

# ROYAL ACADEMY OF DANCE

## Royal Academy of Dance announces dance-inspired borough-wide art competition

- Royal Academy of Dance announces new schools' art competition for the borough, to celebrate opening of brand-new global headquarters in Spring 2022
- Primary schools from Battersea and across Wandsworth are invited to enter the competition for a chance to be displayed in the brand-new RAD headquarters, opening Spring 2022
- A judging panel of RAD President Dame Darcey Bussell and Artistic Director, Gerard Charles and former dancer with English National Ballet, Shevelle Dynott will select the winning work and runners up
- The winners and runners up will be announced in January 2022, with the winning work unveiled later on in the year
- For further information, and details on how to enter visit:  
[www.royalacademyofdance.org](http://www.royalacademyofdance.org)

**Tuesday 2 November 2021:** The Royal Academy of Dance today announces its new art competition for primary schools from Battersea and across the Wandsworth Borough.

Launched to celebrate what will be a momentous year for the internationally renowned dance education organisation with the opening of its brand-new global headquarters in Spring next year – entrants are asked to submit a drawing or painting inspired by dance and how it makes them feel.

Designed to inspire children from across local schools to engage with the borough's historic and deep-rooted connection to the world of dance; primary schools in the borough are invited to submit digital images of their students' work for a chance to win the top prize, a personalized dance workshop at RAD for the whole class, along with a special tour of the new purpose-built Academy and other goodies. The winning entry and runners up will be picked by a judging panel of RAD President **Dame Darcey Bussell** and Artistic Director, **Gerard Charles** and former dancer **Shevelle Dynott** to be exhibited in the new building when it opens formally next year.

RAD is a global organisation with 100 years of experience and a mission to inspire the world to dance. The Academy is committed to making their new headquarters a home for dance, for all. The RAD's community engagement plan seeks to make programmes, projects, and facilities physically and financially accessible to the local community, young and old and a new 193-seat theatre will enable the organisation to share a wide range of dance performances locally.

**Gerard Charles Artistic Director, Royal Academy of Dance says:** "We are delighted to launch the very first borough-wide RAD art competition, inviting pupils across Wandsworth to get creative, inspired by the feeling they have when they dance or when

# ROYAL ACADEMY OF DANCE

they see dance, in any form. Wandsworth is a large and diverse borough, and it is important that we understand what dance means to them. Our youngest residents could be the dancers, choreographers, teachers and artistic directors of the future”

**Dame Darcey Bussell, President, Royal Academy of Dance says:** “Dance is connected to every art form, and at this exciting moment in the RAD’s history we wanted to launch our first ever art competition created especially for schoolchildren across the borough. The panel of judges are so looking forward to what our young budding artists are inspired to create.”

The competition launches as the RAD is just steps away from meeting its £19.5m capital fundraising target for its new global headquarters in Battersea, launching in Spring 2022. The new building will become an international home for dance, allowing the charity to realise the potential of the 60,000 sq ft headquarters to expand on its 100-year history of high-quality dance education to bring the transformational power of dance to more people, regardless of age, ability, or location.

The winning artwork will be exhibited in the new global Headquarters once open, continuing the RAD’s commitment to be a home for dance for all.

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## **Notes to Editors**

### **About the Royal Academy of Dance**

Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) is one of the most influential dance education and training organisations in the world with a strong global membership in 85 countries. Established in 1920 to improve standards and re-invigorate dance training, the Academy helps and encourages its teachers to perfect their teaching skills and pass on this knowledge to their students. There are currently over 1,000 students in full-time or part-time teacher training programmes with the Academy and each year the examination syllabus is taught to thousands of young people worldwide, with around a quarter of a million pupils per year going on to take RAD exams.

### **About Dame Darcey Bussell, OBE**

Darcey Bussell is a former Principal with The Royal Ballet and the most famous British ballerina of her generation. During her nearly twenty years as a Principal, she won worldwide renown for her unique combination of having a tall and athletic physique whilst dancing with soft lyricism.

# ROYAL ACADEMY OF DANCE

Darcey trained at The Royal Ballet School and joined the Company in 1988. She was promoted to Principal in 1989, aged just 20, after the premiere of Kenneth MacMillan's *The Prince of the Pagodas*, in which she had created the lead role. Darcey retired from the Company in June 2007 with a performance of MacMillan's *Song of the Earth*, broadcast live on BBC2. She came out of retirement to dance the 'Spirit of the Flame' at the 2012 London Olympics closing ceremony.

Darcey's extensive broadcast work includes being a judge on *Strictly Come Dancing*, many documentaries for the BBC and she has presented The Royal Ballet's worldwide cinema relays since 2014. She remains a Guest principal coach at The Royal Ballet and is Artist Laureate of the Royal Ballet School.

Her books include *Darcey Bussell: Evolved*, *Darcey Bussell: A Life in Pictures*, the 'Magic Ballerina' children's series and her autobiography. In 2015 she founded DDMIX (diverse dance mix), a dance fitness charity, aimed at getting dance fitness to be part of PE in state schools.

Darcey became the President of the Royal Academy of Dance in 2012.

## **About Gerard Charles, Artistic Director**

Born in Folkestone, England, Charles received his dance training at the Royal Ballet School and returns to the UK to join the RAD after spending nearly forty years based in America.

As a professional dancer, his career started at Ballet International before moving to Milwaukee Ballet and BalletMet in roles ranging from corps de ballet to Principal. Since retiring from the stage, he has served as Education Director for Ballet Met Columbus; Ballet Master for BalletMet and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens; Artistic Director BalletMet and most recently Director of Artistic Operations at Joffrey Ballet.

Gerard has choreographed and staged works internationally and received an NEA Choreographic Fellowship. He was appointed as Artistic Director of the RAD in September 2018.

## **About Shevelle Dynott**

Shevelle Dynott was born in London and started dancing aged seven when he was spotted at his Brixton primary school by scouts for 'Chance to Dance', a scheme which aimed to scout talented inner-city children and expand ballet's reach beyond its traditionally white middle-class base. In 1997, he was the first child to complete the 'Chance to Dance' training and be accepted on the Royal Ballet School's Junior Associates programme. In 2004 Shevelle won a bronze medal in the RAD's Genée International Ballet Competition and upon completing his training in 2005, Dynott joined the English National Ballet as a company artist and has appeared in numerous productions: Akram Khan's *Giselle* Nureyev's *Romeo and Juliet* Macmillan's *Sleeping Beauty*. Shevelle is now a freelance artist and has recently completed a 7-month acting course at identity school of acting in Brixton.

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