# Royal Ballet to premiere contemporary ballet A Single Man based on Isherwood's gay love story



The Royal Ballet, in collaboration with Factory International, is set to unveil the world premiere of A Single Man, a contemporary ballet based on Christopher Isherwood's seminal 1964 novel. Adapted by director and choreographer Jonathan Watkins, this production will run from 2 to 6 July 2025, with a press night scheduled for Thursday, 3 July, at Aviva Studios.

This production represents the first joint venture between the Royal Ballet and Manchester International Festival (MIF). The narrative centres around George, a middle-aged gay professor grappling with the profound grief following the unexpected death of his long-term partner, Jim. As he navigates his sorrow, George seeks connection with those around him, grappling with contrasting facets of his identity. Will a serendipitous encounter rekindle his sense of joy?

Watkins' artistic vision promises to merge the worlds of ballet and contemporary dance in an exhilarating choreography that is both emotionally resonant and visually stunning. The production features original music from singer-songwriter John Grant and composer Jasmin Kent Rodgman, with Grant bringing George's internal monologue to life while former Royal Ballet principal Ed Watson embodies George's external experiences. The ballet will also showcase a dynamic ensemble of characters, including George's friend Charley and a young student, Kenny.

The creative team behind A Single Man includes Oscar-winning costume designer Holly Waddington and set designer Chiara Stephenson, known for her collaborations with artists such as SZA and Björk. Lighting design will be led by Simisola Majekodunmi, all of whom contribute to the production's rich visual narrative.

John Grant expressed his enthusiasm about participating in this groundbreaking production, remarking on the impact of reading Isherwood's novel and recognising its importance as a pioneering work of twentieth-century literature. He emphasised the honour of interpreting this poignant story through song—a sentiment echoed by composer Jasmin Kent Rodgman, who articulated her excitement in creating a score that harmoniously intertwines with Grant's contributions.

Jonathan Watkins articulated the profound nature of Isherwood's work, describing it as a complex exploration of human experience and the essence of being alive. He conveyed a commitment to showcasing queer narratives in a meaningful way on stage, aligning with the wider creative efforts of the Manchester International Festival.

## References

* <https://louderthanwar.com/manchester-international-festival/> - This URL supports the claim about Manchester International Festival's involvement in the premiere of 'A Single Man.' It highlights the festival's upcoming events, which include collaborations with notable artists.
* <https://www.royalballet.org/> - Although not directly mentioned in the search results, the Royal Ballet's official website would provide information about their upcoming productions and collaborations, including 'A Single Man.'
* <https://www.factoryinternational.com/> - This URL would support the claim about Factory International's collaboration with the Royal Ballet on 'A Single Man.' However, specific details about this production might not be available without direct access to their site.