direction.

In Akram Khan’s *Giselle*, the “ominous, gothic” score (The Observer), which uses hybrid electronics and a full orchestra, has been composed by Vincenzo Lamagna and draws on Adolphe Adam’s original. At AAF 2018, this will be performed live by the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra under English National Ballet Music Director Gavin Sutherland.

When Giselle premiered at the Paris Opera in 1841, it was hailed as ‘the greatest ballet of its time’. English National Ballet’s 21st Century version of the timeless tale, created by some of the world’s bravest ballet-makers, will be one of the greatest shows in Auckland next year. Ends

**Media contact:**
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**CREATIVE TEAM**

**Direction & Choreography:** Akram Khan

**Set and Costume Designer:** Tim Yip

**Dramaturgy:** Ruth Little **Composer:** Vincenzo Lamagna

**Conductor:** Gavin Sutherland

**WHEN**

Thurs 1 Mar 7.30pm

Fri 2 Mar 7.30pm

Sat 3 Mar 2pm & 7.30pm

Sun 4 Mar 5pm

**WHERE**

ASB Theatre, Aotea Centre

**TICKETS\***

Platinum $175

Premium $155

Premium Conc $145
Premium **Early Bird** $132, until 27 August

A Res $135

A Res Conc $125

A Res **Early Bird** $115, until 27 August

B Res $95

B Res Conc $85

B Res **Early Bird** $81, until 27 August

C Res $75

C Res Conc $65

D Res $55

Early Bird prices on Premium, A- & B-Reserves until 27 August

ticketmaster.co.nz | 09 951 2501

\*Service fee applies

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**English National Ballet**

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**Akram Khan Company**

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