

THE GREAT GATSBY

BIOGRAPHIES – The Creatives

David Nixon OBE – Choreography, Direction, Scenario, Costume Design

David trained as a dancer, first in his hometown of Chatham, Ontario and then at the National Ballet School of Canada. It was during his time there that he first became interested in choreography, helping to revive a choreographic workshop with the approval of school director Betty Oliphant. After further training in Europe he returned to Canada to train with Erik Bruhn and the great Russian teacher, Eugene Valukin.

David's career began at the National Ballet of Canada where he progressed rapidly through the ranks to become a Principal Dancer, dancing lead roles in the classical and contemporary repertoire. In 1985 he joined the Deutsche Oper Ballet in Berlin as Principal Dancer where he won the Critics' Award for Best Male Performance (1987) and continued to increase his own choreographic output. This included producing and directing a successful mixed programme, *David Nixon's Liaisons*, at the Hebbel Theatre, Berlin in 1990.

David left Berlin for a series of principal guest artist positions with National Ballet of Canada, Bayerisches Staatsballett, Munich and Royal Winnipeg Ballet before returning to Deutsche Oper Ballet in 1994 as First Ballet Master. His guest artist credits also include Birmingham Royal Ballet; Komische Oper; Deutsche Staatsoper; Hamburg Ballet and Sydney City Ballet.

In 1994 David became Artistic Director of BalletMet in Columbus, Ohio USA. During his six years with the Company he added 16 world and 15 company premières to the repertoire. Companies in Canada, the USA and South Africa have since staged David's productions. Recently he has reproduced *The Nutcracker* in Slovenia, *The Three Musketeers* in Tallin, Estonia and *Dangerous Liaisons* in Ohio.

In 2001 David became Artistic Director of Northern Ballet and has since added an impressive array of new works to the repertoire including the hugely *popular Madame Butterfly, Wuthering Heights, the Gershwin extravaganza, I Got Rhythm, Swan Lake, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Peter Pan, Dracula, The Three Musketeers, A Sleeping Beauty Tale, The Nutcracker, Hamlet, Cleopatra, Beauty & the Beast, The Great Gatsby* and most recently *Cinderella*.

His work has received recognition: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Three Musketeers* were nominated for an Olivier award; *The Three Musketeers* won a Manchester Evening News (MEN) Theatre Award and *Madame Butterfly* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* were nominated for a MEN Award. David was voted Director of the Year by readers of *Dance*

Europe in 2003 and 2006; and Northern Ballet received the audience award at the Critics' Circle National Dance Awards for three successive years (2004, 2005, 2006), and the Patron's Award in 2009.

In January 2010 David was awarded an OBE for his services to dance in the Queen's New Years Honours list.

Patricia Doyle - Co-Director

Patricia has worked extensively with Northern Ballet, beginning as drama consultant and acting coach on Christopher Gable's *Dracula*, continuing with him and Michael Pink on *Giselle* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. She then directed Northern Ballet's *Carmen* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*, both choreographed by Didy Veldman. Her collaboration with David Nixon began on *Wuthering Heights* and *Swan Lake* and continued with Patricia co-directing and creating the scenarios with David for the company's new versions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Peter Pan*. Patricia also co-wrote the scenario for David Nixon's *A Sleeping Beauty Tale*, which was performed as part of Northern Ballet's Spring/Summer tour in 2007. As well as co-directing *Hamlet* Patricia also prepared the scenario alongside David Nixon. Patricia also teaches and lectures on British Theatre for American Universities and directs courses at the Actors' Centre in London and Central School of Ballet. She also assesses students at leading drama schools.

Born: Hertfordshire

Trained: RADA

Previous Companies:

As an Actress: Patricia has worked in many of the major repertory companies in Britain; at the Royal Court, the National Theatre and with the Royal Shakespeare Company. Founding member of the GeVa Theatre, Rochester, NY as well as television, radio and film work.

As a Director: Work includes: *Martine*, Salisbury Playhouse; *Time and the Conways* and *Noises Off*, Ohio, USA; *Three Sisters*, *Great Expectations*, *Wuthering Heights* and *Travesties*, Manchester Metropolitan University School of Theatre; *Puss in Boots* and *Little Red Riding Hood*, Theatre, Chipping Norton; *Blue Remembered Hills*, *A Clergyman's Daughter*, and *Bloody Poetry* with her own company Terra Firma, in London and touring. She has also worked with Central School of Ballet, the National Youth Theatre, and has been involved in the training of students at major Drama Schools as well as working with young offenders for the Prince's Trust. Patricia also directs courses at the Actors Centre in

London and was Rehearsal Director for the children in the Hollywood film *Anna and the King* starring Jodie Foster.

Career Highlights:

As an Actress: The world tour of Peter Brook's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the Royal Shakespeare Company, Amanda in Noel Coward's *Private Lives*, Emma in Harold Pinter's *Betrayal*, Hester in Terence Rattigan's *The Deep Blue Sea*, Sheila in Peter Nichol's *A Day in the Death of Joe Egg*, Jo in Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey*, *Pinocchio* and *Hedda Gabler*.

As a Director: *Martine*, *Blue Remembered Hills*, *A Clergyman's Daughter*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Three Sisters*, *Time and the Conways*, *A Doll's House*, *Serious Money*, *Barnaby Rudge*, and productions with Northern Ballet.

Set Designer - Jérôme Kaplan

Born in Paris in 1964, Jérôme studied Scenography at L'Ecole de la Rue Blanche and after graduating in 1987 began working extensively designing sets and costumes for theatre and opera.

In 1992 he collaborated with the Ballets de Monte Carlo for the first time on *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* and has since designed sets and costumes for their productions of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Cinderella*, *Casse-Noisette Circus*, *Eye for Eye* and *Scheherazade*.

In 2001, Jérôme became the first French scenographer to be invited to work with the National Ballet of China in Beijing where he created costumes for *Raise the Red Lantern* staged by the director Zhang Yimou.

Jérôme has worked extensively with Bertrand d'At and his recent work also includes: *The Prince of Pagodas*, Opera of Strasbourg, *In the Mood for Love*, Ballet of Shanghai, with Karine Sporta, *Feu le Music Hall*, Comédie-Française and *In the Night Look*, Opera of Cairo. He has also worked with David Nixon OBE on Northern Ballet's *Ondine*, *A Sleeping Beauty Tale* and *The Great Gatsby*. Other recent ballet work includes: Christopher Wheeldon's *The Sleeping Beauty*, with Ib Andersen on *Kermesse in Bruges* for the Royal Ballet of Denmark and with Nacho Duato on *The Nutcracker* for the Mikhailovsky Ballet in Saint Petersburg.

Since 2010 Jérôme has worked with Alexei Ratmansky creating sets and costumes for *Don*

Quixote for the Dutch National Ballet, the world première of *Lost Illusions* for the Bolshoi in Moscow, for which he won a Golden Mask Award in 2012 for costume design, and *Cinderella* for the Australian Ballet in Melbourne.

Original Lighting Design – Tim Mitchell

Tim has previously lit *Hamlet* and *Dracula* for Northern Ballet and other dance and opera credits include *Die Fledermaus* (WNO); *Die Frau Ohne Schatten*, *Elektra* (Mariinsky Theatre, Russia); *Ariadne Auf Naxos* (Boston); *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Requiem Ballet*, *Don Giovanni* (Kammeroper); *Carmen Negra* (Icelandic Opera); *The Snowman* (Korea/Sadler's Wells/Tour) and *The Lady and The Fool* (BRB).

His recent theatre credits include *Racing Demon*, *An Enemy of the People* (Sheffield Crucible); *The Three Musketeers* (Rose Theatre); *Lend Me A Tenor* (Plymouth); *Tell Me on A Sunday* (Tour); *Master Class* (Theatre Royal Bath); *The Critic / Real Inspector Hound*, *Bingo*, *The Master Builder*, *Oklahoma*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Cyrano De Bergerac* (Chichester Festival Theatre, for whom he is an associate); *The Secret Garden* (Edinburgh Festival Theatre / Toronto); *The Cherry Orchard*, *Arthur and George* (Birmingham Rep); *Dirty Dancing* (West End/ Toronto/ Hamburg/ Utrecht/ USA tour/ Berlin); *The History Boys* (Tour/WYP); *Alphabetical Order* (also tour), *Darker Shores*, *Amongst Friends* (Hampstead); *A Month in the Country* (Salisbury Playhouse); *Cinderella* (Old Vic); *Sleeping Beauty* (New York/Barbican/Young Vic); *Henry IV Parts I & II* (Washington Shakespeare); *The Play What I Wrote* (Broadway/West End); *Merrily We Roll Along* (Donmar); *Hamlet* (Japan/Sadler's Wells); *Yes*, *Prime Minister*, *Toyer*, *Imagine This*, *Bad Girls The Musical*, *Otherwise Engaged*, *As You Like It*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Of Mice and Men* (West End); *Becky Shaw*, *The Knot of The Heart*, *Brighton Rock*, *Big White Fog*, *The Lightning Play*, *Enemies*, *Blood Wedding*, *Whistling Psyche* (Almeida) and over twenty productions for the RSC, most recently *Morte D'Arthur*, *Twelfth Night*, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Hamlet*.

Composer - Sir Richard Rodney-Bennet CBE

Richard Rodney Bennett was born 29 March 1936 in Broadstairs, Kent. He enrolled in the Royal Academy of Music in 1953 and then went on to study in Paris in 1957 – 1959 with the French Composer Pierre Boulez. Bennett wrote his first musical score for ballet in 1980 with the ballet *Isadora* and then in 1981 he wrote the music for *Noctuary*, a ballet by Macmillian yet to be performed.

Bennett later became well known for his film score which includes credits such as *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *Nicholas and Alexandra*, *Murder on the Orient Express* and *Four Weddings and a Funeral*. He also composed for the music to the 1964 Doctor Who serial, *The Aztecs*. He was knighted in 1998 for his services to music.

Richard Rodney Bennett passed away in New York Christmas Eve 2012 after a short illness.

Arrangement – John Longstaff

Born in Lancashire, John was educated at Girton College in Cambridge and then Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He has worked as conductor and rehearsal pianist for Kiel Opera House in Germany and Northern Ballet. He was Artistic Director at Sheffield Symphony Orchestra, Opera Conductor at Leeds College of Music and Guest Conductor at English National Ballet for their *The Nutcracker* and *Giselle* seasons. His work with National Ballet has included *Romeo & Juliet*, *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *Don Quixote*, *Carmen*, *Great Expectations*, *Madame Butterfly*, *I Got Rhythm*, *Beauty & the Beast*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *La Traviata*, *The Three Musketeers*, *The Nutcracker* and *Cleopatra*. Other ballet scores and arrangements include *Dorian*, *La Sylphide*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Hansel and Gretel* (chamber versions) and *The Coronation of Poppaea*. Career highlights include winning second prize at Leeds Conductors' Competition; editing Handel's Judas Maccabeus in the orchestration attributed to Mozart found in Halifax and televised on BBC 4; and producing Northern Ballet's CD's of *Great Expectations*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Peter Pan* and *The Three Musketeers*. John also enjoys playing the organ for services at St. Peter's in Harrogate.

Anthony Meredith – Music Advisor

Anthony, who worked as music advisor on *The Three Musketeers* and *The Great Gatsby*, has written biographies on both Malcolm Arnold and Richard Rodney Bennett. He has wide interests in addition to music and dance.

His most recent books have included a selection of Richard Rodney Bennett's piano works (in the Composer Portraits series); the history of Lord's Cricket Ground; and a motor racing extravaganza, *Silverstone's First Grand Prix, 1948*.

His daughter, Jo Meredith, is a choreographer and movement director.

Conductor – Myron Romanul

Recently nominated for the Marie Taglioni European Award as 'Best Conductor', Myron Romanul is one of the most fascinating and intriguing musicians on the music scene today. His passion and enthusiasm for music has given him the ability to bring people from many different types of arts and backgrounds together to produce spectacular performances that have moved audiences as well as bring critical acclaim.

Born in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A., he comes from a musical family and is the grandson of Stella Roman, former leading dramatic soprano at La Scala and the Metropolitan Opera. He began studying piano and memorising orchestral scores when he was six. He was featured with the New England Conservatory Ragtime Ensemble on the Angel-EMI recording *Scott Joplin: The Red Back Book* which won a Grammy Award for Best Classical Chamber Music. He studied conducting at the New England Conservatory of Music, the Boston University School of Music and the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood with Seiji Ozawa, Gunther Schuller and Joseph Silverstein. His long association with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, working with Ozawa, Kurt Mazur, Arthur Fiedler and John Williams, to mention a few, has been a strong influence in his growth as a conductor. After conducting orchestras such as the Central Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra, the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra and the Boston Ballet Orchestra, he moved to Germany where he has served as Kapellmeister, Associate and Assistant Music Directors in various opera houses in Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Mainz and Essen. He has also guest conducted throughout Germany as well as orchestras in North and South America, Europe and Asia. Romanul was a major force in the successful Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival in Alaska with his creative 16-year run as Music/Artistic Director. His recently released CD, *The Piano Of The Opera* has won critical acclaim.

He is currently conductor at the National Theater Munich, Germany, where since 1987 he has been leading performances of the Bayern State Opera and Ballet. In addition, he is Principal Conductor of the Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra and Guest Conductor at the Opera national du rhin, France. He is also currently Artist in Residence at Wesley College.

His theatre and concerts experiences extend from opera, operetta, ballet, musicals to big bands.