



Press release

15 September 2020

Doncaster Dances

The Royal Ballet gets Doncaster Dancing with the premiere of a community dance film recorded in lockdown

This summer **The Royal Ballet**, in partnership with **Cast** and **Doncaster Council**, set themselves a mission to get **Doncaster Dancing**. The special project, a first for The Royal Ballet, has resulted in a unique community dance film called ***Doncaster Dances***. The film will premiere online on **15 September at 5.30pm on the Royal Opera House, Cast and Doncaster Council websites**.

The film celebrates individuals and community groups and is inspired by the choreography of **Kenneth MacMillan's** ballet ***Romeo and Juliet***, with synchronicity to today's lockdown themes of love and separation, family, friendship and solidarity. The film also features Doncaster local and Royal Ballet dancer **Charlotte Tonkinson** and fellow Royal Ballet dancer **Joseph Aumeer**.

Doncaster residents, primary schools, sports clubs, care homes and dance schools were supported with online resources from the Royal Opera House, alongside remote direction from The Royal Ballet, to learn routines inspired by *Romeo and Juliet*. The project brought together more than 130 residents, 6 community groups, 2 care homes and 2 local schools to get Doncaster dancing and celebrate movement in this isolating and challenging time.

***Doncaster Dances* is available to view on the Royal Opera House, Cast and Doncaster Council websites on 15 September, from 5.30pm. The film can also be viewed in this link <https://youtu.be/jQ7Q7kAQHwo>**

In 2019 the Royal Opera House announced this exciting partnership with Doncaster residents through **Doncaster Creates** (Doncaster's Culture Development programme). This programme of cultural learning activity includes a commitment to work in every school in Doncaster over the next three years. As part of this partnership The Royal Ballet was due to perform at Cast Theatre in July 2020, however sadly both events were postponed due to the pandemic. Eager to continue its commitment to Doncaster and to bring dance to the community, The Royal Ballet, Cast and Doncaster Council have worked together to get Doncaster dancing.

Member of Parliament for Doncaster North, **Ed Miliband**, helped to establish Doncaster Creates as the region's first cultural community project to harness and nurture the creativity of Doncaster.

Kevin O’Hare, Director of The Royal Ballet comments, ‘The Royal Ballet were determined that the pandemic would not interfere with our plans for engaging with Doncaster residents and sharing the enriching experience of dance. Kenneth MacMillan’s powerful setting of *Romeo and Juliet* has always fired the collective imagination and was the perfect springboard for a process of creative exploration during dark times. *Doncaster Dances* has proved just how empowering the arts can be and is a wonderful testament to the resilience of the human spirit. This beautiful film is both poignant and optimistic, demonstrating that everyone in the community, young and old, can unite through dance.’

Deborah Ress, Director of Cast adds, ‘Cast is delighted to be working in partnership with The Royal Ballet and despite the pandemic, together we have found a way to engage with Doncaster communities through the inspirational programme *Doncaster Dances*. The end result of this programme is an amazing film showcasing Doncaster’s talent and resilience and our thanks go to The Royal Ballet and the people of Doncaster for making this happen.’

Ros Jones, Mayor of Doncaster said, ‘This Doncaster Dances premiere is the culmination of a tremendous project with The Royal Ballet. It has involved local residents, schools, community groups and care homes from across the borough, giving them the opportunity to learn a new skill, get active and have some fun with dancers from one of the most prestigious ballet companies in the world. Making this happen during these most difficult of times is a big achievement.’

Ends

Notes to editors

#Doncasterdances

1. Images can be downloaded here: <https://we.tl/t-MWdhpJHEbK>
2. For more information, content and interviews, contact Ashley Woodfield: Ashley.woodfield@roh.org.uk
3. Contact Doncaster Council, Jenny Dewsnap: Jenny.Dewsnap@doncaster.gov.uk
4. To learn more about this Royal Ballet community project, contact: amy.mcgann@roh.org.uk

The Royal Opera House would like to thank the generosity of the Mohn Westlake Foundation and Mrs Lily Safra

About The Royal Ballet

Under the directorship of Kevin O’Hare, The Royal Ballet unites tradition and innovation in world-class performances, and is a driving force in the development of ballet as an art form. Based at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, it brings together today’s most dynamic and versatile dancers with a world-class orchestra and leading choreographers, composers, conductors, directors and creative teams to share awe-inspiring theatrical experiences with diverse audiences worldwide. The Company’s extensive repertory embraces 19th-century classics, the singular legacy of works by Founder Choreographer Frederick Ashton and Principal Choreographer Kenneth MacMillan and the compelling new canon of work including pieces by Resident Choreographer Wayne McGregor and Artistic Associate Christopher Wheeldon.

About the Royal Opera House

The Royal Opera House wants to give everyone access to exceptional ballet and opera. As The Royal Ballet, The Royal Opera and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, we bring together the world's most extraordinary artists in more than 500 performances every year on our two stages.

Across the 2018/19 Season we welcomed more than one million people through our doors as ticketholders, participants in our programme of free and ticketed daytime events, and as visitors to our bars, cafes, restaurants and shop. A further one million people enjoyed our work in cinemas, at free screenings and through streamed and televised performances up and down the UK. Our ongoing partnership with the BBC saw 11 of our productions broadcasts across their platforms last Season.

The ROH has a commitment to widening participation and deepening learning for all ages and achieves this through enabling first encounters with dance, music and theatre craft and talent development programmes including Chance to Dance.

Our national school programme includes Create and Sing, Create and Dance and Design and Make and school matinees. During the 2018/19 Season these programmes supported teachers from 1,394 schools, 81% of which were outside London, bringing arts to children and young people the length and breadth of the country.