



For immediate release

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The Royal Academy of Dance is to present The Royal Ballet with the Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Award

Date: Thursday 4 September 2014

Venue: Claridge's Hotel, 49 Brook St, London W1K 4HR

The Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) will award its highest honour – the Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Award (QEII Award) – to The Royal Ballet, 60 years after the award's inauguration. The award – presented annually in recognition of outstanding services to the art of ballet by the RAD – was first conferred on The Royal Ballet founder Dame Ninette de Valois, in 1954. To celebrate this benchmark in ballet history, the award will be presented during a gala fundraising dinner for the RAD's flagship event, the Genée International Ballet Competition (the Genée).

The QEII Award was created in honour of the 1953 coronation of the RAD's patron, Queen Elizabeth II. The Royal Ballet will become the first ever company to receive the award usually bestowed upon individuals. The gala dinner will be held at Claridge's in Mayfair, on 4 September 2014, the exact venue where the first QEII Award was held at a lunch on 16 July 1954. It was presented to Dame Ninette de Valois by the then RAD President Dame Adeline Genée in recognition of her outstanding contribution to ballet including her founding of The Royal Ballet in 1931 - the same year in which the Genée was first convened.

The Genée has since proved to be a launch pad for a professional career in dance, and the Academy hopes to fundraise to provide the means for a broader pool of young talent to participate. Since the year 2000, 14 Genée medallists have gone on to dance with The Royal Ballet alone – amongst them current Principal Dancers Lauren Cuthbertson (Silver Medallist, 2001) and Steven McRae (Gold Medallist, 2002). As this presentation of the QEII Award celebrates the shared history between The Royal Ballet and RAD, the gala will aim to fundraise for the next generation of young ballet talent hoping to take part in the Genée in the future.

The gala event will be hosted by RAD President and former Royal Ballet Principal dancer Darcey Bussell CBE, and the QEII Award will be accepted by Kevin O'Hare on behalf of The Royal Ballet. Dancers from The Royal Ballet will dine with the guests and the evening will feature a charity auction, where dance lovers will be able to bid for glamorous and highly sought-after prizes.

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The proceeds will create means tested bursaries of up to £2,500 for future Genée candidates who cannot afford the costs involved in taking part in the competition, as well to develop the competition itself further.

Kevin O'Hare, Artistic Director of The Royal Ballet, says: *'On behalf of everyone associated with The Royal Ballet, I would like to say what a great honour it is that the Company has been chosen as recipient of The Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Award this year. 2014 marks the sixtieth anniversary of the presentation of the first award to our founder, Dame Ninette de Valois in 1953 and it is particularly appropriate that during the evening funds will be raised for the Genée International Ballet Competition, which does so much to discover and encourage the finest young dancers and potential stars of the future from around the world.'*

Luke Rittner, CEO Royal Academy of Dance, says: *'I am delighted that the Academy is bestowing its highest honour – The Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Award - on The Royal Ballet Company. The Royal Academy of Dance and The Royal Ballet have a long tradition of mutual respect and close co-operation, and these bonds of friendship will be further strengthened on 4 September when we join together to celebrate this award and to secure the future of the Genée International Ballet Competition.'*

- Ends -

Notes to Editors

Royal Academy of Dance

With over 14,000 members spread across 79 countries, the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) is one of the largest and most influential dance education and training organisations in the world. Established in the 1920s, to improve standards and re-invigorate dance training initially within the UK, 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 our exams.

For more information about the RAD, visit <http://www.rad.org.uk>

The Royal Ballet

Based at the Royal Opera House in London's Covent Garden, The Royal Ballet, led by Director Kevin O'Hare, is Britain's largest ballet company. The Company has a wide-ranging repertory showcasing the great classical ballets, heritage works from Founder Choreographer Frederick Ashton and Principal Choreographer Kenneth MacMillan, works by Resident Choreographer Wayne McGregor and Artistic Associate Christopher Wheeldon, as well as new works by the foremost choreographers of today. Access is a key issue for the Company and its work is seen not just at the Royal Opera House but via televised and cinematic performances, outdoor Big Screen performances, international touring and through the work of the Company's Education Department.

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For more information about The Royal Ballet, visit <http://www.roh.org.uk/>

The Genée International Ballet Competition

The Genée International Ballet Competition, named after RAD's first president Dame Adeline Genée DBE, is the Academy's flagship annual event. Also known simply as 'the Genée', it is one of the most prestigious ballet competitions in the world, attracting the finest young dancers from around the globe all of whom are students of the RAD syllabus. Candidates receive a unique opportunity to work with renowned choreographers and teachers for five days before performing at the semi-finals, and then at the final, where they compete for a range of medals. The competition has taken place almost every year since 1931, and is now a truly global event. The ChallenGenée Fund provides funding for the annual Genée International Ballet Competition. The Challengenee Fund is a Designated Fund of the Royal Academy of Dance.

For more information, visit <http://www.rad.org.uk/genee2014>

Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Award

The QEII award is the RAD's most prestigious award, bestowed for the first time 60 years ago in 1954 to Dame Ninette De Valois, at a lunch attended by - amongst others - the presidents of the four Royal Academies (Arts, Music, Dramatic Art and Dance). Since then it has been awarded nearly every year to many personalities in recognition of outstanding services to the art of ballet.

For more information on the QEII Award and past recipients, visit:
<http://www.rad.org.uk/about/about-the-rad/awards-and-nominations>

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