

ROYAL ACADEMY OF DANCE

Dame Darcey Bussell and Dawn French reunite for a festive fundraiser for the Royal Academy of Dance

Exclusive video released today



- Dawn French and Dame Darcey reunite for an online fundraiser for the Royal Academy of Dance. This online conversation hosted by the RAD takes place as they reflect on 25 years since their famous sketch on 'The Vicar of Dibley'
- In an exclusive teaser video released today, Dawn French shares her memories of taking ballet as a child and what she gained through this experience
- During this warm and humorous conversation, the pair also share what they learned from each other and their respective crafts, as well as hilarious backstage anecdotes
- This event takes place as the RAD is just steps away from meeting its £19.5m capital fundraising target for its new global headquarters in Battersea, launching in Spring 2022, which will be a home for dance for all
- Tickets can be purchased by members of the public to watch this special online event called 'Sparkling Conversations'. The conversation is pre-recorded and will be released on 13 December 2021, available to watch until 28 January 2022
- Buy tickets to watch the full conversation:
www.royalacademyofdance.org/dawnanddarcey
- Watch and share the RAD's teaser on [Youtube](#) or [download](#) the video (password 'RAD')

13 December 2021: As a festive treat, the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) has reunited its President and famed ballerina Dame Darcey Bussell with eminent comedian Dawn French for a one-off, online event called 'Sparkling Conversations'. This special occasion marks 25 years since the pair performed in an infamous sketch called 'The Mirror' in the much loved BBC Series 'The Vicar of Dibley'.

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In an exclusive teaser released today, Dawn French explains how she found childhood ballet classes and how they have continued to play a role in her career. During the full, online conversation, viewers will also have chance to hear Darcey and Dawn share behind the scenes insights into the making of 'The Mirror'; Darcey shares her struggles keeping a straight face, especially whilst working with a certain co-star from the animal kingdom and Dawn gives an insight into how sketches like this are created. They also discuss what they learned during this process and how this has stood them in good stead in their careers, with Darcey explaining how this comedy role helped her as a ballet dancer.

Dawn French said: *“ When I came to work on this sketch with Darcey, everything I knew about ballet was what I had loved as a child at ballet class. My brother remembers this as little hippopotamuses running about - but in my head I was beautiful, lithe, free, I could express myself and I was appreciated by everybody, and I was able to be as unique as I wanted to be inside this discipline. It freed me up to feel graceful, and to feel fit, and it made me very happy. Through Darcey I got to enter this world again and live vicariously through her and through these sketches. It was so wonderful to reminisce with Darcey about this for the Royal Academy of Dance. To this day, I am grateful for having taken dance classes.”*

Dame Darcey Bussell added: *“There is so much comedy in ballet and we forget about that. You have to have range and be diverse, so this performance in ‘The Vicar of Dibley’ was a huge step in my career. Through my conversation with Dawn, I was reminded that dance really helps break down barriers. It’s an experience. It’s not always ‘the show’. It’s how you feel and how it changes how you express yourself. It is there for everybody. This sketch 25 years ago helped to demonstrate that and it is a message I continue to share with the Royal Academy of Dance. I really relished the opportunity to revisit these wonderful - and very funny - memories with Dawn, and to hear how ballet and dance have played such a pivotal role in her life and career.”*

This event takes place as the RAD closes in on its £19.5m capital fundraising target for its new global headquarters in Battersea, launching in Spring 2022. The new building will become an international home for dance, allowing the charity to realise the potential of the 60,000 sq ft headquarters to expand on its 100-year history of high-quality dance education to bring the transformational power of dance to more people, regardless of age, ability, or location.

Members of the public are able to purchase tickets to watch the full conversation, including more funny stories and insights. Find out more at www.royalacademyofdance.org

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Notes to Editors

About the Royal Academy of Dance

Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) is one of the most influential dance education and training organisations in the world with a strong global membership in 85 countries. 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.