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PRESS RELEASE

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Royal Academy of Dance holds special event celebrating older dancers



Angela Rippon with a group of Silver Swans. Image credit: Roswitha Cheshier.

- **Silver Swans Celebration took place on Sunday 1 October 2023 in honour of United Nation's Day of Older Persons**
- **Over 200 Silver Swans from around Europe gathered at RAD's HQ in Wandsworth, London for a day of classes, performances and workshops**
- **Silver Swans Ambassador Angela Rippon gave a welcome speech and Her Majesty The Queen sent a personal message to those taking part**
- **Silver Swans is the RAD's dance programme for older learners of all abilities and helps improve fitness and wellbeing.**

Yesterday on Sunday 1st October, in honour of the United Nations Day of Older Persons, leading dance and training organisation Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) hosted Silver Swans Celebration, an event celebrating the RAD's global community of older dancers.

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The day was a celebration of the RAD's Silver Swans, a programme where older dancers from the age of 55 attend ballet classes to improve their balance, coordination and flexibility, and connect with their peers.

Silver Swans Celebration saw over 200 Silver Swans gather at the RAD's HQ in London to perform in the Aud Jepsen Studio Theatre and participate in ballet classes, workshops and discussions. Workshops focused on strengthening the body; learning repertoire from famous ballets; making connections; and emphasising the benefits dance has on mental wellbeing. Silver Swans based outside of the UK also had a presence at the event, by participating in online forums and classes, and watching screenings of their dance videos shown during the performance.

Her Majesty The Queen, who takes Silver Swans classes, sent a personalised message to the swans wishing them the best of luck on the day.

RAD Silver Swans Ambassador **Angela Rippon** gave a welcome speech at the beginning of the event to inspire her fellow swans. *Speaking about the importance of the Silver Swans programme **Angela Rippon** said: "What a joy it was to come to the RAD and see over 200 swans from all over the country demonstrate the very thing Silver Swans was set up to do - which is to give people over the age of 55 an opportunity to dance. In an ageing population we should do all we can to keep people fit, strong and healthy. Silver Swans demonstrates just that."*

Tim Arthur Chief Executive of RAD said: *"I am happy that we are able to celebrate our Silver Swans and their teachers, to share experiences, recognise their achievements and to build a greater sense of community through a shared love of dance."*

Sue Peterson a Silver Swan who was involved in the creation of the event said: *"Being instrumental, along with Natasha Tobin, in instigating the idea of a Silver Swans Celebration, and to find it so successful, and a sellout, was an honour and privilege for me, a life member of the Royal Academy of Dance. It was fantastic to see so many Swans in one place!"*

Natasha Tobin who teaches Silver Swans classes in Dorset, said: *"It's been a privilege to work with Sue Peterson and the RAD's former Artistic Director, Gerard Charles, to deliver such an inspiring event that has showcased the sheer joy and creativity of dance, presented by our Silver Swans ballet groups, all over the world."*

Royal Academy of Dance developed Silver Swans in 2017 in response to a growing demand for ballet classes for older learners. Sessions are based upon research into dance practice for older participants from the RAD's Dance for Lifelong Wellbeing project. This project identified psychological benefits of dance, such as perceived improvements in quality of life, as well as physiological advantages, such as improved balance.

Silver Swans classes are delivered exclusively by Silver Swans Licensees who have trained to safely adapt ballet techniques for older adults. The RAD has Silver Swans Licensees in over 50 countries around the world (and growing), with nations including UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Mexico.

For more information on Silver Swans programme visit:

<https://www.royalacademyofdance.org/dance-with-us/silverswans/>

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Notes to Editors

About the Royal Academy of Dance

Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) is one of the most influential dance education and training organisations in the world with a strong global membership in 85 countries. 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.