

10 December 2021

English National Ballet celebrates 10 years of Dance for Parkinson's

English National Ballet is celebrating over a decade of its highly successful Dance for Parkinson's programme.



English National Ballet's Dance for Parkinson's class at Mulryan Centre for Dance © Chris Currie

Inspired by Company repertoire, the programme provides high quality dance classes for people living with Parkinson's, their family, friends, and carers. Since its launch in 2010, Dance for Parkinson's has reached more than 5000 people through classes held at English National Ballet's studios, its collaboration with five Hub Partners across the UK and the creation of a national online community with sessions provided over Zoom. It has also inspired numerous other dance classes for people living with Parkinson's.

Anniversary celebrations were originally planned for 2020 but were postponed due to the pandemic. They include the premiere of *Momenta*, a specially commissioned film co-created by Dance for Parkinson's class participants and professional artists which will be released on English National Ballet's website on 15 December. In addition, an exhibition of personal stories, creative research collaborations and portrait photography opens at English National Ballet's east London home, the Mulryan Centre for Dance, with public viewing available from 16 December until late February 2022.

Fleur Derbyshire Fox, English National Ballet's Engagement Director, said: *"I am extremely proud of English National Ballet's Dance for Parkinson's programme and feel continually inspired by the creativity of our participants with lived experience, the passion of our artists, the care given by our volunteers and staff and the commitment of our delivery hub partners. Our classes are expressive, creative and promote feelings of freedom from the physical and social constraints of having Parkinson's. As we celebrate this anniversary, we can take a moment to reflect on the positive impact the programme has had, and I look forward to seeing these benefits brought to more people in the future."*

On their experience of the classes, one class participant said: *“I like the community feeling – this is a group of people who understand the problems and limitations but also the possibilities. Those limitations might be physical, but we’ve learnt to instinctively move with each other – we’re connected, and we understand one another.”*

Another participant added: *“It’s life enhancing. When I’m here I don’t feel anyone is looking at me, I feel accepted. The live music is a joy. I like it very much.”*

English National Ballet’s Dance for Parkinson’s was a model for ground-breaking research published in 2015 by Dr Sara Houston from Roehampton University and is also part of a collaboration with King’s College London and UCL on one of the world’s largest research studies addressing the impact and scalability of arts interventions on physical and mental health.

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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.

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.

English National Ballet’s Dance for Parkinson’s is kindly supported by: Backstage Trust, G&K Boyes Charitable Trust, The Linbury Trust, The London Marathon Charitable Trust and Mercers’ Company Charity.

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

About English National Ballet’s Dance for Parkinson’s

English National Ballet’s Dance for Parkinson’s is a national programme delivered in collaboration with our Hub Partner organisations. The programme extends opportunities for people with Parkinson’s across the UK to access regular dance and cultural activities and to engage with English National Ballet. Our Hub Partners are Royal Albert Hall, DanceEast, Merseyside Dance Initiative (MDI), Oxford City Council and affiliated Hub Partner National Dance Company Wales. To find out more, visit: ballet.org.uk/dance-for-parkinsons

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 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