# Sadler’s Wells East redefines dance with immersive community-led performances



Sadler’s Wells East, a major new dance theatre in east London’s Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, opened its doors in February 2025 with a vibrant celebration of movement and community. The inaugural show, *Our Mighty Groove*, choreographed by Vicki Igbokwe-Ozoagu, sets the tone for this dynamic venue that melds professional artistry with local engagement. Igbokwe-Ozoagu’s work, inspired by a transformative night at a New York nightclub in 2008, fuses club styles such as house, waacking, and vogue with African and contemporary dance forms, creating an immersive rave-like atmosphere that encourages the audience to participate directly in the performance. This spirit of inclusivity reflects the theatre’s broader mission to foster joy, self-expression, and accessibility in dance.

The theatre itself is part of the £1.1 billion East Bank development, anchored by cultural and educational institutions including BBC Music Studios, the London College of Fashion, University College London East, and V&A East. Located near West Ham’s London Stadium, Sadler’s Wells East is housed in a striking building designed by Irish architects Sheila O’Donnell and John Tuomey. Its architecture pays homage to Stratford’s industrial heritage through brickwork and cleverly integrated stage machinery that doubles as functional lighting and sound equipment. The main auditorium, with seating for 550, features retractable seats that can be folded away to transform the space for varied uses—a feature showcased vividly in *Our Mighty Groove*, where audience members join the dancers on the floor, blurring the lines between performers and spectators.

This new facility goes beyond being just a performance venue. It offers six state-of-the-art studios for rehearsals and classes, a café alongside a second-stage space for community events, and it houses important initiatives such as the UK’s first hip-hop school, Academy Breakin’ Convention for 16- to 19-year-olds, and the Rose Choreographic School, which supports emerging choreographers with mentorship. According to Britannia Morton, executive director at Sadler’s Wells, the venue plays a critical role in supporting local artists and bringing dance infrastructure into East London, a legacy continuing the regeneration sparked by the 2012 Olympics.

The programme for the inaugural season reflects this ethos with a rich diversity of performances. Alongside *Our Mighty Groove*, audiences can expect work by local and national companies including an adaptation of James Baldwin’s *Inside Giovanni’s Room* by Leeds-based Phoenix Dance Theatre and innovative performances such as Mette Ingvartsen’s *Skatepark*, which combines skateboarders and dancers on ramps. Other noteworthy productions include Benji Reid’s *Find Your Eyes* and Dan Daw Creative Projects’ *Over and Over (and over again)*, showcasing the venue’s commitment to hosting groundbreaking and genre-expanding dance.

Notably, *Our Mighty Groove* revives and remixes a classic from Igbokwe-Ozoagu’s company, Uchenna Dance, first performed in 2013 and expanded into a full-length touring show by 2015. The new iteration features a fresh cast blending local community members with professional dancers, addressing a unique age group often overlooked in dance training—those too old to be youth but still emerging as artists. Igbokwe-Ozoagu describes the process as collaborative, valuing the input and artistic voice of her dancers to build a shared creative experience.

In line with the theatre’s aim to be truly accessible, Sadler’s Wells East has made 20,000 tickets available at £25 or less, with £10 Barclays Dance Pass tickets for younger audiences aged 16 to 30. This pricing strategy underscores the venue’s mission to make dance welcoming and affordable to a broad demographic, nurturing a lifelong appreciation and participation in the art form.

Ultimately, Sadler’s Wells East emerges as a cutting-edge cultural hub committed to reinvigorating dance in London’s east end, blending architectural ingenuity, community empowerment, and artistic innovation. Choreographers like Vicki Igbokwe-Ozoagu embody this vision through works that invite audiences not just to watch but to move and celebrate alongside performers, reinforcing the theatre’s role as both a legacy of the Olympic regeneration and a beacon for the future of dance.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/news/sadlers-wells-east-our-mighty-groove-b2687776.html), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/sadlers-wells-east-opening-london-queen-elizabeth-olympic-park-b1209500.html), [[7]](https://www.broadwayworld.com/uk-regional/article/OUR-MIGHTY-GROOVE-Comes-to-Sadlers-Wells-in-February-20241104)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/news/sadlers-wells-east-our-mighty-groove-b2687776.html), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/b9a60de4-0c92-44dc-b0f9-000d676f3f0c), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/sadlers-wells-east-opening-london-queen-elizabeth-olympic-park-b1209500.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/news/sadlers-wells-east-our-mighty-groove-b2687776.html), [[3]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c3d5l004x48o), [[5]](https://www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/experience-magic-dance-new-sadlers-wells-east-venue)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/news/sadlers-wells-east-our-mighty-groove-b2687776.html), [[3]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c3d5l004x48o), [[6]](https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/sadlers-wells-east-skatepark-dance-east-bank-b1181139.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/news/sadlers-wells-east-our-mighty-groove-b2687776.html), [[7]](https://www.broadwayworld.com/uk-regional/article/OUR-MIGHTY-GROOVE-Comes-to-Sadlers-Wells-in-February-20241104)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/news/sadlers-wells-east-our-mighty-groove-b2687776.html), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/sadlers-wells-east-opening-london-queen-elizabeth-olympic-park-b1209500.html)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/news/sadlers-wells-east-our-mighty-groove-b2687776.html), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/b9a60de4-0c92-44dc-b0f9-000d676f3f0c), [[3]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c3d5l004x48o), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/sadlers-wells-east-opening-london-queen-elizabeth-olympic-park-b1209500.html)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/news/sadlers-wells-east-our-mighty-groove-b2687776.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/b9a60de4-0c92-44dc-b0f9-000d676f3f0c> - Sadler's Wells East, a new dance complex in east London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, opened on February 6, 2025. Designed by Irish architects Sheila O'Donnell and John Tuomey, the venue features a 550-capacity hall with retractable seating, six studios, a bar, and a café. The architectural design references the area's industrial history, incorporating brick volumes and machinery for lighting and sound systems. The building's placement amid diverse architectural landmarks in London provides a new cultural and performance hub.
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c3d5l004x48o> - Sadler's Wells East, located in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in Stratford, officially opened on February 6, 2025. The venue boasts a 550-seat auditorium, six state-of-the-art dance studios, and a free public performance space. Its opening season features 20 productions showcasing work from locally-based artists and dance companies from across the UK and the world. The venue is part of the East Bank development, which includes BBC Music Studios, V&A East, UAL's London College of Fashion, and UCL East.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/sadlers-wells-east-opening-london-queen-elizabeth-olympic-park-b1209500.html> - Sadler's Wells East, a new dance venue in east London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, opened in February 2025. The inaugural show, 'Our Mighty Groove' by choreographer Vicki Igbokwe-Ozoagu, blends club styles with African and contemporary dance. The venue offers 20,000 tickets for £25 or under, with £10 tickets for 16-30-year-olds for every performance. The East Bank development also includes BBC Music Studios, V&A East, London College of Fashion, and UCL East, contributing to a new cultural quarter in London.
5. <https://www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/experience-magic-dance-new-sadlers-wells-east-venue> - Sadler's Wells East, a new dance venue in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, opened in February 2025. The venue features a 550-seat auditorium, six state-of-the-art dance studios, and a public performance space. Its opening season includes performances such as Jasmin Vardimon's 'NOW', Mythili Prakash's 'She's Auspicious', and Vicki Igbokwe-Ozoagu's 'Our Mighty Groove'. The venue is part of the East Bank development, which includes BBC Music Studios, V&A East, London College of Fashion, and UCL East.
6. <https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/sadlers-wells-east-skatepark-dance-east-bank-b1181139.html> - Sadler's Wells East, a new dance venue in east London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, opened in February 2025. The venue's inaugural season includes performances such as Mette Ingvartsen's 'Skatepark', which teams up dancers with skateboarders on a stage filled with ramps. The venue also hosts productions like Benji Reid's 'Find Your Eyes' and Dan Daw Creative Projects' 'Over and Over (and over again)'. The season opens with 'Our Mighty Groove' by Vicki Igbokwe-Ozoagu, featuring local dancers alongside professionals.
7. <https://www.broadwayworld.com/uk-regional/article/OUR-MIGHTY-GROOVE-Comes-to-Sadlers-Wells-in-February-20241104> - Vicki Igbokwe-Ozoagu's 'Our Mighty Groove' is a remixed take on a Uchenna Dance classic. The first iteration premiered at Sadler’s Wells’ Lilian Baylis Studio in 2013 as part of their Wild Card programme to sold-out audiences. In 2015, it was developed into a full-length production and toured to various venues. This remixed version features a young cast joining Uchenna Dance for the first time in a new formation and larger-scale iteration.