

## **The London Ballet Circle**

**Trustees' Report and Examined Accounts  
for the year ended 31 October 2024**

**Charity number 1123258**

## **THE LONDON BALLET CIRCLE 2023/24**

**Patron:** Sir Peter Wright CBE

**President:** Dame Monica Mason DBE

**Vice Presidents:**

Dame Merle Park DBE

Wayne Eagling

David Nixon OBE

Darius James OBE

Sir David Bintley CBE

Kevin O'Hare CBE

Dame Darcey Bussell DBE

Carlos Acosta CBE

Tamara Rojo CBE

Aaron S Watkin

The **Trustees and Elected Officers** during the reporting year were:

Susan Dalgetty Ezra (Chair)

Krissie Poyser (Secretary)

Keith White (Treasurer)

Alexandra Cross (from 24 September 2024)

Fiona Erleigh

Ben Etteridge (until 14 October 2024)

Candace Kuss

Abigail Lilly (from 11 March 2024)

Susan Lynas

Jill Samuels (from 24 September 2024)

Alastair Thomson

Sylvia Villa

**Registered Charity number: 1123258**

**Registered Office:**

42, The Hyde, Ware, Hertfordshire SG12 0ER

**Independent Examiner:**

M J Bushell Audit LLP

8 High Street

Brentwood

Essex

CM14 4AB

**Bankers:**

Unity Trust Bank

Four Brindley Place

Birmingham, B1 2JB

## ANNUAL REPORT

The London Ballet Circle was established in 1946 by Stanley Hawkins with Ninette de Valois (regarded as the founder of British ballet) as its first president. The LBC is the world's oldest independent ballet appreciation society. It became a charity in 2008 and its objects were widened in 2019. In summary these are:

- to promote and support dance and the kindred arts for the public benefit.
- to enhance public knowledge and appreciation of ballet and associated dance forms
- to encourage excellence, in particular by awarding bursaries for ballet/dance students
- to offer other charitable assistance for dance but not restricted to dance organisations.

The LBC sets out to achieve this in a number of ways by

- offering talks with dancers and leading creatives to members and the wider public
- arranging visits to ballet schools and company rehearsals
- giving bursaries and awards to dance and ballet students, and charitable donations to ballet companies and organisations to develop new work or to recognise their role in helping us achieve our objectives.
- promoting the art form to members through newsletters and to the world at large through the website and social media

The LBC continues to attract membership throughout the UK and worldwide through its events and online talks, where it is possible to arrange speakers from anywhere in the world and minimise the disruption to their busy schedules. Talks are free to members with a small charge for the public. Where live meetings are also screened online as a hybrid event, a charge is made to all members to cover the increasing cost of London venues with again a differential higher charge for others. All bookings are made through the website to eliminate cash handling.

The LBC remains committed to offering a wide range of dance related speakers and both live and online events. Successful live events are important but the LBC also needs to fulfill its charitable duties and not just seek financial viability.

## ACHIEVEMENTS 2023-2024

In the year 2023-2024 subscriptions continued a slow but steady increase reaching a membership of just under 600. The LBC held a record 44 events with an attendance of nearly 1700 Members and guests.

Thanks to the generosity of members, one of the highlights of the year was to be able to increase the Choreographic Award, established in 2022, from £7,500 to £10,000 and to make it a biennial event. Our President, Dame Monica Mason, led the panel of judges and was joined by Christopher Marney (choreographer, teacher and Artistic Director of London City Ballet), Deborah Weiss (dance writer and critic) and Elena Glurjidze (director of the Masters of Ballet Academy). Submissions were received from ten schools and companies and the panel made their recommendations to the Trustees to make the following awards:

£3000 to Northern Ballet for their *Sketches* programme,  
 £3000 to the English National Ballet School towards their 3<sup>rd</sup> Year students' dissertations,  
 £2000 to the Birmingham Royal Ballet to support their Young Choreographers programme,

£1000 to the New English Ballet Theatre towards commissioning a new work by Matthew Ball and £1000 to the children's company Let's All Dance to support their new production of *Puss in Boots*.

Winners of the award invited LBC members to watch rehearsals or performances of these new works not just in London but also in Birmingham and, for the first time, joining the Friends of Northern Ballet in Leeds.

Linda Gainsbury, a lifelong supporter of ballet and vice-chair of the LBC had initiated this award to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the LBC. Following her death in April 2024 it was decided to rename the Choreographic Award the Gainsbury Award in her memory.

Further highlights were two popular hybrid events held at the Royal Ballet Upper School in Floral Street. For the first time the LBC joined with the Ashton Foundation in May to celebrate works performed by the Sarasota Ballet with the company directors Iain Webb and Margaret Barbieri In Conversation with Jane Pritchard, dance curator at the V&A. In October Matthew Ball, principal dancer with the Royal Ballet, entertained guests with stories about his career In Conversation with Deborah Weiss.

The pattern of monthly In Conversation Zoom meetings continued with past and present dancers, choreographers and directors from the Royal Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet, London City Ballet, English National Ballet, London Children's Ballet and the National Ballet of Canada companies. Visits were also made to watch rehearsals and classes with schools and companies such as Acosta Dance Centre, English National Ballet School, New English Ballet Theatre, Central School of Ballet, Northern Ballet, Ballet Black, Masters of Ballet Academy and, for the first time, to the Pett/Clausen-Knight company and to the London Vocational Ballet School.

Members were treated again to visits to tour the Freed's factory to see how pointe shoes are made, to the RAD headquarters for a reception prior to the Fonteyn Award competition and to the annual visit with the Ballet Association to the Royal Ballet Upper School. Members were also invited to watch a masterclass held by Alina Cojocaru, 'Dancing with the Stars' classes sponsored by Dance Forward and to the GradPRO London auditions and final event at Elmhurst Ballet School. The LBC was invited, for the second time, to run a stall at the delightful (if rather wet) Royal Ballet Summer Fair at White Lodge.

The LBC has continued with its proud tradition of awarding bursaries, scholarships and prizes to talented young students. The Stanley Hawkins bursary to attend Ballet Cymru's summer school was awarded to Carlin Dixon from the USA. The LBC also presented the Ninette de Valois award at the Royal Ballet School graduating ceremony to Rebecca Stewart and Emile Gooding who both subsequently joined the Company under the Aud Jebsen programme, and the Sir Peter Wright award was presented to Marlo Kempsey-Fagg at Elmhurst Ballet School. Leo Godfrey, from the English National Ballet School, was awarded the LBC prize at the third annual GradPRO International Showcase competition. Funding was also granted for three scholarships to the Yorkshire Ballet Seminars and also one to the Masters of Ballet Easter Intensive. At the National Dance Awards ceremony, hosted by Graham Watts, Chair of the Dance Critics' Circle, the LBC's prestigious award for Outstanding Male Classical Performance was presented to Brandon Lawrence from the Birmingham Royal Ballet for his role in *Liebestod*.

Money raised from ticket sales at events is given back to the host organisations and awards are made possible through generous donations and profits from membership subscriptions to the LBC.

## **FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE**

The year was again successful financially, despite a (planned) small overall deficit of about £1,900. Funding was set aside to enable the Choreographic Awards to be made during the year and the Fund for this purpose also attracted restricted donations from members.

Together with annual commitments to support dance bursaries and awards and other donations, often following visits, the total charitable donations exceeded £30,000. This amounts to 84% of total expenditure. A full breakdown of LBC donations is appended to the Accounts.

The increasing membership and the extensive events programme were reflected in significant income growth. Most members now make e-commerce transactions and although this incurs some additional costs (card processing and website membership database costs), the handling of cheques can also incur costs. The circulation of a printed newsletter by post has been further reduced to a very small number of long-standing members without email.

The LBC received a gift of £1,000 “for the enjoyment of members” in the will of a former member and together with other donations will enable a social event to be held in early 2025.

## **RESERVES AND ACCOUNTING**

While most of the expenditure is charitable donations, which could be varied according to income to maintain a suitable financial position, in practice the LBC has a number of long-standing student awards which it wishes to sustain to provide certainty to the receiving organisations. Having built up the expectations of a larger and more dispersed membership, the LBC also needs funds to meet those expectations, while still being able to respond to unexpected needs and costs.

In the past the LBC has sought to maintain a minimum reserve of an average one year’s expenditure, excluding those restricted for a particular purpose. With the growth in events and visits which generate income for returning funds to those ballet schools and organisations, a simple relationship to expenditure is no longer appropriate. It suggests reserves at a higher level than required.

The Trustees have therefore decided to seek reserves that provide for one year’s expenditure to keep the charity functioning and for the annual commitments to student awards. Currently this total is around £12,000. The LBC has free reserves (excluding restricted funds) substantially in excess of this and plans over a number of years to expand charitable donations and further choreographic awards on a sustainable basis.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records and preparing financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the financial position in accordance with legal requirements. They are required to select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently; make judgements and estimates that are

reasonable and prudent; and prepare financial statements on a going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that The London Ballet Circle will continue. They are also responsible for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

## GOVERNANCE AND RISKS

The LBC updated its policies in 2023 particularly in relation to safeguarding, volunteers, guidance for members and financial controls and has clarified its policy for giving charitable donations. It continues to review these on a regular basis. The Trustees maintain a risk register and review it at regular intervals.

The biggest single risk is a failure to attract enough Trustees with suitable experience and skills to maintain and develop its expanding programme and serving a growing membership.

The sound financial position has mitigated some of the risks that exist in holding events and being reliant on membership payments and donations. However, the lack of suitable and affordable venues still concerns the Trustees as well as the technology (its availability at venues and the extent to which Trustees and volunteers can manage it) to deliver an extensive online programme of events. LBC has been able to use the facilities of The Royal Ballet School in the evening on a regular basis and while the cost is at a commercial rate, the expenditure stays within the "ballet community".

The Trustees present their report and examined accounts for the year ended 31 October 2024.

### On behalf of the Trustees:

signed Keith F White (Treasurer) dated 2/2/25

signed Suvarnalgetty Raja (Chair) dated 2/2/25

**THE LONDON BALLET CIRCLE**  
**Receipts and payments Accounts**

**Charity registration number 1123258**

**1 November 2023 to 31 October 2024**

	Note	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Total	2022/ 23
<b>RECEIPTS</b>						
Memberships		11570	0	0	11570	10835
Donations		2807	0	1370	4177	2755
Gift Aid	1	2261	0	155	2416	2010
Events (Talks/Visits)		14775	0	0	14775	9505
Bequests and legacies		0	0	1000	1000	0
Interest		700	0	0	700	473
Other		206	0	0	206	356
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>		<b>32319</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2525</b>	<b>34844</b>	<b>25934</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>						
<b>Bursaries and donations</b>						
Bursaries and Awards to students	3	6020	0	0	6020	3950
Donations to ballet organisations	3	14948	0	0	14948	8415
LBC Gainsbury Award		0	10000	0	10000	0
<b>sub total</b>		<b>20968</b>	<b>10000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30968</b>	<b>12365</b>
<b>Administration and Governance</b>						
AGM costs		40	0	0	40	162
Charity insurance		143	0	0	143	143
Bank and transaction charges		1093	0	0	1093	834
Computer software		394	0	0	394	338
Newsletter (Printing and Postage)		188	0	0	188	707
Website (+ member database)		1502	0	0	1502	1403
General administration	2	158	0	0	158	194
<b>sub total</b>		<b>3518</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3518</b>	<b>3781</b>

	Note	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Total	2022/ 23
<b>Event costs</b>						
Talks / visits		1413	0	0	1413	1693
Zoom licences		843	0	0	843	890
<b>sub total</b>		<b>2256</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2256</b>	<b>2583</b>
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>		<b>26742</b>	<b>10000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>36742</b>	<b>18729</b>
<b>NET RECEIPTS (PAYMENTS)</b>		<b>5577</b>	<b>-10000</b>	<b>2525</b>	<b>-1898</b>	<b>7205</b>

## Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 31 October 2024

	Note	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Total
Cash funds at bank		19098	3475	4525	27098
Other monetary assets					
Gift Aid repayable	1	330	0	0	330
less Liabilities		0	0	0	0
<b>NET ASSETS at 31 October 2024</b>		<b>19428</b>	<b>3475</b>	<b>4525</b>	<b>27428</b>

**Unrestricted funds** are freely available for use by the trustees to further the charity's purposes. **Restricted funds** are received and used for purposes specified by the donor. **Designated funds** are allocated by the trustees for a particular purpose (and can be undesignated at their discretion).



## Statement of funds 2023/24

	Cash funds at 31 October 2023	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Cash funds at 31 October 2024
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
General Fund	22326	32319	-26742	-8475	19428
<b>Designated funds</b>					
General Fund	0	0	0	0	0
LBC Gainsbury Award	5000	0	-10000	8475	3475
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
General Fund	2000	1000	0	0	3000
LBC Gainsbury Award	0	1525	0	0	1525
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>29326</b>	<b>34844</b>	<b>-36742</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>27428</b>

The Choreographic Awards Fund was set up by trustees on 1 September 2023 with the aim of supporting choreographic initiatives in the classical genre within ballet schools and companies. It is intended that awards are made every 2 years with funds transferred from general reserves every year. It was renamed in 2024 in memory of Linda Gainsbury, who initiated the awards when Secretary.

The LBC Gainsbury Award balance at 31 October 2024 was £5,000.

### Restricted Funds

The Company of Actuaries made a charitable donation of £2,000 to the London Ballet Circle in 2017 as a contribution towards the move of the LBC Archive to the V&A Museum, which is expected to be completed in 2025.

During 2023/24 a gift in the will of a former member of £1,000 was received “for the enjoyment of members”.

NOTES

- 1 - Gift aid claimed covered the period 1 November 2023 to 30 September 2024. The claim for the period 1 October to 31 October 2024 will be made in 2024/25.  
Gift aid repayable from HMRC is recognised as income at the time of the donation.
- 2.- Trustee expenses  
There were no trustee expenses. Trustees purchase goods and services on behalf of the charity. Transactions with trustees are as ordinary members.
- 3 - The following bursaries, awards and donations were made in 2023/24:

TO STUDENTS		Amount £
ANNUAL AWARDS		
Ballet Cymru (Stanley Hawkins prize)		750
Elmhurst Ballet School (Sir Peter Wright award)		750
Royal Ballet School (Dame Ninette awards)		1500
Yorkshire Ballet Seminars (3 students)		2025
OTHER AWARDS		
Masters of Ballet Easter Intensive		420
Yorkshire Ballet Easter Seminar		575
Total		6020

CHOREOGRAPHIC AWARDS 2024		Amount £
Birmingham Royal Ballet		2000
English National Ballet School		3000
Let's All Dance		1000
New English Ballet		1000
Northern Ballet		3000
Total		10000

<b>TO BALLET ORGANISATIONS</b>	<b>Amount £</b>
<b>DONATION FOLLOWING VISITS</b>	
Acosta Dance Foundation (2 visits - one donation match funded by Big Give)	740
Ballet Black	180
Central School of Ballet (2 visits)	1125
Dance Forward (4 visits)	1190
English National Ballet School (3 visits)	1410
International Dance Teachers Association (Freed's nominated charity)	360
Let's All Dance	125
London City Ballet	520
London Vocational Ballet School	195
Masters of Ballet Academy	80
New English Ballet Theatre	270
Northern Ballet (2 visits)	1520
Pett Clausen-Knight Dance	270
Royal Ballet School	1365
<b>OTHER</b>	
Dancers Career Development (match funded by Big Give)	750
Frederick Ashton Foundation (share of surplus from joint event)	783
GradPro (includes an ROH event)	1940
London Vocational Ballet School (sponsorship of "Awakening")	500
Royal Academy of Dance (Fonteyn competition)	750
<b>NON CHARITABLE</b>	
Dance Awards sponsorship	600
GradPro - sales of discounted event tickets	275
<b>Total</b>	<b>14948</b>

## THE LONDON BALLET CIRCLE

Year ending 31 October 2024

### INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

To the Trustees of The London Ballet Circle

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 October 2024.

#### *Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner*

The Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

#### *Basis of Independent Examiner's Report*

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

#### *Independent Examiner's Statement*

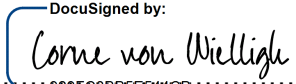
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice : Accounting and Reporting by Charities

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:  Dated: 17 February 2025  
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M J Bushell Audit LLP  
8 High Street  
Brentwood  
Essex CM14 4AB