# The Who's Quadrophenia reimagined as a ballet capturing mod culture and youth rebellion



The Who's iconic rock opera *Quadrophenia*, originally released in 1973, has been reimagined as a ballet that explores the enduring themes of youth identity and rebellion through the lens of 1960s mod culture. Choreographer Paul Roberts, known for his work with stars such as Harry Styles and Prince, has crafted *Quadrophenia, a Mod Ballet*, which transforms Peter Townshend’s ambitious narrative into a contemporary dance production. This new interpretation is set to an orchestral arrangement of the album, composed by Townshend's wife, Rachel Fuller, and recorded by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, bringing fresh depth and grandeur to the familiar soundtrack.

The production dives into the life of Jimmy, a young mod in 1965 London who grapples with societal pressures, drug use, and a profound sense of alienation. The story, deeply rooted in Sixties culture, has been immortalised before as a cult film in 1979, capturing the era’s iconic fashion and lifestyle—from Italian scooters to Chelsea boots. Now, over 50 years later, the themes of *Quadrophenia* resonate strongly with today’s audiences, particularly in light of contemporary discussions around masculinity and identity crises. Roberts highlights the parallels, noting that young people, then and now, are searching for where they fit in a world rife with toxic masculinity. He believes Jimmy’s journey offers valuable lessons: beneath his defiant exterior is a desire to prove himself and find meaning.

The ballet’s design and ambiance vividly evoke the 1960s mod scene, featuring sharp suits by British designer Paul Smith and rich projections of archival footage from The Who’s heyday. Paris Fitzpatrick, who plays Jimmy, describes the experience as exhilarating, despite the story’s darker elements. The company’s authenticity is enriched by Townshend himself, who has contributed memories of mod life to the cast, providing them with a connection to the original era and the mythic status of the work. Fitzpatrick’s enthusiasm grew as he delved deeper into the album and film, developing an appreciation for the nuances and emotional breadth of the story.

Following a series of touring dates in cities like Plymouth, Edinburgh, and Southampton, the ballet opened to London audiences at Sadler’s Wells Theatre in June 2025. The production also features guest appearances, such as that of Royal Ballet principal dancer Matthew Ball, who takes on the role of Godfather—a rockstar idolised by Jimmy. Ball embraced the challenge of channeling the energy of a rock concert within a theatrical setting, aiming to convey the raw vitality of the music through dance.

*Quadrophenia, a Mod Ballet* has stirred excitement not only among fans of The Who but also across dance and theatre audiences. By blending rock culture with ballet, the production seeks to break down barriers traditionally surrounding the art form and invite mods and younger viewers to experience ballet in a new way. Ball emphasizes this connection, noting that the physicality and expression in Townshend’s past performances are not far removed from dance, offering a bridge between the two worlds.

The ballet runs at Sadler’s Wells Theatre in London until mid-July 2025, with a subsequent residency at The Lowry in Salford. Its fusion of rich musical heritage, dynamic choreography, and cultural storytelling positions it as a significant tribute to one of rock’s most enduring narratives, reinterpreted for the contemporary stage.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/news/peter-townshend-quadrophenia-mod-ballet-b2776771.html), [[3]](https://modballet.com/), [[6]](https://dancemagazine.co.uk/2024/07/sadlers-wells-and-universal-music-uk-announce-pete-townshends-quadrophenia-a-mod-ballet/), [[7]](https://www.thewho.com/pete-townshends-quadrophenia-a-mod-ballet/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/news/peter-townshend-quadrophenia-mod-ballet-b2776771.html), [[2]](https://www.sadlerswells.com/whats-on/quadrophenia/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/news/peter-townshend-quadrophenia-mod-ballet-b2776771.html), [[4]](https://petetownshend.net/news/new-quadrophenia-ballet-premieres-at-the-theatre-royal-in-plymouth)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/news/peter-townshend-quadrophenia-mod-ballet-b2776771.html), [[5]](https://petetownshend.net/news/quadrophenia-a-mod-ballet-will-tour-uk-next-year), [[6]](https://dancemagazine.co.uk/2024/07/sadlers-wells-and-universal-music-uk-announce-pete-townshends-quadrophenia-a-mod-ballet/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/news/peter-townshend-quadrophenia-mod-ballet-b2776771.html)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/news/peter-townshend-quadrophenia-mod-ballet-b2776771.html)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/news/peter-townshend-quadrophenia-mod-ballet-b2776771.html), [[2]](https://www.sadlerswells.com/whats-on/quadrophenia/), [[7]](https://www.thewho.com/pete-townshends-quadrophenia-a-mod-ballet/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/news/peter-townshend-quadrophenia-mod-ballet-b2776771.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.sadlerswells.com/whats-on/quadrophenia/> - Sadler's Wells Theatre presents 'Quadrophenia, a Mod Ballet', an explosive dance production based on Pete Townshend's 1973 album. The ballet features a cast of exceptional dancers and is set to an orchestral version of the album by Rachel Fuller. The production is steeped in 1960s culture, with sharp suits, soul music, Vespas, and parkas, while addressing themes of lost youth, rebellion, and the search for belonging. The ballet is scheduled to run from 24 June to 13 July 2025 at Sadler's Wells Theatre in London.
3. <https://modballet.com/> - The official website for 'Quadrophenia, a Mod Ballet' provides detailed information about the production, including tour dates, ticket purchases, and background information. The ballet is set to an orchestral version of Pete Townshend's 1973 album, orchestrated by Rachel Fuller and Martin Batchelar, and recorded by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. The production features choreography by Paul Roberts and direction by Rob Ashford, with original costumes by renowned British fashion house Paul Smith. The lead role of Jimmy is performed by Paris Fitzpatrick.
4. <https://petetownshend.net/news/new-quadrophenia-ballet-premieres-at-the-theatre-royal-in-plymouth> - Pete Townshend's 'Quadrophenia, a Mod Ballet' premiered at the Theatre Royal in Plymouth on 28 May 2025. The ballet is an orchestral dance production based on The Who's 1973 rock opera 'Quadrophenia'. The production features a rich, orchestral arrangement of the album by Rachel Fuller and Martin Batchelar, recorded by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. The ballet is choreographed by Paul Roberts and directed by Rob Ashford, with original costumes by Paul Smith. The lead role of Jimmy is performed by Paris Fitzpatrick.
5. <https://petetownshend.net/news/quadrophenia-a-mod-ballet-will-tour-uk-next-year> - Pete Townshend's 'Quadrophenia, a Mod Ballet' is set to tour the UK in 2025. The ballet is based on The Who's 1973 album 'Quadrophenia' and features an orchestral arrangement by Rachel Fuller and Martin Batchelar, recorded by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. The production is choreographed by Paul Roberts and directed by Rob Ashford, with original costumes by Paul Smith. The lead role of Jimmy is performed by Paris Fitzpatrick. The tour includes dates in Plymouth, Edinburgh, Southampton, London, and Salford.
6. <https://dancemagazine.co.uk/2024/07/sadlers-wells-and-universal-music-uk-announce-pete-townshends-quadrophenia-a-mod-ballet/> - Sadler's Wells Theatre and Universal Music UK have announced 'Quadrophenia, a Mod Ballet', an explosive dance production based on Pete Townshend's 1973 album. The ballet features a rich, orchestral arrangement of the album by Rachel Fuller and Martin Batchelar, recorded by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Choreographed by Paul Roberts and directed by Rob Ashford, the production includes original costumes by Paul Smith and Natalie Pryce. The lead role of Jimmy is performed by Paris Fitzpatrick. The ballet is scheduled to tour the UK in 2025.
7. <https://www.thewho.com/pete-townshends-quadrophenia-a-mod-ballet/> - Pete Townshend's 'Quadrophenia, a Mod Ballet' is an explosive dance production based on The Who's 1973 album. The ballet features a rich, orchestral version of the album by Rachel Fuller, first heard in concert at The Royal Albert Hall and recorded by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. The production is steeped in 1960s culture, with sharp suits, soul music, Vespas, and parkas, while addressing themes of lost youth, rebellion, and the search for belonging. The ballet is scheduled to run from 24 June to 13 July 2025 at Sadler's Wells Theatre in London.