

1 February 2021

Northern Ballet Awarded £600k for Digital Projects

[Northern Ballet](#) has been awarded £600,000 following a successful application to [Garfield Weston Foundation](#)'s highly competitive Weston Culture Fund. The grant will be used primarily to finance the capture of the Company's new full-length ballet [Merlin](#), and a brand-new children's ballet, both set to première this autumn. It will also significantly increase Northern Ballet's digital output so that the Company may continue to reach audiences until it is able to return to normal touring activities.

The Weston Culture Fund received more than £128m worth of applications for the total £25m one-off fund. The Fund was opened to applications from arts organisations to help restart important work, refresh activities and develop plans to rebuild audiences in the devastating wake of Covid-19 cancellations and closures in the sector.

Northern Ballet is at the forefront of creating and distributing ground-breaking digital dance films and is now reaching over 3.4m people a year via cinema, TV and online distribution channels. This work enables audiences to experience ballet without barriers and has been incredibly successful in reaching and engaging audiences during the pandemic whilst most touring activity was cancelled. The award of this grant is pivotal to the Company continuing in this direction which would otherwise not have been possible due to the impact of Covid-19 on Northern Ballet's income. Through these filming projects, the Company will be able to share new and exciting productions with audiences in the UK and beyond, celebrating the vibrance and innovation of culture in the UK.

Mark Skipper DL, Chief Executive of Northern Ballet, said: "We are incredibly grateful to the Weston Culture Fund for awarding us this game-changing grant and for their continued confidence in the excellence of our performances on stage and screen. We have firm plans to return to touring this spring and autumn, and this grant will complement this activity and enable us to reach significantly more audiences so that we may continue to break down barriers to dance and ensure ballet is accessible to everyone, everywhere."

Philippa Charles, Director of the Garfield Weston Foundation, said: “Our cultural sector is at the heart of our local communities providing not only entertainment but education and inspiration to many. Our Trustees were impressed by the entrepreneurial spirit shown across the arts in response to Covid-19 and it was a privilege to hear what organisations have been doing not only to survive, but also to reinvent the way they reach audiences. What really stood out was the level of collaboration and support they had for each other and the determination to keep going, despite the increasingly difficult situation. We all want and need our cultural sector to thrive and, if anything, our time away from the arts has shown just how important they are to us – bringing much needed pleasure and enrichment to our lives. Arts organisations are desperate to re-open and get back to what they do best, and we hope that this new funding will help many of them do exactly that.”

-ENDS-

For further press information contact:

Lauren Godfrey, Head of PR & Publications, Northern Ballet

Email: lauren.godfrey@northernballet.com

Tel: 07912 626206

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Notes to Editors

Northern Ballet

Northern Ballet is one of the UK’s leading ballet companies and the widest touring ballet company in the UK. Bold and innovative in its approach, Northern Ballet is prolific at creating new full-length work with a unique blend of strong classical technique and impressive storytelling. Northern Ballet’s repertoire embraces popular culture and takes inspiration from literature, legend, opera and the classics, pushing the boundaries of what stories can be told through dance.

A champion for the cultural exports of the North, Leeds-based Northern Ballet is dedicated to bringing ballet to as many people and places as possible, under the leadership of Artistic Director David Nixon OBE. Northern Ballet’s Company of dancers performs a combination of its full-length ballets and specially created ballets for children at more than 40 venues annually.

For more details of Northern Ballet's tour, on sale dates and booking information, please visit northernballet.com/whatson

Garfield Weston Foundation

Established over 60 years ago in 1958, the [Garfield Weston Foundation](http://www.garfieldwestonfoundation.org) is a family-founded, grant-making charity which supports causes across the UK and gave over £88million last year. It has donated well over £1billion to charities since it was established. One of the most respected charitable institutions in the UK, the Weston Family Trustees are descendants of the founder and they take a highly active and hands-on approach. The Foundation's funding comes from an endowment of shares in the family business which includes Twinings, Primark, Kingsmill (all part of Associated British Foods Plc) and Fortnum & Mason, amongst others – a successful model that still endures today; as the businesses have grown, so too have the charitable donations. From small community organisations to large national institutions, the Foundation supports a broad range of charities and activities that make a positive impact in the communities in which they work. Around 2,000 charities across the UK benefit each year from the Foundation's grants.



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