

THE PETER DARRELL TRUST  
NEWS  
APRIL 2026



Samara Downs & Ixan Ferrer in *Chéri*; Photographer: Lachlan Monaghan

Rehearsals have been underway in Birmingham with BRB dancers Samara Downs and Ixan Ferrer who will be performing the Léa and Chéri pas de deux from Peter's *Chéri* on **Wednesday 29 April** at the Cadogan Hall in London. *Chéri* is to specially commissioned music by Composer David Earl.

We would like to thank everyone who donated to this project – to those of you who prefer to remain anonymous: we are sorry we can't thank you personally but please accept our heartfelt gratitude for your generous donations which have enabled us to restage this *pas de deux* for the **Ballet Nights** performance which marks the first time an excerpt of the ballet will have been performed in London. You can still donate to this important project by visiting: <https://www.justgiving.com/thepeterdarrelltrust>

Ballet Nights continues to grow in popularity and offers a range of dance styles in its programmes. As well as *Chéri*, the programme on 29 April programme will feature the UK debut of Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, featuring a new work by Trey Parker, B.Dance, Taiwan's celebrated voices in dance innovation, will perform *Floating Flowers* performed by Shu-Han Yeh & Hsin-Chien Chou, choreographed by Po-Cheng Tsai. Denys Cherevychko, international guest Principal Artist will perform *Les bourgeois* choreographed by Ben Van Cauwenbergh with music by Jacques Brel. There will be a new work entitled *Bloom then Fade* choreographed by English National Ballet's Rentaro Nanaaki which will be danced by Fabian Reimair, Emily Suzuki & Martinho Santos. *Frame* is created & performed by Germain Zambì, contemporary French fusion star to music by Balmorhea. *Etudes on a theme of Satie* will be performed by students from English National Ballet School with choreography by Lynne Charles & Juan Eymar. *Quartet Concrete* will perform Beethoven's *Razumovsky* and Viktor Emmanuel will perform Prokofiev's *Toccata, Op.11*

For more information and to book your tickets: <https://cadoganhall.com/whats-on/ballet-nights-011-convergence/>



Samara and Ixan in rehearsals for *Chéri*

Photographer: Lachlan Monaghan

### **Staging Swan Lake Act 2 with Images Ballet Company, by Artistic Director Jamie Carter**

When planning the repertoire for Images Ballet Company this season, I wanted to include a work that connected our dancers to ballet heritage while also offering them an experience close to what they might encounter in a professional company. With a large cohort of twenty-three dancers, staging a historically significant work from notation felt particularly valuable. It allows students not only to perform repertoire but also to engage with the process of reconstructing and understanding a ballet's original choreographic intention.

My own connection to the work of Peter Darrell goes back to my student years, when I first learned his *Othello*. Later, I had the opportunity to perform the ballet with The Sarasota Ballet. What struck me then and continues to resonate is how every step carries meaning. Darrell's choreography is never simply decorative; each movement has subtext and dramatic purpose, revealing character with remarkable clarity.

While researching Darrell's *Swan Lake*, I was fascinated by his interpretation of Act II. In his conception, the vision of the Swan is not simply a romantic encounter but an opium-induced dream of the Prince's ideal woman, a yearning for something profoundly absent from the reality of his life. In our staging, I have explored the idea that the Prince enters Odette's world rather than the other way around. The swan maidens are not tragic heroines but expressions of freedom, almost goddess-like figures existing in their own beauty, unbound by the constraints of reality.

For the dancers, working in this way has been an extraordinary artistic experience. It asks them to think beyond steps and technique, encouraging them to consider intention, narrative, and character in every movement.

It was also a privilege to welcome Judy Spence and Stephen Williams into the studio. Their insight and deep knowledge of Darrell's choreography brought invaluable context to the rehearsal process. Hearing the stories, nuances, and intentions behind the movement enriched the dancers' understanding of the work and helped move their focus from purely technical execution toward a deeper sense of artistry.

More broadly, I hope that projects like this help bring wider recognition to the richness of Darrell's choreography. His smaller chamber works are currently perhaps the most frequently seen, and rightly so - they are extraordinarily varied in theme and subject matter. But his larger-scale works, such as *Swan Lake*, are equally nuanced and rewarding. They offer dancers an opportunity to explore complex dramatic worlds through movement, and they provide audiences with interpretations of the classical repertoire that are both distinctive and deeply thoughtful. For our dancers, engaging with Darrell's choreography has been an invaluable reminder that classical ballet can be both historically rooted and artistically alive.

The programme opens on 7th May at the Arts Depot, Pentland Theatre in London; 18 May Stag Theatre, Sevenoaks; 22 May Key Theatre, Peterborough, 1-2 June Lilian Baylis Theatre, Sadler's Wells, London.

<https://www.londonstudiocentre.org/images-ballet-company/>

Our recent collaboration with the Voice Department at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland offered a truly memorable evening of interdisciplinary artistry.

Year 3 BA Modern Ballet students created and presented original choreographic work inspired by Mahler's *Rückert-Lieder*, performed live in partnership with Voice students. The programme concluded with a sensitive and emotive performance of the final solo from Peter Darrell's *Five Rückert Songs*, beautifully interpreted by Isla MacLeod. The solo was taught by Kristen Johnson and coached by Paul Tyers.

The event showcased the depth of musicality and expressive nuance shared between the song and ballet departments, resulting in a moving and atmospheric performance. Isla's solo in particular captivated the audience, who responded with great warmth and appreciation. Overall, the evening celebrated creative collaboration at its best—thoughtful, heartfelt, and artistically rich.

Isla MacLeod in *Five Rückert Songs*;  
Photographer: Hope Connachan-Holmes



### The Peter Darrell Circle of Friends - why not join our Circle?

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Or you can donate directly through our Justgiving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/thepeterdarrelltrust>

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