

******SADLER'S WELLS DANCE HOUSE by SARAH CROMPTON publisher OBERON BOOKS
2013 editor CHARLES GLANVILLE**

This is a coffee table book published with pages of brilliant photos. But do not let the format fool you....this is no ordinary coffee table book but a very serious and enlightening one covering the development of the Sadler's Wells as it relates to today's very important status. As we gradually slip from the literary achievements for which the UK is so justifiably famous...a country where the written word was developed early on because of the English printing of the bible...I have loudly and clearly bemoaned the loss. With the British Isles' constant invasions by Romans, Vikings, Saxons, Normans, etc, language always altered with the native culture of the Celts, etc. and added richness to the language. As the world becomes global...so are we losing the written word to the world of images. And that is where the strength of the Sadler's Wells lies. There is a National Theatre covering the country and keeping abreast of all the theatrical changes as the digital world creeps in. There is an amazing amount of new young opera companies showcasing in the Linbury Studio Theatre, the experimental house for the Royal Opera House, and sponsorship of new works from the ENO. There are great things changing in opera with the laboratory work of Tête a Tête, OperaUpclose in pubs, and summer sessions of discovering new works and companies at the Arcola Theatre. But where has the new age been represented in dance? The Place Theatre has been the main laboratory on a small and avant-garde scale in developing modern choreographers who have had to spread their wings and fly elsewhere for recognition. It has taken the Sadler's Wells under Alistair Spalding's artistic directorship (March 7, 2005) to lead a theatre of lost identity to a national base like the National Theatre in bringing dance into its new age. That is exactly what this glorious book does and without being verbose but to the point with each photo relating exactly to the text. It not only gives an immensely in-depth understanding and appreciation of the Sadler's Wells but also is an essential introduction as to where the whole art form of dance has evolved. It no longer is like the classical ballet which belonged to the esoteric royal courts....but instead communicates with the emotional struggles, agonies, and triumphs of the 21st century using the ballet training and technique. That is why the choreographers of various styles and dance backgrounds have come to this powerhouse of dance where their basic dance training can now move on within the walls of this great theatre of 1500 seats with its sprung stage floor perfected for dancing, its fantastic lighting equipment and sound system, and a publicity department along with administration to burn the candles at both ends. Here with rehearsal rooms to develop work as choreographers can meet and exchange concepts... where it is now possible to create, with the most important elements, a work of art by collaborating with lighting, scenic, costume, and sound designers under the same roof from its very beginning. This is what made the greatness of the Ballet Russe under the impresario Diaghilev whose background was originally as an art critic and who brought the ballet to life by combining the painters, designers, choreographers, and dancers. He toured the theatres bringing dance to the people. We have in the 21st century at the Sadler's Wells this self same ingenious setting....just as Ninette de Valois created the Royal Ballet by first establishing the Sadler's Wells Ballet company at the Sadler's Wells in 1931 which toured the theatres and spaces throughout the country during the war. Lillian Bayliss was the mastermind of starting Ninette de Valois and using the Sadler's Wells as her northern extension of the Old Vic which housed theatre, dance, and opera for the people and at prices they could afford. Ninette de Valois's involvement into the Royal Ballet and Lillian Bayliss's passing away left the building of the Sadler's Wells (originally established in 1683 in one form or another) to struggle throughout these years to regain its identity, after long periods of just being a receiving house where it rented the venue to anyone in theatre, opera or dance. Ian Albery rebuilt the theatre (after 2 years in 1998) constructing its new enlarged foyers, a modern equipped stage, backstage, and auditorium in order to house world dance. But it took Alistair Spalding to redirect its use into a national theatre of contemporary dance. Like Pina Bausch who approached dance in a narrative or storytelling manner that has evolved into dance theatre and which has always sold out at the Sadler's Wells, Spalding has brought in the choreographers from opposite poles with their collaborators to develop such work.....Akram Khan & Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui with Zero Degrees, Sylvie

Guillem in Sacred Monsters, William Trevitt & Michael Nunn popularisers of Balletboyz, Jonzi D a leading force in Hip Hop culture, cerebral Wayne McGregor, Christopher Wheeldon in balletic growth, satirically famous Matthew Bourne, dance and musical genius Hofesh Shechter..... are the core at the moment as they develop their new works for the Sadler's Wells and then travel the world as the world of contemporary dance, in return, moves in. But the real significance is to grow with the times and this kind of dance is a valid form of modern communication. Dance theatre emerges with global culture and literary drama with its language emphasis begins to fade away. What this book reveals is the world we live in and its growth in this new direction of deeper communication through emotional images of body language. READ this book and have a look into our future.