

Monday 8 November 2021

English National Ballet **BALLET FUTURES: The Pipeline Project**

Plans for English National Ballet's new pipeline project, Ballet Futures, are announced today.

The high-quality, early-stage, ballet training programme for children aged 8-12 years will proactively encourage and incentivise more dancers from traditionally underrepresented groups (African Diaspora, Caribbean, South Asian and South East Asian heritage) to participate in professional ballet training at the earliest possible point.

Starting with a pilot phase from January 2022 and run in association with dance schools nationwide, which so far includes Dupont Dance Stage School in Leicester, Janet Lomas School of Dancing in Greater Manchester, and West London School of Dance*, the project aims to contribute to and promote a diverse classical landscape, in turn, impacting on 21st century work.



Ballet Futures Facilitator, Shevelle Dynott, leads a class with students of Dupont Dance Stage School © Jack Thomson

English National Ballet's senior leadership team will work with members of the Company's artistic staff as well as Company dancer, Sarah Kundi, who will help shape the programme and be a mentor to the children involved in the project.

Tamara Rojo CBE, English National Ballet's Artistic Director said: *"I believe there are spaces to be filled in the dance training system for young artists who are representative of the world we live in, the stories we want to tell, and the people who tell them. Through Ballet Futures, we will work collaboratively with dance schools to diversify their student base; encouraging talented young dancers from a range of backgrounds and creating an opportunity for them to grow into their potential as artists."*

"It's an important step towards broadening access to ballet and I am delighted that, together with these schools, we are providing space for more young dancers to increase their natural aptitude, harness their confidence, understand their artistic personality, and helping them find their places in the dance world in the future."

Sarah Kundi, English National Ballet First Artist and member of the Ballet Futures Leadership Team said: *“It is imperative that we enable and support the underrepresented youth of today by providing training and opportunities, combined with being holistically nurtured, enabling them to flourish and fly.”*

Shevelle Dynott, former English National Ballet Artist of the Company and facilitator on the Ballet Futures programme: *“We all know representation has a huge effect especially on the younger minds. We have a duty to make them aware they are capable of anything they put their mind to, with support and encouragement of the elders around them.”*

Following an audition, participants in Ballet Futures will receive free weekly training at their local dance school with additional financial support to contribute to the costs of shoes, school uniform and travel to and from English National Ballet’s east London home, the Mulryan Centre for Dance, where backstage access will be offered. Participants will also have the chance to work with English National Ballet artists and teachers including a Company representative who will visit participating schools twice a year to offer class, host a Q&A and share feedback and support.

Ballet Futures: The Pipeline Project is supported by the Leverhulme Trust.

*Other dance schools who are interested in taking part in the project are asked to contact the Ballet Futures team at balletfutures@ballet.org.uk for further information.

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Ballet Futures will be the focus of English National Ballet’s Big Give Christmas Campaign 2021. Further information to follow.

English National Ballet is grateful for the generous grant it has been awarded through the Government’s Culture Recovery Fund, which allows it to continue to create, perform and serve its audiences.

For further information and images, please contact Alice Lawley, Head of Press and Communications, on alice.lawley@ballet.org.uk or 07946541703.

Notes to Editors

English National Ballet is a National Portfolio Organisation supported by Arts Council England.

NatWest is Principal Partner of English National Ballet.

Ballymore is Principal Building Partner of English National Ballet.

About English National Ballet

English National Ballet has a long and distinguished history. Founded in 1950 as London Festival

Ballet by the great English Dancers Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin, it has been at the forefront of ballet's growth and evolution ever since.

English National Ballet brings world-class ballet to the widest possible audience through live performances across the UK and on eminent international stages including The Bolshoi Theatre and Palais Garnier; its digital platforms Ballet on Demand and BalletActive; its distinguished orchestra, English National Ballet Philharmonic; and being a UK leader in creative learning and engagement practice, building innovative partnerships to deliver flagship programmes such as English National Ballet's Dance for Parkinson's.

Under the artistic directorship of Tamara Rojo CBE, English National Ballet has introduced ground-breaking new works to the Company's repertoire whilst continuing to honour the tradition of great classical ballet, gaining acclaim for artistic excellence and creativity. 2019 saw English National Ballet enter a new chapter in its history when it moved into a purpose-built state-of-the-art home in east London, Mulryan Centre for Dance, bringing a renewed commitment to, and freedom for, creativity, ambition, and connection to more people, near and far, than ever before.

www.ballet.org.uk

About the Leverhulme Trust

Since its foundation in 1925 the Leverhulme Trust has provided grants and scholarships for research and education, funding research projects, fellowships, studentships, bursaries and prizes; it operates across all the academic disciplines, the intention being to support talented individuals as they realise their personal vision in research and professional training. Today, it is one of the largest all-subject providers of research funding in the UK, distributing approximately £100m a year. For more information about the Trust, please visit www.leverhulme.ac.uk and follow the Trust on Twitter @LeverhulmeTrust

About Arts Council England

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high quality cultural experiences. We invest public money from Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision.

www.artscouncil.org.uk

Following the Covid-19 crisis, the Arts Council developed a £160 million Emergency Response Package with nearly 90% coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. We are also one of several bodies administering the Government's Culture Recovery Fund and unprecedented support package of £1.57 billion for the culture and heritage sector. Find out more at www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19