

**RAMBERT DANCE**

**IN**

**PEAKY BLINDERS**

**THE REDEMPTION OF THOMAS SHELBY**

**ACCESS PACK**

## Important Information

*Peaky Blinders: The Redemption of Thomas Shelby* is a dance theatre show. It has been written and adapted for the stage by *Peaky Blinders* creator, Steven Knight and choreographed and directed by Rambert's Artistic Director, Benoit Swan Pouffer. It stars the Rambert Company. You can learn more about the cast and creatives [here](#).

The show is 1 hour and 47 minutes, with a 20 minute interval.

This show is based on the TV series and there will be some representation of violence, sex, rape, miscarriage, drug use and suicide.

## Sounds

Please note there is loud music throughout the performance. There will be live gunshots and pyrotechnics on stage. There will be some (recorded) loud bangs.

Machine gunshot can be heard during act 1 approximately 15 minutes in. A single gunshot can be heard during act 1 approximately 35 minutes in. A single gunshot can be heard at the end of act 1 approximately 50 minutes in. Two gunshots can be heard during act 2 approximately 42 minutes in.

## Lights

Please note there are flashing lights throughout the performance. Strobe is used at during act 1 approximately 44 minutes in.

**The following pages contain spoilers.**

## Synopsis: Act 1

We begin in 1918, in the trenches of the First World War. After a fierce fight, only 5 soldiers survive - Sergeant Major Thomas Shelby, his brothers Sergeant Arthur Shelby and Corporal John Shelby and Private Barney Kilkade and Private Jeremiah James Johnson.

After the war, the 5 men return to Birmingham, but do not fit into civilian life. We meet Polly and Ada, the aunt and sister of the Shelby brothers, who have been running the family business, bookies in horse racing, while they've been at war. The brothers, the Peaky Blinders, expand the business into illegal activities.

They celebrate their success with a night out, where we meet Grace, a nightclub singer and undercover agent, with a mission to get close to Tommy Shelby. The Peaky Blinders arrive and Tommy notices Grace. He flips a coin and decides to approach her.

They go home to make love, where Grace blindfolds him so he cannot see she is stealing from him - his money, his private papers, his secrets.

She gives these to her boss reluctantly, and leaves. Tommy wakes up alone, realising he has been betrayed. He goes after her, but is chased by police and dogs. There is a chaotic chase, where multiple Tommys and Graces appear as if by magic. In a final showdown, Tommy is cornered. A shot rings out, and the cop falls down dead, killed by Grace, who has chosen Tommy. They run away, hand in hand.

Elsewhere, the Peaky Blinders and some showgirls are coming home from their night out. They find themselves surrounded by a rival gang, led by Changretta. A street fight follows, and John stabs Changretta. The Peaky Blinders leave, as Changretta's wife arrives to discover her husband is dead.

Weeks later, Tommy and his friends and family dress for a special occasion. Elsewhere, Widow Changretta dresses in her late husband's suit and hat. Tommy and Grace are married. At the reception, Tommy gives Grace a necklace. Widow Changretta enters and shoots Grace dead.

## Synopsis: Act 2

Tommy, consumed with grief, is self medicating in an opium den. It's like a morgue, with opium eaters covered in white sheets, and attendants bringing pipes for them to smoke. Tommy is hallucinating. Polly and Ada burst in and attempt to take Tommy away. In his drug-addled state, he refuses to leave. Tommy and the other opium eaters transform into a monster with huge arms, and throw Polly and Ada to the floor. They leave him, and Tommy hallucinates more.

There is a taut membrane behind Tommy, and hands and screaming faces press against it. The figures are shell-shocked soldiers, traumatised from the war. Tommy shares opium poppies with them - he has tried to take away their pain, but has only numbed it - becoming a dealer.

Tommy confronts himself in the reflection of a coin. He flips a coin, and makes a decision - he wants to join Grace by dying. Figures enter, representing his imagination and his Romani heritage. These figures leave, and Grace is onstage. Grace hands him a gun, but as he raises it to his head, the Peaky Blinders arrive, and pull Tommy out of the opium den and back into reality.

Some time later, Arthur, John and other Peaky Blinders are relaxing in Charlie's Yard. They are ambushed by Widow Changretta and her gang, still seeking revenge. A violent battle erupts, and John is killed. Polly and Ada arrive. When she sees John, Polly is enraged and kills the Widow and several gang members.

Tommy enters and tries to break up the fighting, understanding that they have all been brutalised through war and are in a violent cycle. Tommy stops the fight, and sees John's body. The Italian gang and the Peaky Blinders mourn their dead.

In an ancient funeral rite, John's body is placed in a Romani caravan and Tommy sets it alight. Tommy is alone, wracked with guilt and fear from all those he has killed or made die. He is haunted by these ghosts until Polly, Ada, Arthur and John's spirit comfort him. He feels the strength and unity of the Peaky Blinders.

Tommy is left alone, and Grace appears. He kisses her, knowing she will always be with him. She hands him a coin. He flips it, and decides to live.

## Costumes and Sets

There are lots of different costumes in the show, which all reflect the clothing seen in the TV series, as well as historical dress from the time. We'll describe a few of the costumes here.

In the opening scene, the Peaky boys are dressed in WW1 soldiers' uniforms, including khaki shirts and trousers, ballet boots, and a military webbing belt.

In a number of scenes throughout the show, the Peaky Blinders, Polly, and Ada are wearing the iconic Peaky Blinders outfits. The men are dressed in tweed three piece suits, heavy overcoats and, of course, their flatcaps, complete with a glinting razor blade on top of the peak of the cap. Polly is in a tweed suit with a gathered skirt and high lace up boots. Ada is in a burgundy dress with boots.

In the scene set in a nightclub, everyone wears unique outfits, all reminiscent of the Roaring 20s style. There are showgirls in gold/silver sparkly leotards with feathered plumes, and characters in beaded flapper dresses. Tommy is in a 20s tuxedo, and Grace wears a green/black velvet

dress, with two high slits on both sides and fringed sleeves.

In the scene where Tommy and Grace are chased by dogs, dancers portray the dogs. They wear brown steampunk style tailored tailcoats and chaps, and leather dog masks with tall ears like a Dobermann pinscher. They are held by chain leashes held by police officers.

The Italian gang appear in double breasted navy pinstripe suits, or pinstripe dresses. Their leader wears a white fedora.

The set is minimalistic. There is a black flat stage with a raised three sided platform, with a gap immediately behind it, and then a platform behind that. This creates a trench which is used throughout the show. The band is onstage on raised platforms at the back of both sides of the stage. There are two raised platforms on both sides of the middle of the stage, which dancers appear on at various points.



Rambert dancers in *Peaky Blinders: The Redemption of Thomas Shelby*, photo by Johan Persson



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**THANK YOU.**

**RAMBERT**

