

PRESS RELEASE

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## Royal Academy of Dance uncovers never before seen footage of ballerina Margot Fonteyn to be displayed at the V&A



Image credit: Felix Fonteyn

- Never before seen footage of famous ballerina Dame Margot Fonteyn, which was uncovered by the Royal Academy of Dance, will be made available for the public to see for the first time as part of a free to visit display at the V&A, opening today, Wednesday 2 December.
- The footage from 1972, which was only recently discovered, shows Fonteyn (RAD's former President) presenting a ballet syllabus for children she helped to create for the RAD, and offers a glimpse behind the scenes with the renowned prima ballerina.
- *On Point: Royal Academy of Dance at 100* opens to the public in the V&A's Theatre and Performance Gallery today and runs until 19 September 2021. For more information visit [www.royalacademyofdance.org/onpoint](http://www.royalacademyofdance.org/onpoint)
- The footage is available to view and share from [RAD's Youtube channel](#). You can also download still images [here](#), using the password 'fonteyn'.

The Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) today revealed that it has discovered some footage of former President and famed ballerina Dame Margot Fonteyn, never before seen, which will be available to view as part of a free to visit display at the V&A to mark the RAD's centenary. *On Point: Royal Academy of Dance at 100* opens in the V&A's Theatre and Performance Gallery today, 2 December, ahead of RAD officially turning 100 on 31 December. Home to one of the largest dance collections in Europe, this is the first time that RAD has given access to its archives on this scale in its history.

The footage, filmed in 1972 by Margot Fonteyn's brother Felix, is a demonstration of a ballet syllabus for children (filmed in Fonteyn's presence), which Dame Margot helped to create with a group of RAD teachers during her time as President of the Academy. In the video, she is shown introducing



the demonstration and explaining the principles behind the syllabus. She is also heard encouraging the children in the video to 'dance nicely'.

This footage remained hidden in the RAD's archives until recently; when prompted by a question at an AGM, Archives and Records Manager Eleanor Fitzpatrick searched uncatalogued film materials in storage, where she found a set of canisters, containing reels of 16mm film, labelled simply 'Children's Syllabus'. On further investigation, this turned out to be the never before seen film with Margot Fonteyn. The video would have been used as a training tool for RAD teachers across the globe to prepare for teaching the syllabus to their students. Due to financial reasons at the time, the RAD was never able to release the film, which explains how it remained unseen for so long.

Over 250,000 people around the world take an RAD ballet exam each year, using syllabi similar to this one, which have been developed by the Academy over the years. This footage shows the first time any of the RAD syllabus was recorded on film, and illustrates how involved Fonteyn was with the whole process, drawing on her experience as a celebrated ballerina to inspire young children taking their first steps in ballet.

**RAD's Archives and Records Manager Eleanor Fitzpatrick said:** *"It was hugely exciting to find this footage hidden in our uncatalogued archive material after so many years. Although we are lucky enough to be able to see recordings of Margot Fonteyn's performances on stage online, this is such a rare glimpse into her work behind the scenes, helping RAD to inspire the world to dance, and supporting young children taking their very first steps into the dance studio. It is a real testament to the legacy Fonteyn left during her time as President of the RAD. I am so pleased that we are able to share this with the public at our display at the V&A."*

Dame Margot Fonteyn is the RAD's longest serving President. She held this role from 1954 until her death in 1991. She was succeeded by Dame Antoinette Sibley and now, Dame Darcey Bussell, who is the RAD's current President. Hear more about the people who shaped the RAD and the objects that tell the Academy's story at *On Point: Royal Academy of Dance at 100*.

Find out more: [www.royalacademyofdance.org/onpoint](http://www.royalacademyofdance.org/onpoint), plus preparing for your visit to the V&A, including how to book free, timed entry tickets: <https://www.vam.ac.uk/info/plan-your-visit#faq>

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**Media contacts:**

For further enquiries please contact:

**Celia Moran** ([cmoran@rad.org.uk](mailto:cmoran@rad.org.uk)), Press and Communications Manager

**Alice White** ([awhite@rad.org.uk](mailto:awhite@rad.org.uk)), Lead Press and Communications Officer  
**020 7326 8047**



## **Notes to Editors**

### **About the Royal Academy of Dance**

With a thriving membership across in 92 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 and each year the examination syllabus is taught to thousands of young people worldwide, with around a quarter of a million pupils per year going on to take RAD exams.

### **About the V&A**

The Victoria and Albert Museum, London (V&A) is the world's leading museum of art, design and performance with collections unrivalled in their scope and diversity, spanning 5000 years of human creativity. It was established in 1852 to make works of art available to all and to inspire British designers and manufacturers. Today, its purpose is to champion creative industry, inspire the next generation, and spark everyone's imagination.