Dancing to success!

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The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has announced nearly £360,000 of funding for the oldest dance company in the UK, Rambert Dance Company, to preserve and display their exceptional historical collections.

Rambert Dance Company is currently based in Chiswick, with inadequate space to store or provide access to a wealth of costume, audio and film collections and archive material. 2013 will see Rambert move to a new purpose-built home on the South Bank, where HLF funding will enable the fit-out of a new archive space displaying these enthralling collections.

Containing over 300 costumes spanning over 100 years, they include pieces by acclaimed designers Roland Mouret, John Galliano, Stephen Jones and Katherine Hamnett, as well as original pieces belonging to Marie Rambert. Conservation work will be carried out on the items at most risk, around 40% of the collection.

The project will also see an extensive education programme, with particular focus on schools, MA Fashion students, young theatre members, volunteers and the wider community. This will include:

- Opportunities for fashion students to gain invaluable practical skills in cataloguing costume collections with the chance to curate a public exhibition.
- A digitisation archivist will train volunteers to help with the digitisation of VHS film collections.
- At least 15 schools will participate in workshops on themes such as significant choreographers, the emergence of contemporary dance and the Company's founder, Marie Rambert.
- Groups of young people from Lambeth City Learning Centre will look at archive footage to develop documentary films on music, design and dance.
- Young people from the Unicorn Theatre will create a performance about the life of Marie Rambert inspired by the Company's archives.
- Rambert will deliver a series of talks and events for adults and community groups.

Sue Bowers, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund London, said: "These collections are of national and international importance. We are delighted that these valuable items will be properly preserved and made accessible to the public. They provide a fascinating glimpse into the development of dance design during the 20th century, including costumes by some of Britain's greatest designers."

Nadia Stern, Rambert Dance Company's Chief Executive, commented: "This grant will transform access to Rambert's extensive archive which documents the birth of British ballet. This is a fascinating collection of national significance dating back to the late 19th century, recording the development of dance, the most ephemeral of art forms".

The archive was developed following the company's 50th anniversary in 1976, and formally established in 1982 when Marie Rambert, founder of the Company, donated her own personal archive.

Over 600 boxes of documents and 1800 film and audio footage will also be preserved to professional standards. The VHS collection, which is significantly at risk, will be digitised with many items available online.

Note to Editors

John Charles Galliano CBE, RDI (born 28 November 1960) is a Gibraltan-born British fashion designer who was best known as head designer of French haute couture houses Givenchy (July 1995 to October 1996) and Christian Dior (October 1996 to March 2011), and his own self-titled fashion house.

Katharine E. Hamnett CBE (born 16 August 1947, in Gravesend, Kent) is an English fashion designer best known for her political t-shirts and her ethical business philosophy. In the early 1980s Hamnett's oversized t-shirts with large block letter slogans were adopted by pop bands including Wham!, with her "CHOOSE LIFE" slogan prominently displayed in the music video for "Wake Me Up Before You Go Go" and in Queen's video for Hammer To Fall (worn by Roger Taylor). Taylor also wore a "WORLDWIDE NUCLEAR BAN NOW" shirt during Queen's historical appearance at the first edition of Rock in Rio festival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Roland Mouret (born 1962 in Lourdes, France) is a French fashion designer. Sharai and André Meyers bought his line in 1998. After seven years and a move to New York, Mouret introduced his Galaxy dress in his Spring 2006 collection. Called the "dress of the season" by many, its ubiquity was such that Vogue magazine would later write that "for weeks you couldn't open a newspaper or magazine without seeing another young Hollywood A-lister wearing" it.

Stephen Jones OBE (born 31 May 1957) is a leading British milliner based in London, who is considered one of the world's most radical and important milliners of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. He is also one of the most prolific, having created hats for the catwalk shows of many leading couturiers and fashion designers, such as John Galliano at Dior and Vivienne Westwood. His work is known for its inventiveness and the high level of technical expertise with which he realises his ideas. Jones co-curated the 2009 exhibition Hats: An Anthology for the Victoria & Albert Museum.

About Rambert Dance Company

Founded by Marie Rambert in 1926, Rambert Dance Company has sustained her pioneering commitment to choreography and developing dancers as artists, leading the way for over 85 years. The vision of this energetic Polish woman ensured that dance as an art form took root and blossomed in this country, as she produced the founding generation of British choreographers including Sir Frederick Ashton and Antony Tudor. Excepting her great inspiration, Diaghilev, no other director has had a greater effect on the creative forces in ballet, not only in Britain but all over the world. She stressed the value of collaboration between choreographer, composer and artist and the Company continues in that tradition, routinely commissioning composers and artists alongside new choreography. Rambert is renowned for its use of live music and is the only UK-based contemporary dance company to always tour with an orchestra. Today, the Company thrives on its unique ability to share with audiences the widest range of repertoire: works from our rich heritage as the UK's oldest dance company; new works and re-stagings by choreographers from all over the world, including those who may be less well-known in the UK, and landmark dance from the 20th century. Bold, risk-taking, agile and beautiful, our dancers combine rigorous technique and artistry with an extraordinary ability to challenge and entertain. Under the award-winning artistic direction of Mark Baldwin, the Company creates bold, ambitious productions that achieve audience and critical acclaim. Rambert received two national awards in 2010: the Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dance 2010 and the National Dance Award Critics' Circle for Outstanding Company 2010.

Further information

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