

## **Dancing into Spring! Scottish Ballet's second wish comes true, as part of 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations**

On Friday 12 April, Scottish Ballet made the second of five wishes come true as part of the company's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year.

Jemma McRae, owner and dance teacher at Academy Street Dance Studio in Aberdeen submitted a wish for Scottish Ballet to visit and dance in her studio, as a way of saying thank you to her students for their support during her treatment for breast cancer.

Following a surprise visit to the dance school in January, in which Scottish Ballet revealed that her wish had been chosen, Jemma sadly passed away. The staff of Academy Street Dance Studio and Scottish Ballet remained committed to making her wish come true, and to sharing it with the community in Aberdeen.

Following a day of workshops with Scottish Ballet dancers, and an exclusive viewing of the *Spring!* dress rehearsal at His Majesty's Theatre in Aberdeen, 85 students from Academy Street Dance Studio came together to perform a 5-minute routine from the finale of *Elite Syncopations* by Sir Kenneth MacMillan, to a sold-out audience of 600 friends and family at Aberdeen's Beach Ballroom.

Performing with Scottish Ballet Principals Andrew Peasgood, Bethany Kingsley-Garner, Christopher Harrison and Constance Devernay, and Soloists Araminta Wraith, Jamiel Laurence and Thomas Edwards, the colourful and celebratory performance paid tribute to Jemma and showcased the human impact that dance can have on a community.

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

'Scottish Ballet worked with 85 dancers from Academy Street Dance Studio to help make Jemma's wish come true. The students worked incredibly hard, and we thoroughly enjoyed performing with them to bring this special wish to life in Aberdeen's beautiful Beach Ballroom.'

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

'It was a special moment to surprise Jemma and her dance students in January, and to return to work with her talented dancers this week. We had a short rehearsal period, but their performance was brilliant, and they should be incredibly proud.'

**Gillian Stuart and Joanne Milne, Jemma's friends and colleagues at Academy Street Dance Studio said:**

'Jemma wanted to give every pupil and every parent something spectacular to look forward to as a thank you for their continued support over the years. Jemma's little girl Izzy and the pupils at Academy Street Dance Studio – known as Jemma's extended family – have gained so much from this experience and are extremely privileged to dance with a wonderful company like Scottish Ballet.'

Over 400 wishes were submitted to Scottish Ballet's Five Wishes campaign, with over 100,000 votes cast by the general public. The top 50 were presented to an esteemed judging panel which includes **Dame Darcey Bussell, Susan Calman, Fred MacAulay, Janice Forsyth, Christopher Hampson and Principal Dancer Christopher Harrison**, with full details of the five chosen wishes announced on Thursday 31 January.

The Five Wishes continue to take place in Scotland throughout 2019 as part of Scottish Ballet's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, with full details available here:

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

## **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

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[www.scottishballet.co.uk/50](http://www.scottishballet.co.uk/50)

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

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:**

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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.
- Scottish Ballet extends thanks to Beach Ballroom, CRD Recordings and His Majesty's Theatre, Aberdeen.

**ENDS**