

ROYAL ACADEMY OF DANCE

Steven McRae appointed Ambassador of the Royal Academy of Dance



Steven McRae, Photo by Bill Cooper / Royal Opera House

- Steven McRae has been appointed to RAD's newly created Ambassador role
- The role draws on his personal experience of quality dance teaching, as well as his experience as a parent
- The Academy will work with McRae to help bring dance teachers closer to the industry and highlight the significant role a good teacher can play in a dancer's career
- McRae's first activity as Ambassador is an exclusive video conversation for RAD members with his RAD ballet teacher, Hilary Kaplan, discussing the importance of excellent dance teaching

4 March 2022: The Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) today announced Steven McRae as an Ambassador. This new role created by the RAD, will see the Academy work with Steven to highlight the positive role a good teacher can play in a dancer's life and career, offer a dancer's insight on how dance teachers can best support and motivate their students, and open up worldwide discussions and debates about the teaching of dance.

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In his first activity as Ambassador, the RAD today released access to an exclusive video conversation between McRae and his RAD ballet teacher, Hilary Kaplan, discussing the importance of good dance teaching for RAD members.

As part of his role, Steven will speak with RAD ballet teachers from across the globe through interviews and forums, with hopes to inspire them and nurture them at all levels of their careers. Steven will interact with dancers and students to discuss the importance of good training and how to achieve it. By having greater awareness of this all-important area of the Academy's work, the RAD hope that teachers will feel a greater connection to their part in the dancing world.

Now a Principal dancer with The Royal Ballet, Steven's introduction to ballet was through the RAD. Taught by RAD teacher Hilary Kaplan in his hometown of Sydney, Australia, Steven learnt the foundations of classical ballet through the RAD syllabus and annual exams. In 2002, he went on to compete in the Genée International Ballet Competition (now The Margot Fonteyn International Ballet Competition) where at age 16 he won the coveted Adeline Genée Gold Medal. Steven joined The Royal Ballet School in 2003, graduated into The Royal Ballet in 2004, and worked his way up to Principal in 2009. The RAD provided Steven with the crucial stepping stones to facilitate a successful career in dance and to this day, Hilary remains a source of support and inspiration as he performs on a world stage.

The RAD are recognising Steven's progression through RAD training to achieve such a high level of professional acclaim as a dancer, as well as his passion and understanding of quality dance teaching. This is reinforced by his recognition of the strong foundation he received through learning the RAD syllabus. As a parent of young children, Steven also has an awareness of what young children need in order to succeed and enjoy dance, whether as a recreational pursuit or as a career.

Steven McRae said: *'The RAD has been instrumental from the very start of my training at the age of 7. Progressing through the syllabus all the way through to the Solo Seal & a gold medal at the Genée (now The Fonteyn) provided me with a foundation to build on, that I was then able to combine with my love of other dance styles. Now as an Ambassador, I hope to shine a light on the importance of great teaching, and the responsibility we all have in nurturing the next generation of dancers in a way that not only creates great artists, but empowers people to contribute to the wonderful world of dance through a healthier and more holistic approach. Dance can transform lives, so we must enable more lives to be positively impacted by the power of dance!'*

Gerard Charles, RAD Artistic Director said: *'Quality teaching is at the heart of who we are and so I am very pleased that a successful dancer of Steven's stature would take on this role. His passion and personal experience of good training makes him an ideal ambassador to draw attention to this most important aspect of our work. He is intelligent, personable and articulate and I am sure that our teachers and dancers will all delight in interacting with him.'*

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The Academy plans to appoint a roster of high profile Ambassadors over the coming months, in order to help the organisation remain at the forefront of dance education. These appointments come as the Academy move to a new global headquarters in Battersea, opening in Spring 2022.

The new building will become an international home for dance, allowing the RAD to expand on its 100-year history of high-quality dance education to bring the transformational power of dance to more people, regardless of age, ability, or location.

Find out more about the Royal Academy of Dance at: www.royalacademyofdance.org

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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.