



Press Release

MONDAY 13 APRIL, 2026

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Biographies can be downloaded [here](#)

REHEARSAL IMAGES RELEASED FOR *THE SURGE: AN ODE TO SINEAD O'CONNOR*

INSPIRED BY THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF SINÉAD O'CONNOR

CREATED BY TONY AWARD-WINNING CHOREOGRAPHER AND DIRECTOR SONYA TAYEH



Rehearsal images are released today for the World Premiere of *The Surge: An Ode to Sinéad O'Connor* created by Tony award-winning choreographer and director **Sonya Tayeh** (*Moulin Rouge: The Musical!*) opening from **25-27 June 2026** at Aviva Studios, Manchester, home of **Factory International**. The dance work is set to the music of **Sinéad O'Connor** and is a mediation on voice, protest and the courage to live a life that defies the norm performed by a company of 10 women.

PUBLIC SECTOR FUNDERS



Aviva Studios
Water Street, Manchester M3 4JQ
factoryinternational.org

Presented in partnership with **The Joyce Theater** and **Factory International**, O'Connor's voice guides us through the work, via her iconic music and narration from her memoir *Remembering's* with Tayeh's powerfully choreography performed by 10 women - 10 dance artists cutting through the notion of age as something to fear. These women total more than five hundred years of collective wisdom – affirming the passing of time as a privilege that carries beauty and experience with it.

The company brings together Dance Artists **Betsy Cooper, Alison Clancy, Gabrielle Malone, Mor Mendel, Amy Miller, Jennifer Nugent, Karine Plantadit, Lisa Race, Monique Smith, Jin Ju Song-Begin** and Understudy **Lauren Gerrie**.

The Surge is conceived, choreographed and directed by **Sonya Tayeh** – a creative visionary whose work relating to the body in motion explores many different worlds. An internationally celebrated artist, she is the dance backbone behind numerous stage and screen projects, most notably *Moulin Rouge: The Musical!*, for which she won the Tony Award for outstanding choreography. Tayeh has also directed and choreographed for world renowned music artists including Miley Cyrus, Florence and the Machine and Kyle Minogue. Her upcoming projects include the world premiere of *Girl, Interrupted* at New York's Public Theater and the Academy Award-nominated psychological thriller *Black Swan* which she brings to the stage at A.R.T in Massachusetts. Her work powerfully weaves together different styles – creating onstage worlds celebrated for her chameleon-like choreography and ability to adapt her storytelling to any scale.

Director and choreographer Sonya Tayeh said: *“To me, Sinéad O'Connor's music is rooted in a sense of a desire for freedom, an unrelenting righteousness and a quest for a spiritual awakening. The depth of emotion in her music is unmatched and vibrates through the dance space with such electric inspiration for me and has for decades now. I am so grateful to be working with ten women across many genres of the art form – from dance scholars and makers to teachers and seekers – to join me in the howl. To join me in The Surge.”*

ENDS

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LISTINGS INFORMATION

The Surge: An Ode to Sinéad O'Connor (25-27 June)

Press Night: 25 June. 7.30pm

A Joyce Theater and Factory International production

Sonya Tayeh Director and Choreographer

Sinéad O'Connor Music

Tom Visser Lighting and Scenic Designer

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Marc Cardarelli Sound Designer

Jenn Freeman Associate Choreographer

Márion Talán de la Rosa Costume Designer
Mieka van der Ploeg Associate Costume Designer

Jenn Freeman, Lauren Gerrie Co-Rehearsal Directors

Stacey-Jo Marine Production Manager

Jenna Hanlon Stage Manager

The Hall, Aviva Studios, Water Street, Manchester, M3 4JQ

Thursday 25 and Friday 26 June: 7.30pm

Saturday 27 June: 2.30pm and 7.30pm

NOTES TO EDITORS:

About

Factory International is the organisation behind Manchester International Festival and the city's landmark cultural space, Aviva Studios.

Factory

Factory International commissions, produces and presents a year-round programme of original creative work and special events at Aviva Studios, online, and internationally through its network of co-commissioners and partners. It also stages the city-wide Manchester International Festival (MIF) every other year.

International

Factory International builds on the legacy of Manchester International Festival, one of the world's leading arts festivals, and the first to be entirely focused on the commissioning and producing of ambitious new work. Staged every two years in Manchester since 2007, world-renowned artists from different art forms and backgrounds create dynamic, innovative and forward-thinking new work in venues and spaces across Greater Manchester.

Aviva Studios was designed by the world-leading practice Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), with Ellen van Loon as lead architect – their first major public building in the UK. Its development was led by Manchester City Council, with backing from HM Government and National Lottery funding from Arts Council England.

Ultra-flexible in design, the building is based around large, open, adaptable spaces that can be constantly reconfigured, enabling artists to develop and create large-scale work of invention and ambition of a kind not seen anywhere else in the world. A unique canvas to make, explore and experiment, audiences can enjoy the broadest range of art forms - from major exhibitions and concerts to intimate performances and immersive experiences.

Factory International plays an important role in the lives of Greater Manchester residents, bringing jobs, skills, training and creative opportunities. Through the Factory Academy, Factory International is training the creative workforce of the future, while its pioneering creative engagement and artist development programmes create year-round opportunities for local people to get involved, from participating in flagship commissions to shaping the organisation through involvement in its public forums.

Factory International is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.
factoryinternational.org

About The Joyce Theater

The Joyce Theater Foundation ("The Joyce," Executive Director, Linda Shelton), a non-profit organization, has proudly served the dance community for more than four decades. Under the direction of founders Cora Cahan and Eliot Feld, Ballet Tech Foundation acquired and renovated the historic Elgin Theater in Chelsea, transforming it into a space built by dancers for dance. Opening as The Joyce

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Theater in 1982, the venue was named in honor of Joyce Mertz, beloved daughter of LuEsther T. Mertz, whose vision and generosity made the theater possible; ownership was secured by The Joyce in 2015. In addition to its presenting activities, The Joyce advances the creation of new work through Joyce Theater Productions (JTP), its in-house producing initiative founded in 2014, which develops original productions for its stage and for touring worldwide while providing producing, fiscal, and administrative support to artists. Since its founding, The Joyce has presented more than 475 U.S.-based and international companies, expanded beyond Chelsea through off-site presentations, and sustained commissioning, residency, and education programs serving students and teachers in grades 1–12. With an annual season of roughly 48 weeks of dance, including more than 300 performances for audiences exceeding 100,000, The Joyce remains one of the few theaters in the world devoted exclusively to dance, upholding its mission to champion innovation, preserve tradition, and celebrate the art form's boundless possibilities.

About

Arts

Council

England

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. Our vision, set out in our strategy *Let's Create*, is that by 2030, we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. Between 2023 and 2026 we will have invested over £467 million of public money from Government, alongside an estimated £250 million each year from The National Lottery, to help ensure that people in every part of the country have access to culture and creativity in the places where they live. Until Autumn 2025, the National Lottery is celebrating its 30th anniversary of supporting good causes in the United Kingdom: since the first draw was held in 1994, it has raised £49 billion and awarded more than 690,000 individual grants.

Visit [our website](#) to learn more about our work.