



Holland Dance Festival: the longest-running international dance biennale in the Netherlands

In February 2026, Holland Dance Festival celebrates its 20th jubilee edition with a diverse programme spread across five cities in the Netherlands – a milestone in the festival's 40-year history. From 4 to 21 February, The Hague, Delft, Rotterdam, Utrecht, and Tilburg will be transformed into hubs of dance, presenting world premieres, Dutch debuts and internationally renowned creators.

Forty years of dance history, creativity, and impact

Since 1987, Holland Dance Festival has been a platform where the international dance community comes together and where dance in all its forms is celebrated. From groundbreaking premieres to unforgettable performances by leading companies and iconic choreographers, each edition adds a new chapter to the ongoing dialogue between artists and audiences. The festival not only reflects the evolution of international dance but also the power of movement as a universal language — one that connects people and cultures, transcends boundaries, and opens new worlds.

An unparalleled gathering of dance, creators and defining moments

Over the years, legendary dance artists from around the world have graced the stages in The Hague. At the same time, Dutch talent has always been given a prominent place.

Twenty editions — a living archive of dance through the decades

The festival has offered international dance icons a platform to experiment, inspire and push artistic boundaries. Across twenty editions, 450 choreographers, 350 companies and independent makers have taken part, resulting in nearly 400 productions and an impressive 1,700 performances — attracting more than one million visitors. Holland Dance Festival has not only built a rich dance legacy, but also a unique archive of international creation and unforgettable moments of encounter and innovation.

Dance with a mission

Alongside its international programming, Holland Dance Festival is also known for its strong social engagement. Seniors, inclusion and dance in special education are key priorities. Through its educational and outreach projects, the festival brings people together and demonstrates the transformative impact of dance in society.

And onward...

Its rich history speaks for itself: forty years of dance, innovation, and unforgettable moments. But the story does not end here. Holland Dance Festival looks to the future with the same curiosity and energy, ready to write new chapters in dance history. The 2026 anniversary programme promises new highlights, spectacular premieres, and exciting collaborations. The combination of established names, emerging voices and a strong social agenda underscores the festival's importance as a unifying force within the dance field.

Key Highlights of the 2026 Festival Programme

The 20th jubilee edition will be celebrated in full force with a rich and diverse programme.

- **Festive Opening:** The circle comes full circle: where Holland Dance Festival began in 1987 at the initiative of Nederlands Dans Theater, NDT now also opens the 20th jubilee edition. Featuring a world premiere by Jan Martens (his first work for NDT) and live music by Dutch Ballet Orchestra, this evening at Amare in The Hague promises an impressive start to the festival. During the opening, the Kylián Ring will be awarded for the eleventh time — an honour celebrating exceptional dance artists who continue to renew the imaginative power of dance in the Netherlands.
- **Spectacular Closing:** The festival concludes with the Dutch premiere of *An Untitled Love* by Kyle Abraham — an energetic and intimate finale infused with the R&B sounds of the recently deceased D’Angelo.
- **Boy Blue:** The acclaimed British hip-hop company led by choreographer Kenrick ‘H2O’ Sandy presents the Dutch premiere of their latest production *Cycles* — a work that blurs the lines between street and stage and resonates strongly with a new generation of dance audiences.
- **Gauthier Dance:** The company presents a special edition of *FireWorks*, featuring ten new short works by international choreographers such as Mauro Bigonzetti, Stijn Celis and Benjamin Millepied. In addition, audiences can enjoy four repertoire gems and a spectacular finale: Ravel’s *Bolero* performed on trampolines, featuring Gauthier Dance Juniors. Artistic director Eric Gauthier is known for making dance widely accessible without compromising on quality, offering performances that are visually, technically, and emotionally compelling.
- **Hofesh Shechter:** With his distinctive choreographic signature, Shechter is known for group-based movement that sweeps across the stage like a flock. His work balances between aggression and poetry, between physicality and emotion. He combines dance with his own percussive musical scores and theatrical elements. Shechter is internationally recognised as one of today’s most exciting contemporary choreographers.
- **International DanceAble Symposium:** Focused on inclusion in dance, the 6th edition of the symposium sets the tone for discussion and awareness. Through presentations, panel discussions and workshops, the theme of an “inclusive dance sector” connects international speakers and participants, with the aim of continuously challenging and renewing the field.
- **Emerging Talent:** Holland Dance Festival loves shining a spotlight on young talent — this year with *KC Dance 70 Years. In Motion!* in which the young dancers of the Royal Conservatoire Dance share their passion, strength, and emotion with the audience. The programme is enriched by performances from KC alumni.
- The acclaimed tour **Talent On The Move** — a co-production of Holland Dance Festival and Codarts Rotterdam — kicks off with a premiere during the festival. More than thirty cities across the Netherlands will welcome the young dancers through May 2026. With this initiative, HDF and Codarts provide a national platform that offers invaluable stage experience.

And there is more...

Audience favourite **Silvia Gribaudi** returns with *Grand Jeté*, full of playfulness, humour, and irony. The 20th jubilee edition also brings surprising discoveries, such as the hypnotic *Semâ* by Compagnie Linga and **Alyssa Martin** with her surreal *Big Time Miss*.

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