

Dame Monica Mason, former Director of The Royal Ballet

Born in Johannesburg, Monica came to England at the age of 14 and trained with both Nesta Brooking and The Royal Ballet School. She joined the Company in 1958 and was promoted to Principal in 1968. She created The Chosen Maiden in *The Rite of Spring* and many other roles, dancing a wide repertory that included the 19th-century classics. She was appointed Principal Répétiteur in 1984, Assistant to the Director in 1988, and Assistant Director in 1991.

Monica became Acting Director of The Royal Ballet before becoming Director in 2002. She retired in 2012 after 54 years at the Royal Opera House. She was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Surrey in 1996, an OBE in 2002 and in 2003 the Achievement in Dance Award from the Dance Teachers' Benevolent Fund.

In 2008 she was made a Dame Commander for her services to dance. She received the Queen Elizabeth II Award from the RAD in 2011 and the Olivier Special Award in 2012. In 2013 she became an Honorary Fellow of St Hilda's College, Oxford, and Kings' College, London. In January 2014 she was appointed Chairman of The Royal Ballet Benevolent Fund, now the Dance Professionals Fund.