Scottish Ballet announces two new dance films, created alongside people living with neurological conditions

Today, Scottish Ballet unveils two new dance films created in collaboration with people living with Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis and dementia, as part of their creative engagement project *Haud Close.*

From Orkney to Tasmania, *Haud Close* was a multi-artform project that connected with over 100 people worldwide to celebrate the creativity, strength and perseverance of people living with neurological conditions, and their households.

Initially inspired by Scottish Ballet's award-winning dance film, *Haud Close Tae Me,* directed by filmmaker Eve McConnachie in 2017, with choreography by Christopher Hampson and poetry by Jackie Kay, the project used the film's resonating themes of reflection and visibility to explore connection at a time of separation.

Bringing together choreographer Jack Webb, visual artist Brian Hartley, storyteller and dramaturg Philippa Clark and filmmaker Beth Chalmers, the freelance artists worked with dancers from across the Scottish Ballet Health network each week, to create a new dance film called *Haud Close* that features movement, poetry and visual art.

As part of the project, a global callout also invited people living with dementia, MS and Parkinson's to submit a 20-second video response to either a poetry or dance task set by the company. These feature in a new dance film called *Haud Close Together* that connect local residents from Erskine Care Home in Bishopton, to responses from as far and wide as Australia.

Lisa Sinclair, Dance Health Manager of Scottish Ballet, said:

'As we reflect on the last year, the need for connection is stronger than ever. We are delighted to have found new ways of connecting and celebrating our global SB Health community and have been moved by the honesty and creativity shown by all who engaged with Scottish Ballet's project, *Haud Close*.'

Kirsty Grant, *Haud Close* participant said:

'What you have given me with the *Haud Close* project is a way to find freedom, a way to find movement, a way to find creativity – you've opened that door and it's a door that's been waiting to be opened for a long time. I am extremely grateful for this enormous gift.'

Jack Webb, Choreographer, said:

'Working on *Haud Close* has been yet another confirmation of the transformational power of dance and movement. The simplicity of coming together to share, move, dance, express and create, against all odds, has been the ultimate act of perseverance and joy! The many moments of curiosity, play, vulnerability, resilience and generosity of spirit created in the *Haud Close* community has at times moved me deeply and will stay with me forever.'

Brian Hartley, Visual Artist, said:

'*Haud Close* was an opportunity to work with a wonderful team of artists, to bring our various creative skills together in new ways, exploring digital technology, to bring a sense of connection and creativity to a wider community of participants and learn and work collaboratively to share ideas of visibility through these challenging times.'

Philippa Clark, Dramaturg and Storyteller, said:

'The *Haud Close* project created a real sense of connection and community during a time where a lot of people were experiencing challenges. Collaborating with the other artists and participants was a highly creative and motivating process that enabled a strong shared experience, resulting in work that we're all very proud of.

Beth Chalmers, Filmmaker, said:

'*Haud Close* was a project centered around connectivity, visibility and collaboration taking place in lockdown; a time when each of these themes are not part of daily life. It was a privilege and a joy to dance, chat and create with every dancer and artist involved.'

The two new dance films *Haud Close* and *Haud Close Together*, alongside a poetry collection and gallery of visual art created throughout the project, can be viewed for free here:

https://www.scottishballet.co.uk/join-in/sb-health/haud-close

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 via digital platforms.

- 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 (Scottish Ballet's Neurological Dance Health partner) 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.

- Scottish Ballet is funded by the Scottish Government.

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