



ROYAL  
BALLET  
SCHOOL

# ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

THE ROYAL BALLET SCHOOL

CANDIDATE BRIEFING DOCUMENT - MARCH 2024

# LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

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Dear prospective candidate,

This candidate pack should help you decide whether you would like to apply to be the next Artistic Director of The Royal Ballet School. Of course, words are only part of the story – you can see our students performing on our [website](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

These short films reveal the real attraction of the role – the opportunity to lead the artistic vision of a School with exceptionally talented, passionate, and committed students, many of whom are destined for the world's leading ballet companies.

In addition, the Artistic Director will play a key role in maintaining The Royal Ballet School's status at the leading edge of dance teacher training, broadening its reach so that every primary school child in the UK has the chance to encounter this exceptional art form at an early age.

Working closely with the Chief Executive, you will inform the School's broader strategy to ensure that this unique institution continues as a byword for excellence in ballet training, influencing the wider debate about the benefits of dance, and representing a model, forward-thinking school in all respects for decades to come.

We look forward to your application.

**Christopher Rodrigues**

Chair (Interim CEO)

**Anna Birkett**

Deputy Chair (Interim Chair)



# ABOUT US

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The Royal Ballet School is one of the world's most celebrated centres for classical ballet training. It is the leading classical ballet school in the UK and an international institution, attracting dancers with exceptional potential from the UK and worldwide.

Since its founding by Dame Ninette de Valois in 1926, the School has contributed immeasurably to the UK's rich dance heritage, producing dancers and choreographers of international renown – including Darcey Bussell, Margot Fonteyn, Anya Linden, Kenneth MacMillan, Christopher Wheeldon and a new generation currently making its mark on the world stage including Matthew Ball, Francesca Hayward, Steven McRae and Marcelino Sambé.

The School fosters academic and artistic excellence, nurturing its extraordinary students holistically and preparing them for careers with The Royal Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet and other leading UK and international companies. Admission to the School is based purely on talent and potential, regardless of academic ability or personal circumstances.

Alongside this, the School sets the standard for the future of classical ballet training with its extensive teacher training programmes. Its unique expertise empowers all teachers to deliver exceptional training, whether in the vocational or recreational sector. The School also works to raise awareness of the benefits of dance and create opportunities for people worldwide to experience and engage with classical ballet with dedicated in-person and online programmes for dance students and primary school children.

## THE ROYAL BALLET SCHOOL SUMMER PERFORMANCES

The School's Summer Performances on the main stage of the Royal Opera House, the Linbury Theatre and Opera Holland Park are the culmination of a year of intensive training and performing. Each year, the Artistic Director chooses a broad selection of repertoire, including heritage works and modern choreography, designed to showcase the technical mastery, interpretive artistry, and versatility of the students.



# OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

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Our vision is to be the best ballet school in the world.

Our mission is to nurture, train and educate exceptional young dancers for the Royal Ballet companies and other leading UK and international companies and to inspire the future of classical ballet training.

Our values are:

- **Striving for excellence** in everything we do
- **Nurturing individuals** holistically, equipping them to shape their futures as healthy, resilient human beings
- **Actively widening access**, creating opportunities for people to engage with ballet across the UK, and globally via digital access
- **Our heritage nourishes our future** and is the foundation from which we sustain and evolve the School
- **Always innovating** as a bold, forward-thinking organisation dedicated to continuous evolution.



# APPLICATION DETAILS

## THE ROLE



After ten successful years with the School, Christopher Powney is stepping down from his role as Artistic Director and CEO. After reviewing the School's demanding future agenda, the board has taken this opportunity to split the role and create two positions, a Chief Executive Officer and an Artistic Director who will lead on artistic matters within an overall enterprise framework set by the CEO.

The Artistic Director will maintain and enhance the status of The Royal Ballet School as one of the pre-eminent ballet teaching and training institutions in the world. They will provide leadership for the artistic team, ensuring teaching excellence through a culture of innovation and continuous improvement, aspirational technical standards, and holistic personal development, setting the bar for the future of classical ballet training within the School and across the wider vocational and recreational sector.

With the centenary of The Royal Ballet School approaching in 2026, this role presents a unique opportunity for a talented individual to set and lead an artistic vision that will be forward thinking and relevant for the future of ballet training as the School enters its second century.

### **The Artistic Director reports to:**

- CEO

### **Directly responsible for:**

- Head of Artistic Programmes & Production
- Artistic Managers
- Artistic staff

### **Key relationships:**

- Academic & Pastoral Principal, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Commercial Officer, School Governors, Senior Leadership Team, Healthcare, Training & Access and Development Teams

### **Contract terms:**

Competitive salary and package will be offered

# MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

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## ARTISTIC LEADERSHIP

- Set the artistic vision and oversee artistic standards for the School across all its activities
- Ensure that the artistic training programme and system of training align with the overarching artistic vision and will achieve intended outcomes
- Attract guest choreographers and répétiteurs to enhance student experience and expand the School's extensive repertoire
- Plan and select the annual programming within the School and for external performances at Opera Holland Park and at the Royal Opera House.

## STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

- Source, attract, audition, and retain outstanding ballet talent at all stages from across the world
- Ensure the School attracts, develops and retains an outstanding and diverse teaching staff across all relevant disciplines
- Work closely with the Principal to ensure that the right structures, processes, people, resources and culture are in place to deliver a student experience that combines the highest standards of teaching with equally high standards of mental and physical wellbeing, allowing students to thrive and fulfil their potential.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- Cultivate and maintain strategic partnerships with stakeholders, including The Royal Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Royal Ballet governors, government agencies, cultural institutions, corporate sponsors, and philanthropic supporters
- Identify opportunities for collaboration and resource-sharing with sister organisations
- Act as an ambassador for The Royal Ballet School, representing its interests in public forums, media appearances, and industry events.

## TALENT DEVELOPMENT

- Source talent and ensure that students are able to secure employment appropriate to their levels of artistic prowess
- Champion diversity, equality, and inclusion initiatives within the organisation, promoting a supportive and inclusive environment for students and staff
- Support the professional development and well-being of all employees, fostering a culture of learning, creativity, and excellence.

## OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL

- Work closely with the Chief Commercial Officer to develop and implement strategies to grow commercial revenue streams, including Training & Access programmes, as well as identifying and supporting the development of other net revenue generating opportunities
- Work closely with the Development team to cultivate relationships with major donors and secure significant gifts to support capital projects, scholarships, and other priority initiatives
- Work closely with the Chief Operating Officer to develop and oversee the implementation of a sustainable financial strategy, optimising revenue streams and cost efficiencies to support the organisation's long-term viability and growth.



# PERSON SPECIFICATION

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- A proven track record in artistic leadership within a ballet school, dance company, or similar institution, with the ability to set and implement a forward-thinking and relevant artistic vision for ballet training.
- Demonstrated expertise in ballet, combined with knowledge of teaching techniques and professional experience in teaching ballet to students aged 11 – 19
- Experience or working knowledge of The Royal Ballet repertoire
- Experience in planning and selecting annual programming, including an understanding of how to balance artistic quality with educational objectives
- Strong skills in sourcing talent and a proven track record in guiding students to secure employment in global ballet companies
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to engage and inspire diverse stakeholders, including staff, board members, donors, and community partners
- High levels of emotional intelligence with the ability to work with people at all levels within an organisation, leading them through change. Excellent influencing skills will be beneficial
- An understanding of the importance of balancing high artistic and educational standards with student wellbeing, including mental and physical health
- Commitment to community engagement and educational outreach, promoting ballet training to a broader audience
- Commitment to fostering an inclusive environment that respects diverse backgrounds and perspectives, both within the School community and in its external engagements
- Commitment to the mission and values of The Royal Ballet School, with a passion for arts education and talent development.



# SAFEGUARDING DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and recognises that this is everyone's responsibility. The School expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment to children's safeguarding and to share this child-centred approach. This approach means that staff must always consider what is in the best interests of the child.

Additionally, the following is expected of all staff:

- To uphold the School's policies relating to safeguarding and child protection, behaviour, health and safety and all other relevant policies
- To promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young persons for whom you are responsible and come into contact with
- To report any safeguarding concerns using the relevant channels, such as informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead, in a timely and appropriate manner
- To ensure full compliance with all statutory regulations, particularly the most recent Keeping Children Safe in Education, and to communicate concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, other relevant staff of The Royal Ballet School or local children's services as appropriate.

We are committed to creating an environment where all our employees feel part of our team and can flourish, regardless of their background. We're proud to be an inclusive workplace that promotes and values diversity.

The information detailed here about this role should not be considered encompassing. Over time, the emphasis of the job may change without changing the general characterisation of the role or the level of duties and responsibilities. This information will be periodically reviewed and revised in consultation with the postholder.

# HOW TO APPLY

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To apply, please send a CV and covering letter stating why you think you are suitable for the role of Artistic Director to our recruitment consultant, Helen Sprott, AEM International Ltd at [hsprott@aeminternational.co.uk](mailto:hsprott@aeminternational.co.uk). Letters should be no longer than three pages. All applications will be acknowledged.

The deadline for applications is Monday, 15 April 17.00

Evaluation interviews with AEM International will be held the weeks of 22 and 29 April

Interviews for shortlisted candidates will be held the weeks of 13 and 20 May

We would also ask that you complete our Equality and Diversity monitoring form to help us assess this recruitment process. This form can be accessed [here](#) and should be uploaded separately. If you need any changes to the application process or wish to submit your application as a video or in an alternative format, we would be happy to support you and accommodate this. Please contact us to make us aware.

If you would like a confidential and informal chat about the role, please contact Helen at the address above.

