

# BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET

PRESS RELEASE

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5 March 2024

**HELP KEEP DANCERS ON THEIR TOES!**

**BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET LAUNCHES POINTE SHOE APPEAL**



**Birmingham Royal Ballet's Principal Dancer Celine Gittens, First Soloist Rosanna Ely and Artist Regan Hutsell, have teamed up to help launch the company's 2024 Pointe Shoe Appeal.**

The appeal is running alongside the UK tour of Sir Peter Wright's *The Sleeping Beauty*, which was recently performed at Birmingham Hippodrome, the company's home base.

The appeal aims to raise funds to keep dancers on pointe during BRB's forthcoming national and international tours later this year.

Pointe shoes are fundamental to a dancer, helping to showcase their strength, grace and agility. From their very first pair, to the shoes worn for their most cherished performance, a dancer's connection with their pointe shoes is special.

**Celine Gittens** said *"Pointe shoes are really important to me they are the tools of my trade and I go through so many of them that I actually can't keep count! Without pointe shoes, we wouldn't have classical ballet."*

Each pair of shoes costs £50 and BRB dancers use up to 4,000 shoes each year.

On average a BRB dancer can go through up to 10 pointe shoes each month, some of which can wear out within just an hour of a performance depending on the demands of the role. In

BRB's much-loved classical ballets such as *Swan Lake* and *The Sleeping Beauty*, Principal dancers can use up 20 pairs of shoes every month!

BRB dancers have several pairs of pointe shoes in use at any one-time during rehearsal and performance. Each pair are custom made and altered for the perfect fit for all performances and career longevity.

**Sandra Madgwick**, former BRB Principal and member of the company's Board of Directors commented *"From age ten up until retirement from my long performing career, it is a little daunting to think about the number of shoes I must have worn, with all the associated hours of stitching ribbons and elastics! But what is sure, is that every one of those shoes were part and parcel of an incredible journey."*

**Rachael Magson**, BRB's Director of Development added *"The company spend £200,000 annually on pointe shoes so every donation, of any size, will go to support the careers of our talented and dedicated dancers, ensuring they can perform at their best on stage and continue to inspire audiences in Birmingham and beyond."*

The Pointe Shoe Appeal is in addition to the generous support the company receive from donors and supporters for its ongoing programming. This is a fundamental part of the work of the Development Team's vital fundraising activity and is not related to Birmingham City Council's recent announcement of cuts in arts funding.

For further information on how to donate please visit [Pointe Shoe Appeal | Birmingham Royal Ballet \(brb.org.uk\)](https://www.brb.org.uk/pointe-shoe-appeal)

BRB's tour of Sir Peter Wright's *The Sleeping Beauty*, which celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, continues across the UK until 27 April. [www.brb.org.uk](https://www.brb.org.uk)

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## **Note to Editors**

### **Birmingham Royal Ballet**

Based at Birmingham Hippodrome, Birmingham Royal Ballet is the United Kingdom's leading touring ballet company performing a range of traditional, classical and heritage ballets as well as ground-breaking new works with the aim of encouraging choreographers of the future. The Company's Director since January 2020 is the internationally renowned Carlos Acosta. Birmingham Royal Ballet standardly performs at Birmingham Hippodrome for approximately ten weeks of the year and the remainder of the year tours throughout the United Kingdom and overseas. On average, the Company performs 100 shows a year nationally and internationally.

### **Useful information:**

Birmingham Royal Ballet - [Life of a Pointe Shoe](#) (video)

Birmingham Royal Ballet - [Q&A with Sandra Madgwick](#)