



ROYAL
OPERA
HOUSE

THURROCK

14 OCTOBER 2013

Thurrock Schools Meet Royal Ballet Dancers

Royal Ballet Chance to Dance programme in Thurrock schools

Students from across Thurrock attended demonstrations by dancers from **The Royal Ballet** on Thursday 3 and Friday 4 October. The demonstrations were part of one of **the Royal Opera House's** Learning and Participation programme, **Chance to Dance**.

The Gateway Academy and Shaw Primary School hosted dancers from The Royal Ballet as they performed extracts from *The Nutcracker* to more than 700 children from ten other local schools to introduce them to ballet.

Royal Ballet dancer Bennet Gartside said: 'It was a pleasure to visit the Gateway Academy and give Thurrock schools a close-up insight into ballet. The response from our young audience was incredible. They were completely enraptured and really enthusiastic. It was a great experience for us all.'

Jill Bacon, Extended Provision Manager at the Gateway Academy said: 'The children certainly enjoyed the show and so did I! It was lovely to see such an engaging performance that captivated the young children and the staff accompanying them.'

The Chance to Dance programme began in Thurrock in 2012. It provides a creative introduction to ballet for all Year 3 children in partnership with

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30 primary schools through demonstrations by Royal Ballet dancers and six weeks of practical and creative dance workshops.

Children who show a particular enthusiasm and aptitude for dance will be invited to join the Chance to Dance Company for up to four years until the age of 11, attending weekly after school classes hosted by The Gateway Academy, the project's partner Secondary School. They will also be invited to family days at the Royal Opera House and take part in an annual performance working alongside dancers from The Royal Ballet.

Teachers in each partnership school also receive training to develop their skills to create their own school-based creative dance projects with the opportunity to share their work with other schools and see a Royal Ballet dress rehearsal.

Chance to Dance has been ongoing in selected London boroughs since 1991 and for the past two years this has involved working with 20 partnership primary schools in Lambeth and Southwark.

To find out more about the Chance to Dance, please go to www.roh.org.uk/learning/schools-and-colleges/chance-to-dance

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Notes for Editors

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Royal Opera House Learning and Participation in Thurrock

Royal Opera House Learning and Participation in Thurrock has been offering innovative and creative projects and programmes in schools, colleges and across communities in the Thames Gateway for the past six years. In 2010, more than 1000 people from Thurrock, young and old, took part in creating and performing the spectacular Purfleet Opera: *Ludd and Isis*, the third large scale ROH performance created with communities in Thurrock. As a result of this work a Thurrock Community Chorus has been created with over 140 members of all ages and a new Youth Vocal Group for 11-25 year olds.

Local schools and teachers are benefiting from Royal Opera House projects which enable collaboration with creative professionals, the learning of new skills and the nurturing of creativity

Public and educational tours of the state-of-the-art Bob and Tamar Manoukian Production Workshop where the sets and scenery for the Royal Opera House stage in Covent Garden are built are now available.

The High House Production Park is supported by a unique partnership including Arts Council England, Creative & Cultural Skills, the Royal Opera House and Thurrock Council.