

## **Scottish Ballet announces the five wishes that will come true in the company's 50th anniversary year**

Scottish Ballet is delighted to announce the five wishes that will come true in 2019, as part of their 50th anniversary celebrations.

As a way of saying thank you to their audiences and supporters, Scottish Ballet invited people across Scotland to submit wishes. Over 400 wishes were posted online, with over 100,000 votes cast by the general public, before the top 50 were presented to the esteemed judging panel which includes Dame Darcey Bussell, Susan Calman, Fred MacAulay, Janice Forsyth, Christopher Hampson and Principal Dancer Christopher Harrison.

Looking for a variety of original, personal and imaginative wishes, the judges chose the final five based on their inspiring individual stories and their impact on the wider community; taking Scotland's national dance company across the country.

From rehearsing and performing with the company, to conducting the orchestra and working alongside the wardrobe team, the selected wishes will all take place in Scotland during 2019.

In a celebratory year that will see three world premieres, including *Dextera* by Sophie Laplane, Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* choreographed by Helen Pickett, and *The Snow Queen* by Christopher Hampson, the story of the wishes will be captured in a BBC Scotland documentary that will be broadcast at the end of the year.

The *Five Wishes* are:

### **Wish 1: Having a ball with *Cinderella***

On Saturday 12 January, Scottish Ballet made the first of the five wishes come true.

Lily Douglas, aged 11, was surprised by the company's Principal dancers, Bethany Kingsley-Garner, Constance Devernay and Sophie Martin, who revealed that her dream of dancing on stage with the company, taking a backstage tour, and watching *Cinderella* in Glasgow would come true.

Lily has been battling a rare form of childhood cancer called 'Ewing's Sarcoma' and has recently been undergoing rounds of treatment. A family friend submitted the wish on Lily's behalf.

This was chosen as the first wish alongside a submission for a fellow ballet lover, Rosie Mitchell, aged 7, who was similarly being treated for cancer. A surprise visit to Rosie's dance school took place in Greenock on Tuesday 18 December 2018 to tell her that her wish had been chosen, and to share a dance with her. Both Lily and Rosie received personal video messages from Dame Darcey Bussell, the champion for this wish. Very sadly, Rosie passed away in January 2019. All at Scottish Ballet have been deeply inspired by Rosie's passion for dance.

### **Wish 2: Dance into *Spring!***

Jemma McRae, owner and dance teacher at Academy Street Dance Studio in Aberdeen, is currently undergoing treatment for breast cancer. As a way of saying thank you to her students for their support, she wished for Scottish Ballet to visit and dance in her studio.

On Thursday 17 January, dancers Christopher Harrison and Araminta Wraith surprised Jemma and her students and revealed that the company will work with the school to create a special performance that will coincide with the company's *Spring!* opening in Aberdeen in April.

#### **Jemma McRae said:**

'The wish is a way of thanking, not only my pupils, but also their parents and everyone that's supported me through my illness. I'm touched and I know by seeing the looks on the children's faces after the surprise what it's going to mean to them as well! I'm so excited, it's going to be an absolutely amazing experience, and it's something for my students to look forward to.'

### **Wish 3: 'We Sing, You Dance'**

Lesley Cumming, Alzheimer Scotland's Community Activities Officer for West Dunbartonshire, wished for Scottish Ballet to join the Every Voice Choir for their summer community celebration in Dumbarton.

On Wednesday 30 January, dancers Constance Devernay and Jamiel Laurence visited the choir and revealed that Scottish Ballet would work with them to create a unique performance for their community event; bringing their wish of 'We Sing, You Dance' to life. In addition, Scottish Ballet will continue working with the choir, inviting the ensemble to perform on stage at a performance of *The Snow Queen* in Edinburgh in December.

#### **Lesley Cumming said:**

'I am over the moon that our community choir has been granted this wonderful wish to perform with Scottish Ballet as part of their 50th anniversary celebrations later this year. Thank you to everyone who has supported us, and all those who voted for the Every Voice Choir; the day will be magical for all involved, a once in a lifetime memory.'

### **Wish 4: Creating costumes for *The Crucible***

Poppy Camden, a recent graduate of the Fashion Design programme at Glasgow School of Art, wished to work with Scottish Ballet's costume department during a production.

Looking to make her career working with costumes for theatre and dance, Scottish Ballet has invited Poppy to spend time behind the scenes: observing the inner workings of the company on tour, and experiencing what goes into creating, fitting and maintaining costumes for *The Crucible*, in its premiere year.

#### **Poppy Camden said:**

'I am really excited to have my wish chosen by Scottish Ballet and am so grateful to have a chance to get an insight into the behind-the-scenes world of the company. As a recent graduate, I think this will be an invaluable opportunity to gain experience into how the wardrobe department works and understand the level of production involved in putting on one of their shows.'

### **Wish 5: Conducting *The Snow Queen***

At the age of 45, retired musician Colin Bowen was diagnosed with Parkinson's: a neurological condition that affects the central nervous system. A professional musician who has played with orchestras in Scotland, his wife Anne wished for him to conduct the Scottish Ballet Orchestra in rehearsal.

Colin will conduct the Orchestra as they prepare for *The Snow Queen*, the world premiere of Christopher Hampson's upcoming winter production, leading a section of the Rimsky-Korsakov score.

**Anne Bowen said:**

'I was absolutely delighted and very humbled when told our wish had been selected. When Colin conducts the Scottish Ballet Orchestra it will be emotional but also a very happy occasion, and I can't wait to see him reconnecting with fellow musicians and sharing such wonderful music... Colin is so positive about his condition and told his colleagues that Parkinson's is no more challenging than life itself.'

Wanting to thank people for making the company what it is today, Scottish Ballet is looking forward to welcoming people throughout this celebratory year.

**Talking about the wishes, CEO/Artistic Director of Scottish Ballet, Christopher Hampson, said:**

'The judging panel were overwhelmed by the number of submissions made to our *Five Wishes* campaign but after careful deliberation, we have chosen a mix of creative and heartfelt wishes, influenced by the inspiring stories behind them. We are excited to welcome these people into our Scottish Ballet family and thank them for the support of the company.'

**Dame Darcey Bussell, champion of the first wish, said:**

'I am so glad that Scottish Ballet were able to make this wish come true for Lily, and to dance with Rosie. There were many wishes for us to choose from, but we were all inspired by their stories and their love and passion for dance.'

**Christopher Harrison, Principal dancer at Scottish Ballet and champion of the second wish, said:**

'I am grateful to be a dancer at Scottish Ballet, and on the judging panel for the wishes. It was a special moment to surprise Jemma and her dance students in Aberdeen and I'm looking forward to seeing their wish come true, as we all perform together in April.'

**Susan Calman, champion of the third wish, said:**

'I am so pleased that Scottish Ballet was able to surprise Every Voice Community Choir, to share the wonderful news that their wish of singing and dancing together will come true. It is a powerful thing to unite people through such a celebratory performance, and I can't wait to see what they come up with.'

Janice Forsyth will champion the fourth wish with Poppy, and Fred MacAulay will champion the fifth wish with Colin.

For more about Scottish Ballet, and the *Five Wishes* campaign, please visit:

<https://www.scottishballet.co.uk/wish>

For more about Scottish Ballet, and their 50th anniversary season, visit:

<https://www.scottishballet.co.uk/50>

## **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

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Scottish Ballet 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Press Pack can be downloaded [here](#)

Information about the Five Wishes campaign can be downloaded [here](#)

Images available to download directly from [here](#)

### **Scottish Ballet Press Contacts:**

For more information on the 2019/20 season and Five Wishes campaign, including interview, picture and biography requests, please contact Joy Parkinson, Press & Communications Officer, Scottish Ballet:

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### **About Scottish Ballet**

- Scottish Ballet, founded in 1969, is Scotland's national dance company. Based in Glasgow, the company performs regularly across Scotland, and increasingly throughout the UK and internationally – promoting Scotland's pioneering spirit far and wide.
- Under CEO/Artistic Director Christopher Hampson, Scottish Ballet presents bold, adventurous performances rooted in strong classical technique, accompanied by the Scottish Ballet Orchestra. The company's broad repertoire includes new versions of the classics and ground-breaking commissions, as well as an innovative digital season every two year
- Scottish Ballet runs an extensive engagement programme, tailored to the needs of diverse communities, promotes confidence, fosters well-being and encourages creativity through dance.
- In 2019, Scottish Ballet celebrates 50 years of inspiring audiences on stage and beyond, with a creative vision crafted by Scotland. For more information about the anniversary season, visit: [www.scottishballet.co.uk/50](http://www.scottishballet.co.uk/50)
- Scottish Ballet is funded by the Scottish Government.

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