



ROYAL
BALLET
SCHOOL

STAGE FUND REPORT 2024/25

THANK YOU

Thanks to your generous philanthropy we have been able to offer a series of inspirational opportunities to our **213** full-time students this academic year. It is the generosity of you and all our valued donors that allow the School to continue to push the boundaries of ballet education. Without this attitude, we are not able to hold true to our founder, Dame Ninette's, vision. Thank you for championing The Royal Ballet School and supporting our Stage Fund. **We hope you enjoy reading how your support has impacted The School's stage work this year.**



The Royal Ballet School offers the best real-world opportunities for students to prepare, physically and mentally, for the stage. This means staging performances to large live audiences that students take part in from age 11 up, employing the best guest teachers, directors, and répétiteurs, and nurturing each dancer's unique creative impulse. Year-round production, wardrobe, and artistic budgets are just some of the key areas that are supported through our Stage Fund.

'The excitement that you get in the build-up to the performance and the anticipation when you're in the wings, it's unreal and I've never felt anything like it.' (Cameron, Year 7 student)

THANK YOU FROM OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

I would like to personally thank you in my capacity as Chair of the Royal Ballet School for the transformational support that you have provided this academic year. It has been a wonderful privilege for me to witness the exceptional talents of all the students throughout the course of their training and learning journeys.

The recent Summer performances were exemplars of the discipline, artistry and commitment that has developed in each dancer, serving as inspiration to us all. We hope you enjoy reading these updates and look forward to welcoming you into the exciting next chapter for the School in its upcoming Centenary Year. Your philanthropy is valued and vital, and we are deeply grateful for the faith you have placed in our work.



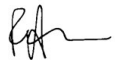
NATASHA KAPLINSKY OBE, CHAIR



2024/25 has been an exciting year for everyone at The Royal Ballet School. I feel fortunate to have joined an organisation globally renowned for arts excellence, that is also deeply committed to widening access to high-quality training and opportunities for young people to experience dance.

Despite the worldwide reach and impact of the School's reputation for excellence, we are dealing with an extremely challenging operating environment, as are most schools and arts organisations at the moment. We believe admission to the School must continue to be based solely on talent and potential, never the ability to pay, and we are committed to finding more creative and sustainable ways to ensure this happens.

The Royal Ballet School wouldn't be able to support these inspiring young dancers in the way it does without the commitment of its generous donors. Thank you for championing our School.



PATRICK HARRISON, CEO



I am thrilled and honoured to have completed my first year as Artistic Director at The Royal Ballet School. In 2024/25 I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the inspiring students of the School, alongside the highly talented and dedicated staff.

My vision is that the School continues to be an environment where students can thrive artistically, physically and mentally, emerging prepared to lead the global dance community as artists, displaying excellence and resilience. As we approach our Centenary year in 2026, I am committed to upholding and enhancing The Royal Ballet School's rich heritage while looking firmly to the future. Thank you for your support and we look forward to another energetic and creative year ahead.



IAIN MACKAY, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



This year has been marked by exceptional dedication, artistry, and growth across all year groups. Our students have shown extraordinary commitment to their training, balancing the demands of their academic studies with the rigours of daily artistic endeavours. The culmination of their efforts was a series of outstanding performances, including our Summer Performances at Opera Holland Park and the Royal Opera House. These moments on stage are a true celebration of their progress and promise as the next generation of artists.



DAVID GAJADHARSINGH, ACADEMIC & PASTORAL PRINCIPAL



SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

Our School's rich programme of activities ensures that students can flourish holistically and have the tools they need to meet life's challenges, contribute to their communities and go on to have a fulfilling career in professional dance.

CREATIVE ARTIST TALKS

Our Creative Artist Talks offer students the chance to learn from those who have carved out successful careers both within and beyond ballet. In January Tyrone Singleton, Principal at Birmingham Royal Ballet, shared his journey from a young student to a celebrated figure in the world of dance. Interviewed by three of our 1st Year students, Tyrone shared some inspiring stories and advice. He encouraged Royal Ballet School students to think beyond the stage and explore the many creative opportunities that lie ahead.



THE NUTCRACKER

Each holiday season, The Nutcracker offers our students an extraordinary opportunity to work alongside professionals. This year, our Upper School had the privilege of joining Birmingham Royal Ballet and English National Ballet in their productions. Through weeks of rehearsals, costume fittings, and performances, our students got a taste of what professional life is like and had the opportunity to shine on stage. From dazzling waltzes to thrilling battle scenes, every moment on stage brought new challenges and unforgettable memories.

AN INSIGHT INTO PERFORMING AT THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

BY ALBERTO (PRE-PROFESSIONAL STUDENT)

"In Onegin, I've been playing the Footman in the third act, and in Romeo and Juliet I've been dancing in the ballroom scene as a Capulet.

Being part of these ballets is such an incredible experience. The music, the costumes, the choreography and the story of both ballets are wonderful, and being in productions of this magnitude is a gift.

I've learnt so many things. Seeing my idols perform in ballets like these is breathtaking and a dream come true. It's very inspiring to see how the company works as a team to make this production a reality on stage.

I am so grateful to share the stage with the biggest stars in the world of dance. The moment the curtain first went up before the ballroom scene in Romeo and Juliet, I got goosebumps, it was so emotional. I felt so lucky to be dancing The Dance of The Knights on the Opera House Stage.

I have learned that every single character on stage matters and contributes to the story. Especially in Sir Kenneth MacMillan's ballets, what goes on in the side of the stage is what makes the ballet and the storyline come to life. He is a genius and being in the rehearsal process of Romeo and Juliet gave me so much experience for the future."

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE VISIT

In May we welcomed American Ballet Theatre Studio Company (ABT), with Artistic Director Sascha Radetsky guest teaching the Pre-professional Year students' morning class at Upper School, Covent Garden. It was wonderful to see the students dancing alongside the 11 ABT Studio Company dancers and witness the energy that was created in the room when bringing these young people together. The students were challenged by Mr Radetsky with complex petit allegro combinations and were asked to incorporate elements of repertoire that they were working on into the ending of centre exercises. The Pre-professional students remarked that it was a very inspiring class.



ASSOCIATE PROGRAMME

We currently have **765 students** taking part in our Associate Programme. Based in **seven centres** across the UK, the programme is designed to augment an individual's current training while introducing them to The Royal Ballet School's System of Training alongside other gifted children who aspire to a career in dance. Alongside their studies this year some of our Associate students also enjoyed performing at our Chair's Circle event in January. We are delighted to report that **23 out of 27 Year 7s** coming into the School in September 2025 came from our Junior Associate programme.



PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH

Our team of 28 healthcare professionals continue to ensure that students are mentally and physically prepared for the demands of a professional career. Our programme is world-leading, and we are proud to be trailblazing on expert healthcare provision in dance education.

Physical health

In 2024/25, students have undergone termly screening and profiling exercises, measuring factors like jump height and training load. Our Associate students also receive tailored healthcare education and support from the School's dedicated team of healthcare professionals. This year, as part of our Enlighten series for teachers and students aged 18+, Emma Porter, the School's Training and Access Healthcare Lead gave a webinar on REDs (Relative energy deficiency in sport). Emma said *'[it is] important to make sure we are spreading awareness [of REDs] and giving teachers the tools they need to mitigate more cases.'*

Mental health

Alongside the continuation of our in-house counselling service, students have been given the opportunity to attend mental wellbeing workshops, most recently these focused on building character strengths and working relationships. In October students and staff celebrated World Mental Health Day with 'tea and talk', encouraging people to get together to discuss well-being.

THE NINETTE DE VALOIS CHOREOGRAPHIC PROGRAMME

Centring choreography in our training, the Ninette de Valois Choreographic Programme is an integral component of our student's academic and artistic education. The programme provides a platform for our emerging artists to create and explore, allowing them to develop their expressive instincts alongside their technical training.

They experience working as a professional choreographer would, taking responsibility for all the elements that make a successful production, from research, casting and rehearsals to staging, props, lighting and costume design. In 2024/25, 36 students presented a diverse array of works across three performances, detailed below.



Kenneth MacMillan Emerging Choreographer, December 2024, Years 10 and 11

Held at White Lodge, ten students presented a new piece of choreography, created by them, to a captivated audience of supporters, staff, students, and a panel of industry judges. Audience members were treated to a variety of dance styles across the afternoon, including a neo-classical creation titled *Infatuation* by Kanoko Aoyama, Year 11, a Bob Fosse inspired work by Rose Milner, Year 11, *Rich Man's Frug*, and many more original works showcasing the students' individual voices and creativity. After the performance, our panel of judges, Ryoichi Hirano, Dame Monica Mason and Kristen McNally, provided invaluable feedback to the students about their work.



Frederick Ashton Emerging Choreographer, May 2025, 2nd Years (Year 13) Upper School

Held at Upper School, Covent Garden, 16 students presented a range of creative works in front of family members, supporters and staff, each revealing their unique choreographic voices. From themes of love, time and connection, to dreams, organs of the body and aliens, the works explored a vast array of concepts, mesmerising audiences with their originality, creativity and maturity. Our student choreographers first met with the mentors at the start of the Spring term to workshop and discuss ideas. As they finetuned their works, students received further feedback and guidance from their mentors in the lead-up to the performance. Following the performance, the mentors and special guests Emma Southworth and Valentino Zucchetti provided invaluable feedback to the students to further develop their works for future performances.



Ursula Moreton Emerging Choreographer, March 2025, Years 7, 8, 9

Held at White Lodge, the event offered an inspiring showcase of original works created by students. Under the guidance of choreographic tutor Rhian Robbins, eleven young choreographers presented works they had devised, drawing on their own interpretations of music, movement, and staging. The process of crafting these pieces extends beyond choreography alone. Students also gained insight into the professional production process, selecting their own music, and contributing to costume and lighting design. This year, the students further enhanced their understanding of stagecraft through a dedicated lighting workshop with Production and Theatre Technician Daniel Philipson.



2025 GRADUATE CONTRACTS

We are delighted to announce the contracts awarded to our 2025 graduates. Six students will join The Royal Ballet Aud Jebsen Young Dancers Programme this year, and one will join Birmingham Royal Ballet/BRB2. Other students will join prestigious companies worldwide. Congratulations to all our graduates – we are immensely proud of their accomplishments and wish them the very best in their future endeavours.

Sofia Blok Lysvåg, Norwegian National Ballet 2

Amos Child, The Royal Ballet Aud Jebsen Young Dancers Programme

Aurora Chinchilla, The Royal Ballet Aud Jebsen Young Dancers Programme

Javier Cubillas Izaguirre, Joffrey Studio Company

Matteo Curley-Bynoe, American Ballet Theatre Studio Company

LilySophia Dashwood, The Australian Ballet

Ptolemy Gidney, American Ballet Theatre Studio Company

Alberto Gil Vicente, Boston Ballet II

Roo Jacobsen, Sacramento Ballet Second Company

Chiyo Kameda, Leipzig Ballet Junior Company

Yasemin Kayabay, Birmingham Royal Ballet/BRB2

Sean Manzano-Anderson, Oklahoma City Ballet Studio Company

Tristan-Ian Massa, The Royal Ballet Aud Jebsen Young Dancers Programme

Axel Mero, Bayerisches Staatsballet

Heewon Moon, National Ballet of Canada RBC Apprentice Programme

Shani Moran-Simmonds, The Royal Ballet Aud Jebsen Young Dancers Programme

Yuki Nagayasu, The Royal Ballet Aud Jebsen Young Dancers Programme

Erle Østraat, Norwegian National Ballet 2

Joe Parker, Nashville Ballet

Joe Parkinson, The Royal Ballet Aud Jebsen Young Dancers Programme

Edoardo Russo, Stuttgart Ballet

Krista Vaitkeviciute, Ballett Zürich Junior Company

Mingyang Xie, Finnish National Ballet Youth Company

Pietro Zironi, Royal Swedish Ballet Junior Company

KEY UPDATES

OUR CENTENARY YEAR

In 2026, we will mark our Centenary, celebrating 100 years of the School's work to deliver classical ballet excellence to the world's main stages, and set the standard for the future of classical ballet training. This significant celebration in our School's history will serve as an opportunity to rally support so we can continue enabling extraordinary young dancers to train here for the next 100 years. Through a series of curated events, we aim to raise the profile of The Royal Ballet School and celebrate the achievements of our students past and present, demonstrating our cultural leadership of the creative industries through artistry and athleticism in elite youth. We look forward to sharing more information about this exciting year with you.



'Working alongside professional dancers is incredibly inspiring, and I feel excited every time I perform.'

(Yuki, Pre-professional student)

FIVE YEAR PLAN

The cornerstones of success for our five-year plan are to:

- increase the number of full-time students to 250;
- enhance our Associate centres across the UK to extend reach and provide training for younger years closer to home;
- increase our fundraising and commercial income;
- modernise our estate.

Despite seven figure government cuts earlier this year, which sadly led to the closure of our Primary Steps programme and exacerbated our structural deficit, the Department for Education has confirmed additional Music and Dance Scheme places for next academic year, meaning we can grow to 230 students, from 213 this past year. There is still a substantial shortfall to meet all the annual costs of fees and boarding. Your support for the School makes all the difference, ensuring we deliver for our students despite significant challenges to the funding environment.

Thank you for your support

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