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



Johannes Radebe, the celebrated South African dancer known for his dynamic performances on Strictly Come Dancing, is poised to make his West End debut as the drag queen Lola in the acclaimed musical Kinky Boots. This Olivier and Tony award-winning production will open at the London Coliseum in March 2026, with Radebe reprising the role he began playing during the UK and Ireland tour in January 2025, marking his transition from television dance star to musical theatre performer.

Kinky Boots tells the uplifting story of Charlie Price, who inherits his family’s struggling shoe factory and, with Lola’s flamboyant and fearless support, reinvents the business by designing a line of striking high-heeled boots for drag performers. Radebe's portrayal of Lola is anticipated to bring his unique blend of dance prowess and stage charisma to this beloved narrative. The production is directed by Nikolai Foster and will play at the prestigious London Coliseum from 17 March until 11 July 2026.

Radebe’s journey into the spotlight began well before his West End debut. Born in South Africa, he built a formidable reputation as a dancer, becoming a two-time Professional South African Latin Champion and a three-time Amateur Latin South African Champion. Prior to his UK television debut on Strictly Come Dancing in 2018, he had already made history on Strictly Come Dancing South Africa, reaching the finals twice. His move to the UK version of the show showcased not only his exceptional talent but also his trailblazing spirit, particularly through his groundbreaking same-sex dance partnerships. In 2021, his partnership with John Whaite marked the first all-male pairing on the UK show, a step that was celebrated as a milestone for inclusivity in the competition.

Radebe’s rise has not been without challenges. His personal story includes overcoming significant adversity, including homophobia and bullying in his youth. Speaking to The Guardian, he reflected on these experiences, highlighting his resilience and unwavering dedication to his craft as key factors in his success. His visibility and achievements on Strictly have made him a beloved figure who continues to inspire many within and beyond the dance community.

The transition to musical theatre with Kinky Boots signals an exciting new chapter in Johannes Radebe’s career. As he steps onto the West End stage, audiences can expect a performance imbued with the same passion, energy, and authenticity that have defined his journey so far. His casting in such a prominent role also underscores the growing acceptance and celebration of diverse identities within the performing arts.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/showbiz/celebrity-news/johannes-radebe-west-end-london-coliseum-south-african-john-whaite-b1236769.html), [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/showbiz/celebrity-news/johannes-radebe-west-end-london-coliseum-south-african-john-whaite-b1236769.html), [[3]](https://www.londontheatre.co.uk/theatre-news/news/johannes-radebe-to-make-west-end-debut-in-kinky-boots), [[7]](https://www.standard.co.uk/showbiz/celebrity-news/johannes-radebe-west-end-london-coliseum-south-african-john-whaite-b1236769.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/showbiz/celebrity-news/johannes-radebe-west-end-london-coliseum-south-african-john-whaite-b1236769.html), [[3]](https://www.londontheatre.co.uk/theatre-news/news/johannes-radebe-to-make-west-end-debut-in-kinky-boots), [[7]](https://www.standard.co.uk/showbiz/celebrity-news/johannes-radebe-west-end-london-coliseum-south-african-john-whaite-b1236769.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.hellomagazine.com/film/2018053049015/strictly-come-dancing-johannes-radebe/), [[5]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/profiles/4xtShnS9l3dZR7JpKbZFRbJ/johannes-radebe)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2024/jan/22/enough-shame-johannes-radebe-fought-bullies-strictly-superstar), [[5]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/profiles/4xtShnS9l3dZR7JpKbZFRbJ/johannes-radebe)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/showbiz/celebrity-news/johannes-radebe-west-end-london-coliseum-south-african-john-whaite-b1236769.html), [[3]](https://www.londontheatre.co.uk/theatre-news/news/johannes-radebe-to-make-west-end-debut-in-kinky-boots), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2024/jan/22/enough-shame-johannes-radebe-fought-bullies-strictly-superstar)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/showbiz/celebrity-news/johannes-radebe-west-end-london-coliseum-south-african-john-whaite-b1236769.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/showbiz/celebrity-news/johannes-radebe-west-end-london-coliseum-south-african-john-whaite-b1236769.html> - Johannes Radebe, a South African dancer known for his role on 'Strictly Come Dancing', is set to make his West End debut in the musical 'Kinky Boots' at the London Coliseum in 2026. He will portray Lola, a drag queen character, in this Olivier and Tony award-winning production. Radebe previously joined the UK and Ireland tour of 'Kinky Boots' in January 2025, marking his musical theatre debut. The show follows Charlie Price, who inherits his family's failing shoe factory and, with Lola's help, develops a line of high-heeled boots.
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 'Kinky Boots' at the London Coliseum from 17 March to 11 July 2026. Having starred as Lola in the UK and Ireland tour since January 2025, Radebe brings his experience to the West End stage. Directed by Nikolai Foster, 'Kinky Boots' tells the story of Charlie Price, who, with the help of drag queen Lola, aims to save his family's failing shoe factory by creating a line of high-heeled boots.
4. <https://www.hellomagazine.com/film/2018053049015/strictly-come-dancing-johannes-radebe/> - Johannes Radebe, a South African dancer, joined the UK version of 'Strictly Come Dancing' in 2018. Prior to this, he was a professional dancer on 'Strictly Come Dancing South Africa' for two seasons, reaching the final both times. Radebe is a two-time Professional South African Latin Champion and a three-time Amateur Latin South African Champion. He expressed his excitement about joining the UK show, calling it one of the greatest achievements of his dancing career.
5. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/profiles/4xtShnS9l3dZR7JpKbZFRbJ/johannes-radebe> - Johannes Radebe, a South African dancer, joined the UK version of 'Strictly Come Dancing' in 2018. He has since partnered with various celebrities, including Catherine Tyldesley, Caroline Quentin, John Whaite, Ellie Taylor, Annabel Croft, and Montell Douglas. Radebe has been known for his dynamic performances and has made history with same-sex dance partnerships, notably with John Whaite in 2021, marking the first all-male couple on the show.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2024/jan/22/enough-shame-johannes-radebe-fought-bullies-strictly-superstar> - Johannes Radebe, a South African dancer, overcame homophobia and bullying to become a beloved figure on 'Strictly Come Dancing'. He joined the UK version of the show in 2018 and has since been known for his dynamic performances and same-sex dance partnerships. Radebe's journey from South Africa to the UK and his experiences on the show highlight his resilience and dedication to his craft.
7. <https://www.standard.co.uk/showbiz/celebrity-news/johannes-radebe-west-end-london-coliseum-south-african-john-whaite-b1236769.html> - Johannes Radebe, a South African dancer known for his role on 'Strictly Come Dancing', is set to make his West End debut in the musical 'Kinky Boots' at the London Coliseum in 2026. He will portray Lola, a drag queen character, in this Olivier and Tony award-winning production. Radebe previously joined the UK and Ireland tour of 'Kinky Boots' in January 2025, marking his musical theatre debut. The show follows Charlie Price, who inherits his family's failing shoe factory and, with Lola's help, develops a line of high-heeled boots.