

Boys take centre stage in Royal Academy of Dance's drive to attract more male dancers



Hamish Scott, Genée 2016 Bronze Medallist and Elmhurst Ballet School student, was actively involved in the Project B creation process.
Photo credit: WinkiPop Media , courtesy of the Royal Academy of Dance.

- RAD launches Project B, aiming to increase the proportion of boys taking part in dance activities by 2020
- RAD raises the barre with more male role models including Principal Dancers Iain Mackay and Alexander Campbell
- RAD seeks to fire boys' imaginations with new dance partnerships inspired by sports and superheroes
- RAD increases male dance provision with more Boys Only! workshops and Boys Ballet Masterclasses, as well as bursaries and financial support for regular tuition
- RAD offers financial support to encourage more men to train as dance teachers, and will create new resources for existing teachers to engage with boys at all levels

The Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) today announced the launch of **Project B** – a range of initiatives to widen access to dance for boys and encourage more to take up ballet. In celebration of its upcoming centenary in 2020, the RAD aims to bring dance to more people in more places and will be initially investing over £30,000 to further support male dance provision over the next three years. This will be ahead of further fundraising.

Project B launches with a focus on four key strands:

B: Active

Following a successful collaboration as part of The Patron's Lunch last year, the RAD is again partnering with fellow Patron's Organisation Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) to launch a six week pilot scheme in primary schools. The project aims to promote the strong connection between dance and sport, and challenge traditional stereotypes of both cricketers and dancers. The pilot will comprise of a series of workshops to be held in primary schools within two miles of Lord's Cricket Ground in St. John's Wood. Classes will be delivered by both an RAD Registered Teacher and a MCC coach. Focusing on strength, stamina, balance and fitness and the links between sport and dance, this project hopes to encourage more boys to dance and more girls to try cricket.

Royal Ballet Principal Dancer and cricket enthusiast, **Alexander Campbell**, has been named as the RAD's Ambassador for the project: *"As a passionate supporter of both ballet and cricket, it is with great excitement that I am to be involved as an Ambassador for the project. Cricket and ballet were a huge part of my life growing up, and continue to be a huge part of my life today. They are fun and engaging at all levels, and I am absolutely delighted to have the opportunity to introduce children to my favourite art-form, as well as my favourite sport."*

Charlotte Edwards will support the project as MCC's Ambassador. Charlotte is an MCC Honorary Life Member and the most successful England Women's cricketer and captain of all time.

B: Inspired

In a bid to inspire a boys ballet boom, RAD Male Dance Ambassador, **Iain Mackay**, has created choreography that will challenge stereotypes surrounding male dance, and ballet in particular, and celebrate boys who dare to dance. The choreography, which is simple, fun and suitable for all ages and abilities, will be free to download via the smartphone app **Seenit**. From 18 June (Father's Day) users will be encouraged to use video to document their dance journey.

Iain's choreography draws on his experience as a dancer, teacher and father. Based on terms and references from popular culture, it will get boys busting ballet moves in a language they can relate to: *"The inspiration for my choreography comes from all the boys I have taught with the RAD. I've looked at ways of bringing what young boys interested in ballet can take from their passions outside of the studio and use it to give them confidence and a common language. This inspires them to develop inside the parameters of a ballet class. Whether that be developing their favourite footballer's elaborate goal celebration, jumping and posing like super heroes, spinning across the room like Angry Birds, or creating patterns and shapes like building blocks in Minecraft. Regardless of the inspiration, the result is the same: a strong, well held upper body and grace and strength in abundance – what every male dancer represents. I hope the choreography I have created will motivate and excite aspiring male dancers to get involved and enjoy the athleticism and physicality that ballet holds."*

B: Involved

To date, the RAD has seen an increase of over 20% in the numbers taking part in its boys' ballet activities in the UK in the last year. However, only 1.8 per cent of all global RAD exam candidates are male – the proportion rises to around 4-6 per cent at the higher vocational graded levels. By investing over £30,000 over three years, the RAD will further its commitment to male dance. It will reach boys at a grass roots level by providing more **Boys Only!** workshops and **Boys Ballet Masterclasses** throughout the UK, as well as providing additional bursaries and financial support to ensure that, regardless of geography or financial situation, a diverse range of boys have the chance to participate.

B: Engaged

As a membership organisation, the RAD recognises the importance of building capacity in the sector by helping dance teachers to reach out to male students and to encourage more men to pursue dance teaching. As part of their investment plans, the RAD will provide financial support to male students enrolling on RAD teacher training programmes in a drive to recruit more male dance teachers and increase the number of positive male role models. Iain's choreography and ethos towards teaching boys will also be used as a basis for developing new Continuing Professional Development courses, in collaboration with RAD's Artistic Director **Paula Hunt**. These CPD courses will be provided free of charge to RAD Registered Teachers to support them in engaging more male students in their dance schools nationwide.

Take up the challenge to 'be part of Project B': www.rad.org.uk/projectb.

– ENDS –

Notes to Editors

Website: www.rad.org.uk

Project B: www.rad.org.uk/projectb

Hashtag: #RADProjectB

Facebook: @RoyalAcademyofDance

Twitter: @RADHeadquarters

Instagram: @RoyalAcademyofDance

Royal Academy of Dance

With 14,000 members in 83 countries, the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) is one of the largest and most influential dance education and training organisations in the world. Established in 1920 to improve standards and re-invigorate dance training, the Academy helps and encourages its teachers to perfect their teaching skills and pass on this knowledge to their students. There are currently over 1,000 students in full-time or part-time teacher training programmes with the Academy and each year the examination syllabus is taught to thousands of young people worldwide, with around a quarter of a million pupils per year going on to take RAD exams.

Marylebone Cricket Club

MCC is the world's most active cricket club, the owner of Lord's Ground and the guardian of the Laws and Spirit of the game. Founded in 1787, it issued the first code of Laws in 1788 and moved to its current home in 1814. There are 18,000 Full and 5,500 Associate Members of MCC.

Iain Mackay

Born in Glasgow, Iain Mackay trained as a Junior Associate of Scottish Ballet, before joining the Dance School of Scotland. He spent two years at the Royal Ballet Upper School, and joined Birmingham Royal Ballet in 1999 following his success at the RAD's Genée International Ballet Competition where he won a bronze medal. He was promoted to Soloist in 2001 and Principal in 2003. Able to take on everything from classical princes to intense dramatic roles, Iain became one of Birmingham Royal Ballet's most valued and versatile artists, leading to the creation of a number of major roles in the recent repertory.

Alexander Campbell

Australian dancer Alexander Campbell is a Principal of The Royal Ballet. He trained at The Royal Ballet School and on graduation joined Birmingham Royal Ballet. He joined The Royal Ballet as a Soloist in 2011, was promoted to First Soloist in 2012 and Principal in 2016. Campbell was born in Sydney and trained at Academy Ballet, Sydney, before joining The Royal Ballet School. In 2003 he won the silver medal at the RAD's Genée International Ballet Competition and was a Prix de Lausanne finalist.

For press information, contact:

Celia Moran

Press & Communications Manager
Royal Academy of Dance
Tel: +44 (0)20 7326 8002
E-mail: cmoran@rad.org.uk

Nima Naik

Press & Social Media Officer
Royal Academy of Dance
Tel: +44 (0)20 7326 8047
E-mail: nnaik@rad.org.uk