# Johannes Radebe to make West End debut as Lola in Kinky Boots in 2026



Strictly Come Dancing star Johannes Radebe is set to make his West End debut as the iconic drag queen Lola in the award-winning musical *Kinky Boots*, which is returning to London’s prestigious Coliseum Theatre in 2026. This marks a significant milestone for the South African dancer, who first captivated British audiences on Strictly in 2018. Since January 2025, Radebe has been touring the UK and Ireland with *Kinky Boots*, bringing his unique flair to the role before stepping onto the West End stage for a 17-week run from March 17 to July 11, 2026.

The musical, based on a true story and the 2005 film of the same name, follows Charlie Price, a man who inherits his family’s struggling shoe factory. His fortunes turn when he meets Lola, a charismatic cabaret performer, inspiring Charlie to launch a line of high-heeled boots that revitalises the business. The show features a celebrated book by Harvey Fierstein and a pop-infused score composed by Cyndi Lauper. According to Lauper, *Kinky Boots* has an uplifting impact on audiences, spreading joy and acceptance—a sentiment she emphasised in light of the turbulent times audiences face today.

Radebe’s journey to this moment has been extraordinary. Born in the township of Zamdela, South Africa, he left home at 21 to pursue dance, initially performing in cruise ship ensembles before rising to public prominence through Strictly Come Dancing. Reflecting on his career in an interview, he described the opportunity to play Lola as a dream realised after six years of dedication, praising the warm welcome he has received from the theatre community. His appearances on Strictly were groundbreaking too, notably reaching the final in 2021 as part of the show’s first all-male dance couple alongside Bake Off star John Whaite.

The current tour of *Kinky Boots* continues to draw audiences across the UK and Ireland, with performances in cities such as Liverpool, Dublin, and Oxford. However, those intending to see Radebe live should verify show schedules, as he may not appear at every performance. Directed by Nikolai Foster, the production has been praised for its vibrant storytelling and unforgettable music, attributes that are expected to resonate strongly once it returns to London.

Tickets for the West End run will go on sale on July 15, 2025. As *Kinky Boots* prepares to grace the London stage once more, Johannes Radebe’s debut in this beloved role adds an inspiring chapter to the musical’s ongoing legacy—celebrating resilience, identity, and the power of a well-crafted dance number to change lives.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/entertainment/strictlys-johannes-radebe-to-make-west-end-debut-as-kinky-boots-drag-queen-ZJR7FBQK5NPLFI44EMHU435WJE/), [[2]](https://www.irishnews.com/entertainment/strictlys-johannes-radebe-to-make-west-end-debut-as-kinky-boots-drag-queen-ZJR7FBQK5NPLFI44EMHU435WJE/), [[3]](https://www.londontheatre.co.uk/theatre-news/news/johannes-radebe-to-make-west-end-debut-in-kinky-boots), [[6]](https://kinkybootstour.com/tour/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/entertainment/strictlys-johannes-radebe-to-make-west-end-debut-as-kinky-boots-drag-queen-ZJR7FBQK5NPLFI44EMHU435WJE/), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/showbiz/strictly-come-dancing-johannes-radebe-musical-debut-kinky-boots-b1150768.html), [[3]](https://www.londontheatre.co.uk/theatre-news/news/johannes-radebe-to-make-west-end-debut-in-kinky-boots)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/entertainment/strictlys-johannes-radebe-to-make-west-end-debut-as-kinky-boots-drag-queen-ZJR7FBQK5NPLFI44EMHU435WJE/), [[5]](https://www.whatsonstage.com/news/strictly-business-johannes-radebe-on-making-his-musical-theatre-debut-in-timely-kinky-boots_1658364/), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/showbiz/strictly-come-dancing-johannes-radebe-musical-debut-kinky-boots-b1150768.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://kinkybootstour.com/tour/), [[7]](https://www.whatsonstage.com/news/kinky-boots-tour-with-johannes-radebe-releases-show-footage_1667206/), [[3]](https://www.londontheatre.co.uk/theatre-news/news/johannes-radebe-to-make-west-end-debut-in-kinky-boots)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/entertainment/strictlys-johannes-radebe-to-make-west-end-debut-as-kinky-boots-drag-queen-ZJR7FBQK5NPLFI44EMHU435WJE/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.irishnews.com/entertainment/strictlys-johannes-radebe-to-make-west-end-debut-as-kinky-boots-drag-queen-ZJR7FBQK5NPLFI44EMHU435WJE/> - Strictly Come Dancing star Johannes Radebe is set to make his West End debut as Lola in the award-winning musical Kinky Boots at the London Coliseum in 2026. Radebe, who joined Strictly in 2018, has been part of the UK and Ireland tour of Kinky Boots since January 2025. The show follows Charlie Price, who inherits his family's failing shoe factory and develops a line of high-heeled boots after meeting cabaret performer Lola. The London production will run for 17 weeks from March 17 to July 11, 2026, with tickets going on sale on July 15, 2025.
3. <https://www.londontheatre.co.uk/theatre-news/news/johannes-radebe-to-make-west-end-debut-in-kinky-boots> - Johannes Radebe is set to make his West End debut as Lola in a new production of Kinky Boots, opening at the London Coliseum from March 17 to July 11, 2026. Radebe has been performing the role of Lola in the UK and Ireland tour since January 2025. Directed by Nikolai Foster, the musical follows Charlie Price, who inherits his family's failing shoe factory and, with the help of drag queen Lola, aims to save the business. The production features a book by Harvey Fierstein and a score by Cyndi Lauper.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/showbiz/strictly-come-dancing-johannes-radebe-musical-debut-kinky-boots-b1150768.html> - Strictly Come Dancing star Johannes Radebe will make his musical debut in Kinky Boots when the show returns to the UK in 2025. Radebe will take on the role of drag queen Lola in the production, which features a score by Cyndi Lauper and a book by Harvey Fierstein. The show is based on a true story and the 2005 movie of the same name, about a man named Charlie Price who inherits his family's failing shoe factory and meets Lola, whose high-heeled boots might save the business.
5. <https://www.whatsonstage.com/news/strictly-business-johannes-radebe-on-making-his-musical-theatre-debut-in-timely-kinky-boots_1658364/> - Johannes Radebe discusses his musical theatre debut in Kinky Boots, where he plays Lola. The production is directed by Nikolai Foster and features a book by Harvey Fierstein and a score by Cyndi Lauper. Radebe reflects on his journey from being a dance teacher in Johannesburg to performing in London's West End, expressing his excitement and gratitude for the opportunity to star in his favourite musical.
6. <https://kinkybootstour.com/tour/> - The Kinky Boots UK & Ireland Tour 2025 schedule includes performances in Liverpool, Dublin, Oxford, and other cities. Johannes Radebe will not be appearing at all performances; attendees are advised to check their theatre’s website for performance schedules. The tour features a cast including Dan Partridge as Charlie Price and Courtney Bowman as Lauren, with Radebe making his musical theatre debut as Lola.
7. <https://www.whatsonstage.com/news/kinky-boots-tour-with-johannes-radebe-releases-show-footage_1667206/> - The Kinky Boots tour, featuring Johannes Radebe as Lola, has released new show footage. The production, directed by Nikolai Foster, includes a book by Harvey Fierstein and a score by Cyndi Lauper. The tour is strutting across the UK and Ireland, with Radebe making his musical theatre debut in the role of Lola. The show tells the story of a struggling shoe factory that attempts to save itself by tapping into a niche market – boots for drag queens.