

# BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET

PRESS RELEASE

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**NEW DANCE PRODUCTION *FORTIS*  
LED BY BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET'S  
LEARNING, ENGAGEMENT, ACCESS & PARTICIPATION DEPARTMENT (LEAP)  
TO RECEIVE ITS WORLD PREMIERE AT  
BIRMINGHAM WEEKENDER  
FREE EVENT**



Students from Performers College credit Natalie Lee

Birmingham Royal Ballet's Learning, Engagement, Access and Participation Department (LEAP), in partnership with Performers College, Birmingham present *Fortis*, a brand-new dance production which will receive its world premiere at this year's Birmingham Weekender.

Set to music by the award-winning composer Zoe Keating *Fortis* honours the suffragette women who learnt jiu-jitsu as a means of self defence against police brutality and abuse and fuses ballet, neo-classical and contemporary dance forms with jiu-jitsu inspired movement.

Inspired by themes from Louise Palfreyman's book *Once Upon a Time in Birmingham: Women Who Dared To Dream* and the world premiere of BRB's new forthcoming ballet *Luna*, *Fortis* explores ideas of community, recovery, and reclamation of identity in women.

This thrilling new piece will be performed for the first time by fourteen first, and second year female students currently studying Dance and Musical Theatre at the college.

Working with professional choreographer Patsy Browne-Hope, with artistic support from BRB Soloist Sofia Linares, the partnership, now in its third year, provides students with the opportunity to co-create and choreograph new work alongside BRB's world class dancers.

**Hannah MacGregor, BRB's Engagement Coordinator with LEAP** said: "We very much look forward to premiering this new work for free in front of audiences at Birmingham Weekender. This is a great example of BRB's continued work in the community to support dancers of the future."

**Hannah continued:** "*Fortis*, the Latin word for 'strong, brave and powerful', is an exciting, dynamic piece of dance promoting female empowerment. Patsy was inspired by the work of local domestic abuse charity We: Are in the project's development. and we are proud that We: Are's tagline 'rise, reclaim and recover' is embodied in the piece. [www.weare.org](http://www.weare.org).

*Fortis* will be performed at 1pm and 3.20pm on the Dance Stage at Bullring and Grand Central - Lower Mall West (inside Bullring near Marks and Spencer) on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> August as part of Birmingham Weekender. This is a FREE event. For further information on Birmingham Weekender go to [www.birminghamhippodrome.com](http://www.birminghamhippodrome.com)

The world premiere of BRB's *Luna* takes place at Birmingham Hippodrome on 3 October 2024. *Luna* is a 2-act (full-length), abstract ballet in six movements, which forms the final part of Carlos Acosta's Birmingham Trilogy (*City of a Thousand Trades*, *Black Sabbath – The Ballet and Luna*). For further information go to [www.brb.org.uk](http://www.brb.org.uk)

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#### Media Enquiries

[mandyrose@msevenpublicrelations.co.uk](mailto:mandyrose@msevenpublicrelations.co.uk) 07454 365421

#### Notes 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.

##### **Performers College**

Performers College is part of BIMM University and is a specialist higher education school for the Performing Arts. With campuses in both Essex and Birmingham, our creative space nurtures talent and enables future generations to find their place within the Performing Arts industry.

##### **Birmingham Royal Ballet - partnership with Performers College**

Launched in 2022 BRB has supported students training for the industry through offering opportunities to learn and create movement alongside professional choreographers and BRB dancers, as well as performance opportunities in the city. Previous performances have included *Seraphina* at Birmingham International Dance Festival, which was also BRB's first ever curtain raiser at Birmingham Hippodrome; *Mostly Life* at Mostly Jazz Festival 2023; *Fortis* on the Dance Stage in the Bullring Shopping Centre at Birmingham Weekender 2024.