

Scottish Ballet's pioneering new programme 'Safe to be Me' will be rolled out to primary schools across Scotland

Scottish Ballet is proud to announce that an innovative new programme using dance to tackle challenging subjects such as racism, homophobia, bigotry, ableism and transphobia will be rolled out to primary schools across Scotland in 2019. Delivered in line with key Scottish Government targets to address bullying in these areas, the *Safe to be Me* initiative is made possible with the support of Aberdeen Standard Investments.

This pioneering project engages with Primary 6 pupils, aged 9-11, to explore themes that include identity, tolerance, acceptance, respect, ethnic and family diversity and LGBTQ+ communities. After a successful pilot in February-March 2019, Scottish Ballet plans to roll out the programme to primary schools across Scotland from August 2019. Feedback from pupils, teachers and parents has been extremely positive, demonstrating the value of a creative approach to help schools introduce and discuss these important topics.

Pupils are initially introduced to the themes by a team of experienced dance practitioners in the weeks leading up to watching a performance, which is choreographed by Scottish Ballet's Engagement Creative Director, Lorraine Jamieson. The pupils then take part in a full-day workshop where they have the opportunity to create their own *Safe to be Me* performance; encouraging each of them to be comfortable with who they are.

Scottish Ballet has extensive experience delivering workshops in schools, having engaged with over 3,000 pupils to explore the themes of ballet productions in sessions tailored to support the curriculum at various levels. In its 50th anniversary year, Scotland's national dance company is delighted that, with the support of Aberdeen Standard Investments, this expertise will be used to help Scottish children explore and express their identities in a supportive and creative environment.

The *Safe to be Me* programme aligns closely with Aberdeen Standard Investments' core value of encouraging diversity in the workplace. A perfect fit for Aberdeen Standard Investments, *Safe to be Me* is in line with their corporate vision to work towards a culture of inclusion where everyone is able to be fully themselves at work.

Catherine Cassidy, Director of Engagement at Scottish Ballet, said:

'As one of Scotland's national performing companies, we are proud to present this programme that celebrates diversity and inclusion. 'Safe to be Me' is a creative performance project that reflects our communities' values, encouraging 10-year-old pupils to celebrate difference and gain respect for themselves and one another.'

Lynne Connolly, Global Head of Diversity and Inclusion at Aberdeen Standard Investments added:

'The 'Safe to be Me' initiative is a powerful tool to help Scotland's children develop compassion for others and confidence in themselves. Inclusive workplaces are better for people and better for business – but to fully succeed we need to evoke change across society. That includes helping our young people on the right path and I can't think of a more compelling way to engage children than dance and performance in a supportive environment.'

A teacher from a school that was involved with the pilot workshops said:

'The whole experience has been absolutely amazing, and I think it will have a massive lasting impact on the class. The results were beautiful and effective.'

A P6 pupil commented on one of the pilot workshops, and said:

'We learned about how people can be different and nobody is the same, and it's okay to be different.'

For further information on Scottish Ballet and the *Safe to be Me* initiative, and the company's full engagement programme, visit: www.scottishballet.co.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS:

A press pack, including photographs, can be found available for [download here](#).

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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 bi-annual digital season.
- Scottish Ballet runs an extensive engagement programme, tailored to the needs of diverse communities, promoting confidence, fostering well-being and encouraging 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
- Scottish Ballet is funded by the Scottish Government.

About Aberdeen Standard Investments

- Aberdeen Standard Investments is a leading global asset manager dedicated to creating long-term value for clients, and is a brand of the investment businesses of Aberdeen Asset Management and Standard Life Investments.
- With over 1,000 investment professionals, they manage £505.1 billion of assets worldwide. They have clients in 80 countries supported by 50 relationship officers, ensuring they are close to clients and the markets in which they invest. (*as of 31 December 2018)
- You can access the Aberdeen Standard Investments media centre here: www.aberdeenstandard.com/news-and-media
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