**PRESS RELEASE**

 **THE DUCHESS OF CORNWALL MEETS SILVER SWANS IN NEW ZEALAND**

INCLUDE PHOTO HERE

* HRH The Duchess of Cornwall met a group of Silver Swans in Christchurch, New Zealand today, Friday 22 November, as part of a royal tour of the country
* The Duchess was welcomed by RAD National Director in New Zealand Bronwyn Williams and Silver Swans Licensee Celia Bosman before watching a demonstration by six Silver Swans
* This engagement follows Her Royal Highness’ visit to RAD headquarters in London in 2018, where the Duchess met a range of students, including those taking Silver Swans classes especially created for over 55s

**HRH The Duchess of Cornwall met a group of Silver Swans and their teacher in Christchurch, New Zealand today.** The Duchess observed a demonstration class by the students, led by Silver Swans Licensee Celia Bosman, before talking to the group about how experiencing ballet as an older learner has improved their wellbeing, and the many benefits of ballet for all ages. The Silver Swans class was part of an Active Ageing event held in New Zealand during The Duchess’ tour of the country. Her Royal Highness also had the opportunity to meet a range of activity groups for older people, including singing and cooking.

Although this is the first time that The Duchess met the ‘kiwi’ variety; Her Royal Highness has met *Silver Swans* before when the RAD had the opportunity to welcome The Duchess to its headquarters in London and introduce her to the project and its wide reaching benefits for older learners. During the visit last year, having observed a class in action, The Duchess declared she too would like to join the ranks of the Silver Swans.

The RAD developed Silver Swansin response to a growing demand for ballet classes for older learners, drawing upon research into dance practice for older participants from RAD’s Dance for Lifelong Wellbeing project. Silver Swans classes are delivered exclusively by Silver Swans Licensees who have trained to adapt ballet-teaching techniques for the needs and safety of older adults, taking into account a wide range of abilities and ages. Initially launched in the UK and USA in 2017, Silver Swans is now truly global, with classes also available in Australia, Hong Kong, Canada and Mexico. The initiative launched in New Zealand in July of this year to great success. By the beginning of 2020, there will be over 1,000 Silver Swans Licensees across the world offering classes in their local community.

**Royal Academy of Dance National Director for New Zealand Bronwyn Williams said**:

“*It was a huge honour to introduce HRH The Duchess of Cornwall to some of our Silver Swans in New Zealand.* *Whilst The Duchess has had the opportunity to watch a class in the UK, I think it is so important to see how initiatives such as this can influence communities across the world. Ballet has the opportunity to enhance lives, regardless of age, background or geography. Here in New Zealand, we have been delighted to see how Silver Swans has benefitted so many in such a short time. I am very pleased that Her Royal Highness was able to see for herself the holistic benefits of ballet and its contribution to creating positive, healthy habits as we get older.”*

**Silver Swan xxxx added:**

 *{Insert a quote about how they felt meeting HRH, and briefly refer to their experience of Silver Swans/the benefits}*

The Royal Academy of Dance was founded in 1920 and looks forward to celebrating 100 years of teaching the world to dance next year. The Academy received its Royal Charter from King George V in 1936, and is proud to now have Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as its Patron. The following year, the RAD was awarded its coat of arms by the College of Arms. The RAD has had a presence in New Zealand since 1933, with the first RAD ballet exam being held there in 1935.

**– ENDS –**

**Notes to Editors**

**Website:** www.royalacademyofdance.org

**Facebook:** @RoyalAcademyofDance

**Twitter:** @RADheadquarters

**Instagram:** @RoyalAcademyofDance

**Royal Academy of Dance**

With approximately 13,000 members in 89 countries, the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) is one of the largest and most influential dance education and training organisations in the world. Established in 1920 to improve standards and re-invigorate dance training, the Academy helps and encourages its teachers to perfect their teaching skills and pass on this knowledge to their students. There are currently over 1,000 students in full-time or part-time teacher training programmes with the Academy. In addition, RAD teachers teach the RAD examination syllabus to thousands of young people worldwide, with around a quarter of a million pupils per year going on to take RAD exams.

2020 sees the RAD celebrate its centenary with an exciting programme of events and initiatives designed to bring the joy of dance to children and adults everywhere.

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