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Virginia Arts Festival presents Britain's famed  
**Birmingham Royal Ballet**  
in  
***Romeo and Juliet***  
April 20 – 22  
Chrysler Hall, Norfolk

***Exclusive North American engagement!***

**Norfolk, VA**—Love at first dance! Forbidden passions, dangerous secrets and star-crossed fate combine in this exhilarating classic ballet that reveals the heart of Shakespeare's immortal love story, coming to Chrysler Hall April 20-22, 2018. From the tender balcony scene to the lovers' heart-breaking ends, *Romeo and Juliet* is dance at its most poignant and beautiful—and the opulent production by Britain's famed [Birmingham Royal Ballet](#) is doubly exciting for its dramatic choreography by the great Sir Kenneth MacMillan, lavish sets and costumes, and dancers who embody the young lovers and their noble families. Further distinguishing these Norfolk performances is the presence of the [Virginia Symphony Orchestra](#), who will perform the beautiful Prokofiev score live, making the experience a feast for the ears as well as the eyes.

Birmingham Royal Ballet's performances in Norfolk mark the company's only North American engagement this season. The acclaimed company, with its rich history and deep repertoire, has had a relationship with [Virginia Arts Festival](#) since 2007; this 2018 engagement marks the company's fourth appearance in Norfolk. "We make it our mission to bring the world's great dance companies to the Festival," said Robert W. Cross, Virginia Arts Festival Perry Artistic Director. "For ballet and dance fans here in Norfolk, and for visitors from throughout Virginia and across the country, Norfolk has become a hub for great performances like this—and this year, Norfolk is the only place in the U.S. where you can see this internationally acclaimed company."

**Sir Kenneth MacMillan and *Romeo and Juliet***

Sir Kenneth MacMillan created his *Romeo and Juliet* in 1965, and the debut performance featured Rudolf Nureyev and Margot Fonteyn, two of the world's most legendary ballet stars. Born to a working class family in Scotland, MacMillan rose to become one of the most revered choreographers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; his works are featured in the repertoire of virtually every great company. His signature was his ability to uncover the psyche of the characters in each piece; in MacMillan's *Romeo and Juliet*, audiences may be surprised to find themselves gasping at the ferocity of the feuding noblemen, or in tears when the lovers are parted forever—such is this master choreographer's gift for revealing the heart of the story.

**Tickets** for Birmingham Royal Ballet's *Romeo and Juliet* are available online at [www.vafest.org](http://www.vafest.org), by phone at 757-282-2822 or by visiting the Virginia Arts Festival box office located at 440 Bank Street in Norfolk between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday-Friday.

**Birmingham Royal Ballet *Romeo and Juliet*  
with Virginia Symphony Orchestra  
Chrysler Hall, Norfolk, Virginia  
Friday, April 20 – 7:30 pm  
Saturday, April 21 – 7:30 pm  
Sunday, April 22 – 2:30 pm**

**About Birmingham Royal Ballet**

Birmingham Royal Ballet's history encompasses some of the most momentous events in British modern history. Founded in 1931 by Dame Ninette de Valois as the Vic-Wells Ballet, the company began performing at the famed, ancient Sadler's Wells Theatre as well as the Old Vic Theatre in London. When Sadler's Wells Theatre was bombed during World War II, the company hit the road, performing throughout Britain as the Sadler's Wells Ballet. After the war, the company became the touring arm of the newly founded Royal Ballet, and a Royal Charter was bestowed on both companies and their joint school. In 1990, the company moved to a new home in Britain's second largest city, and took its name as Birmingham Royal Ballet. Birmingham Royal Ballet's patron is Her Majesty the Queen, its President is HRH The Prince of Wales, and its Vice-President is The Lady Sarah Chatto, the daughter of Princess Margaret.

**About Virginia Symphony Orchestra**

Under the leadership of GRAMMY-winning music director JoAnn Falletta, the Virginia Symphony Orchestra is Virginia's pre-eminent professional symphony orchestra with a mission of inspiring, educating and connecting audiences of all ages.

Founded in 1921, it is ranked in the top ten percent of professional orchestras nationwide and serves the entire Southeastern Virginia region with Classics, Pops and Family concert series in Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Newport News and Williamsburg as well as performances in outlying Virginia and North Carolina communities, reaching more than 160,000 concert-goers every year. Additionally, the orchestra annually reaches 45,000 children, students and lifelong learners with its education and community programs. The Virginia Symphony has performed at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center and is the cornerstone of the performing arts in Hampton Roads.

**About the Virginia Arts Festival**

Since 1997, the **Virginia Arts Festival** has transformed the cultural scene in southeastern Virginia, presenting great performers from around the world to local audiences and making this historic, recreation-rich region a cultural destination for visitors from across the United States and around the world. The Festival has presented numerous U.S. and regional premieres, and regularly commissions new works of music, dance, and theater from some of today's most influential composers, choreographers and playwrights. The Festival's arts education programs reach tens of thousands of area schoolchildren each year through student matinees, in-school performances, artists' residencies, master classes and demonstrations. ###