

ROYAL ACADEMY OF DANCE

For immediate release
PRESS RELEASE

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RAD receives Kenneth MacMillan's archive

The collection gives insight into a pioneer of twentieth century ballet



Sir Kenneth MacMillan rehearsing *Le Baiser de la Fée* in 1960 with Lynn Seymour and Donald MacLeary. Image/copyright credit: © Zoe Dominic

Today, the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) announces that it has received British choreographer Sir Kenneth MacMillan's archive.

Sir Kenneth MacMillan (1929-1992) was the leading choreographer of his generation, creating world-renowned ballets including *Romeo and Juliet*, *Gloria*, *Manon*, *Mayerling* and *Requiem*.

The archive comprises a diverse and rich range of material covering the personal, artistic and business archive of one of the most significant ballet figures of the 20th century.

The records span MacMillan's life and career from his school days and early years as a dancer, through his career with the Sadler's Wells Ballet/The Royal Ballet as dancer, choreographer, and Artistic Director from 1970-1977, and Principal Choreographer from 1977 until his death in 1992. He was Director

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of Deutsche Oper Ballet Berlin from 1966–1969 and Artistic Associate of American Ballet Theatre and Houston Ballet from 1984–1989.

Speaking of the news and MacMillan's impact on British ballet, **Dame Darcey Bussell, President of the RAD** said: *"There is no doubt that Kenneth's creative genius contributed to the evolution of the art form of classical ballet. He put British ballet on the international map, drawing stars from around the world to work with him and perform his works. The RAD could not be more grateful to have the honour of holding Kenneth's archive. With our state-of-the-art facilities, I know the RAD will preserve the archive superbly and offer access in an inclusive way in the years to come."*

Dame Monica Mason, Vice President of the RAD and répétiteur to MacMillan in 1980 reflected: *"Sir Kenneth MacMillan was a visionary choreographer whose work had a profound impact on the evolution of ballet. His innovative creations captivated audiences worldwide and continue to inspire dancers and choreographers today. This archive is a wonderful legacy for the RAD to receive and will not only shed light on Sir Kenneth's creative process but enrich our understanding of his life and the cultural context in which he worked."*

RAD's Artistic Director, Alexander Campbell said: *"As a huge personal fan of Sir Kenneth MacMillan's work, I am delighted that the RAD is to receive this archive. A visionary choreographer who challenged the status quo and shaped our understanding of what ballet is and can be, the opportunity to gain further understanding about Sir Kenneth and his process is a gift to all. This is a hugely important historic collection, and the fact that we have been entrusted with this archive is testament to the RAD's position in the dance world."*

The archive – which includes photographs, diaries, and letters – paints a rich picture of MacMillan's life. Its early material covers MacMillan's school years and includes his Grade 1 ballet exam certificate from the Royal Academy of Dancing in 1944.

Personal material includes diaries and handwritten notes that are incomplete but revelatory. His interest in fantasy jewellery is covered in correspondence, catalogues, and details of the Jewels of Fantasy exhibition at the V&A, which included key items from MacMillan's collection of jewellery.

There is **correspondence** from major figures in the world of ballet, music and theatre, as well as from friends and members of the public. The letters blend business with personal matters, reflecting working practices in the

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arts, and include letters from Dame Ninette de Valois, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Humphrey Burton, Lucia Chase, Alexandra Grant, Nora Kaye, Jiri Kylian and more.

Photographs cover his early days with the Sadler's Wells Ballet, some as dancer others socialising and on tour, rehearsal photographs, portraits and photographs of his ballets.

Following MacMillan's death in 1992, there are letters of condolence, tributes, records for the funeral, and for the Service of Thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey.

The Kenneth MacMillan archive has been gifted to the RAD by Deborah, Lady MacMillan and the RAD is extremely grateful for her incredible generosity. The RAD is planning a cataloguing project for 2025 after which the collection will be made available to the public for educational research.

Containing over 75,000 items spanning 100 years, the RAD Archive, based at RAD's Wolfson Library at its headquarters in London, is an important record of the evolution of British ballet and dance in the 20th century; from materials relating to the development of dance teaching, a photographic archive capturing the 1940s-1980s British ballet scene, through to special collections of ballet trailblazers.

Last year, the RAD announced it had received the Dancing Times, Britain's oldest dance magazine, archive after it ceased publication in September 2022.

RAD members can visit the library for free. For more information visit: <https://www.royalacademyofdance.org/about-us/the-wolfson-library/using-the-library-and-archives/library-admission-fees/>

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Notes to Editors

About the Royal Academy of Dance

The RAD is one of the world's most influential dance education and training organisations. With its global headquarters in London, the RAD

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works locally and around the world to bring dance to diverse communities, widen access to dance and share the benefits and wellbeing that dance brings.

With a strong global membership presence in over 85 countries, each year around 250,000 dancers learn the RAD syllabus and take exams. Over 1,000 students are enrolled in in-person and distance-learning dance teacher training programmes.

The RAD empowers people through dance education and enjoyment and believes that 'every body' should have the opportunity to learn to dance.