

Theatre, opera and ballet streamings to watch this weekend

 By [Daniel Dercksen](#)

3 Jul 2020

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National Theatre Live

Les Blancs is a brave, illuminating and powerful work that confronts the hope and tragedy of revolution and marks the National Theatre debut of the multi-award-winning South African director Yaël Farber, whose productions include *The Crucible* (Old Vic) and the internationally acclaimed *Mies Julie* and *Nirbhaya*. It streams until 9 July 2020.

An African country teeters on the edge of civil war. A society prepares to drive out its colonial present and claim an independent future. Tshembe, returned home from England for his father's funeral, finds himself in the eye of the storm. A brave, illuminating and powerful work that confronts the hope and tragedy of revolution. *Les Blancs* was filmed for the National Theatre Archive in 2016.

This production is adapted by Robert Nemiroff and the restored text directed by Joi Gresham. Presented in memory of Nofenishala Mvoty, who played friction drum (masengwana) in *Les Blancs* and was a preserver of the Xhosa culture, as well as an ambassador of the split-toned, throat deep sounds that normally echo in the mountains of Ngqoko.

The running time is two hours 30 minutes with a very short interval. Age guidance is 15+ This play is about imperialism, racism and colonialism and contains scenes of racially-motivated violence that some people may find distressing.

Opera

La Boheme, Puccini's opera of passion, friendship and heartbreak is one of the best-loved operas worldwide and streams from the Royal Opera House from 3 to 17 July. Starring Nicole Car as Mimi and Michael Fabiano as Rodolfo, the opera blends tragedy and comedy, the soulful and the spirited, into a powerful encapsulation of the intenseness of life's experiences to its young would-be artists and their lovers, in this recording performed by a winning young cast under the baton of Antonio Pappano, music director of The Royal Opera. [Stream here](#)

From the Metropolitan Opera in New York, there's **Carmen** (3 July), Bizet's iconic tale of the irresistible and free-spirited Gypsy, whose fatal attraction with the jealous soldier Don José burns too hot for them to control. Georgian mezzo-soprano Anita Rachvelishvili gives a dynamic performance as Bizet's iconic gypsy, the woman who lives by her own rules. Imbuing the familiar Don Juan myth with a captivating combination of comedy, seductiveness, danger, and damnation, Mozart's **Don Giovanni** (4 July) stars Mariusz Kwiecien as the world's most notorious lover; Donizetti's uproarious yet sophisticated comedy Don Pasquale (5 July) pits a clever young widow against a crusty old bachelor, who is no match for her wiles, starring Beverly Sills and Alfredo Kraus; and an all-star cast assembles for the Met's first-ever performances of Rossini's romantic **La Donna del Lago** (6 July), a retelling of Sir Walter Scott's epic poem The Lady of the Lake. Joyce DiDonato is Elena, the title heroine, who is being pursued by not one, but two tenors—setting off sensational vocal fireworks. Juan Diego Flórez is King James V of Scotland, disguised as the humble Uberto, and John Osborn sings his political enemy, and rival in love, Rodrigo Di Dhu. [Watch here](#).

Ballet

Virginia Woolf defied narrative conventions to depict a heightened, startling and poignant reality. Wayne McGregor's ballet triptych **Woolf Works** was inspired by the writings of Virginia Woolf and has an original score by Max Richter and is performed by the Royal Opera House Ballet. Woolf Works re-creates the emotions, themes and fluid style of three of Woolf's novels: Mrs Dalloway, Orlando and The Waves. These inspirations are also enmeshed with elements from her letters, essays and diaries such that Woolf Works expresses the heart of an artistic life driven to discover a freer, uniquely modern realism. It brings to life Woolf's world of 'granite and rainbow', where human beings are at once both physical body and uncontained essence. It streams until 10 July. [Watch here](#).

[Read more](#) about the latest streamings.

ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit www.writingstudio.co.za

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