

Scottish Ballet brings the health benefits of dance to you, in 2021

- New programme of online ballet classes for adults and children, taught by Scottish Ballet dancers
- New series of dance classes for those living with neurological conditions, Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis and dementia
- Range of movement and mindfulness resources for NHS staff and keyworkers, as well as pilot workshops in care homes
- *Haud Close*, a multi-artform project inspired by the theme of visibility, to connect with people living with dementia, MS and Parkinson's in creating a new dance film
- *Safe to Be Me Festival*, a digital festival of dance to celebrate diversity, engaging with schools and young people in March 2021

Today, Scottish Ballet launches an expanded programme of ballet classes, community engagement programmes and health resources to bring the benefits and joy of dance to everyone, this new year.

Committed to connecting with communities, Scotland's national dance company is offering a range of ways to improve physical and mental wellbeing, help alleviate stress on the body, and use creativity to inspire audiences of all ages.

From today, a **new programme of adult and children's ballet classes** go on sale, offering the opportunity to learn from Scottish Ballet's own company dancers. With a new term of online classes running February-April 2021, the courses will range from Absolute Beginners to Intermediate, bringing ballet directly into people's homes. Participants of all abilities will be able to practice and perfect their technique via Zoom, and there are dedicated classes for 10-14-year-olds and over 60s too.

The importance of movement for the body and mind is central in the pioneering work of the SB Health team, who launch a **new series of online movement classes for people living with dementia, Multiple Sclerosis and Parkinson's** from Monday 1 February via Zoom. *Dance for Parkinson's Scotland*, *Elevate*[™] and *Time to Dance* form the SB Health programme that is sponsored by Baillie Gifford. *Dance for Parkinson's Scotland* is run in partnership with Dance Base, Edinburgh.

Following the launch of the award-winning *Health at Hand*[™] programme for frontline workers, **Scottish Ballet is continuing to collaborate with NHS Scotland** to create resources to help alleviate the physical and mental impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Health at Hand*[™], the series of breath and movement resources created for NHS staff and keyworkers, which won the 2020 Achatas Philanthropy Prize for Scotland, is now available to all online.

In addition, **a pilot project will run in Erskine Home, Bishopton** during February-March 2021 to reach those who are particularly isolated and vulnerable. A series of digital movement sessions will be offered in small groups and 1 to 1, to support physical and emotional health and wellbeing.

Dance is the creative tool woven throughout all the work at Scottish Ballet, and today the company launches **two new creative engagement projects, *Haud Close* and the *Safe to Be Me Festival***, that aim to connect and inspire people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.

Haud Close is a multi-artform project inspired by Scottish Ballet's film *Haud Close Tae Me*, initially created by filmmaker Eve McConnachie in 2017, with choreography by Christopher Hampson and poetry by Scots Makar Jackie Kay. Using the film's resonating themes of connection, reflection and visibility, *Haud Close* brings together choreographer Jack Webb, visual artist Brian Hartley, and storyteller and dramaturg Philippa Clark, to work remotely with participants from Erskine Home, Bishopton and the dancers from *Dance for Parkinson's*, *Elevate*[™] and *Time to Dance*, to create three new dance films.

As part of the *Haud Close* project, **a global callout is inviting people living with dementia, MS or Parkinson's to submit a 20-second video**, to feature in one of the new dance films. Deadline for submissions is Monday 22 February.

And finally, working with young people will continue as the ground-breaking programme *Safe to Be*

*Me*TM moves online to formulate ***Safe to Be Me Festival 2021; a digital festival of dance to celebrate diversity***, made possible with the support of Aberdeen Standard Investments.

Working with schools and groups throughout March 2021, the festival is an opportunity for young people aged 10 to 23 to engage with the programme's focused areas of racism, homophobia, bigotry, ableism and transphobia. Delivered in line with key Scottish Government targets to address bullying in these areas, young people will explore themes of acceptance, identity and respect through creative multi-art form workshops, digital dance sessions and inspirational talks.

CEO/Artistic Director of Scottish Ballet, Christopher Hampson, said:

'At Scottish Ballet, we are committed to connecting with our audiences and using dance to engage with our communities. We are dedicated to using our skills and expertise to support everyone, bringing the benefits of movement and the joy of dance to people of all ages and backgrounds during these challenging times.'

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

'As we look to the new year, the SB Health team continue to focus our attention on connecting with people. Engagement work is vital in making a difference to communities, and we will continue to produce work that helps support people's physical and mental wellbeing.'

We are proud of the work that we are offering to people across all areas of society, and will continue to use dance and movement as a connector to improve people's health, and inspire creativity.'

Scottish Ballet invites people to join the SB community, to make the most of all these digital experiences and to stay up to date with Scotland's national dance company. Anyone can sign up to join Scottish Ballet's free Membership programme, and many of the dance classes are available exclusively to members.

For more information, visit:

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

NOTES TO EDITORS:

A press pack, including biographies and 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, 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, both on stage and screen.
- Scottish Ballet runs an extensive engagement programme, tailored to the needs of diverse communities, promoting confidence, fostering wellbeing and encouraging creativity through dance.
- *SB Health* is supported by Baillie Gifford with a funding commitment for the next five years. The programme is aligned to the Company's repertoire, in particular the work created as part of the Five in Five campaign which looks to create five new narrative ballets in five years; launched to celebrate the company's 50th anniversary in 2019.
- Alongside Baillie Gifford, SB Health is supported and funded by The Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Life Changes Trust, R S Macdonald Charitable Trust, The Rayne Foundation, Elizabeth Frankland Moore & Star Foundation, The Robertson Trust, Pam and Norman Murray, Ed and Jean Murray, Joyce Pringle, Fiona Chalmers, alongside anonymous patrons.
- Scottish Ballet's *Dance for Parkinson's Scotland* programme is delivered in partnership with Dance Base, Edinburgh.
- *Safe to Be Me*TM is supported by Aberdeen Standard Investments.
- Scottish Ballet is funded by the Scottish Government.

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