

THE PETER DARRELL TRUST
NEWS
JUNE 2026



Photo of Jessica Wilkes as Odette;
Photograph: Amber Hunt at Photography
by Ash for Images Ballet Company

We are delighted to start the summer newsletter with the exciting news that an important new acquisition of Peter's ballets has been gifted to the Victoria and Albert Museum.



A Wedding Present costume and set designs

Costume design for the Girl in Home

The Victoria and Albert Museum is delighted to have been given four designs which were owned by the late Peter Darrell C.B.E. (1929-1987) and left to his former carer and friend, the photographer Alan Crumlish. The gift consists of designs for *A Wedding Present* (1962) and *Home* (1965), both created for Western Theatre Ballet and a design for his centennial staging of *Swan Lake* in 1977 for Scottish Ballet. Prior to offering these designs to the V&A Crumlish consulted with the Peter Darrell Trust and the Scottish-based dance critic and writer Geoffrey Baskerville as to where they considered the best place to house them for the future and they recommended the V&A. The V&A includes the National Collection of Performing Arts and it is appropriate that Peter's work is represented there.

For *A Wedding Present*, regarded as the first British ballet to present homosexuality openly, there are designs for the set and a costume for the bride. The ballet concerned the immediate collapse of a marriage when the bride discovers the groom has been having an affair with his friend. Peter Williams in *Dance and Dancers* (August 1962, p.21) noted that designer 'Judy Wood [...] provided atmospheric settings and excellent costumes. Her sense of form, colour and texture was at all times interesting.'

A costume designed by Peter Cazalet for Nadia Nerina as the Girl in Peter Darrell's ballet *Home* (1965) now joins two designs acquired earlier for this landmark work. Choreographed to a scenario by playwright John Mortimer for the Northeastern Festival of the Arts in Sunderland, *Home* addressed mental health. Clement Crisp's review (*Financial Times*, 8 February 1965) referenced the 'good, imaginative designs by Peter Cazalet'

and noted that the Girl is 'packed off to an institution with a hideous flowered hat plonked on her head'. This is shown in the design.

Finally, there is a second costume design by Cazalet. This time for a dancer as one of the Princesses in Act III of Peter's 1977 *Swan Lake*. This was the staging that returned Tchaikovsky's score to its original order and whose Siegfried encountered Odette as an opium-induced vision.

The V&A recognises the importance of Peter Darrell as a choreographer and the significance of WTB both for its work throughout regional Britain in the 1950s and 1960s and for Peter's pioneering use of subject matter and collaborations. The V&A holds three archives that include material on WBT: Western Theatre Ballet Collection (THM/278), Laverne Meyer Archive (THM/230) and Clover Roope Archive (THM/295). The Theatre and Performance Collections also possess material in the Western Theatre Ballet Core Collection, Company files as well as photographs of their works, including of *A Wedding Present* and *Home*, in the Anthony Crickmay Archive (THM/20). The V&A also holds the Nadia Nerina Collection (THM/559) which includes further information on *Home*. The archives on Western Theatre Ballet are largely administrative or focusing on the careers of dancer-choreographers other than Darrell. They are essentially research tools and do not include designs. To acquire these designs, which are eminently exhibitable, contributes both to raising awareness of the archive collections and to understanding the creative processes of these significant productions.

The V&A has few designs for Western Theatre Ballet. Other current holdings comprise a costume design by Cazalet for Saunders as a Guest in *Francesca* (1967) and one by Barry Kay for *Non Stop* (1957). As yet the V&A collection is less well served by specific material for Scottish Ballet in the Darrell era although it holds complete design records for *Beauty and the Beast* (1969). It has a rich collection of designs by Lez Brotherston for more recent works. Again for Scottish Ballet there is material in files in the production and company core collections and in photographic collections. **Jane Pritchard, MBE, Curator of Dance, Victoria & Albert Museum**



The Peter Darrell Trust would like to thank Alan and Geoffrey for this important contribution, and to Jane Pritchard at the V and A. As we approach the 40th anniversary of his death in 2027 and the centenary of his birth in 2029 we are considering ways of celebrating Peter's genius, such as an exhibition or a conference. If you have any suggestions or material to share, please let us know by emailing peterdarrelltrust@gmail.com

Geoffrey Baskerville with Jane Pritchard Photo: Alan Crumlish

Ballet Nights at London's Cadogan Hall in April was deemed by critic Deborah Weiss, writing for Bachtrack, "A winning formula". Her review of the *Chéri*. pas de deux is below:

"Significant in the second half was an all too short pas de deux from Peter Darrell's *Chéri*. Danced by Birmingham Royal Ballet's Samara Downs and Ixan Llorca Ferrer, it is a measure of Darrell's genius that we can be so touched by a few minutes of his choreography. Peter died in 1987 and there will be plenty of recognition of his work next year and also in the year reflecting his birth, 1929".

The good news is that you will be able to see the pas de deux on Peter's "home stage", the Theatre Royal in Glasgow on 2 and 3 September when **Ballet Nights** makes its second Glasgow presentation, following the sell-out success of last year's show. Visit <https://www.balletnights.com/>

Images Ballet Company - Swan Lake Act II - A note from Jamie Carter, Artistic Director

Jamie Carter, Artistic Director of **Images Ballet Company** writes "One of the greatest achievements of my career as Artistic Director, has been the opportunity to present a work by Peter Darrell. Throughout the rehearsal process, I spoke to the dancers about the idea that in performing this ballet (*Swan Lake Act II*), we are holding hands with Peter, and with every dancer who has performed this work before us, a living chain stretching back to the original 1977 cast at Scottish Ballet. That sense of lineage and responsibility felt very meaningful, and I think the dancers genuinely carried that with them onto the stage. It was a real joy to work with these dancers in preparing the ballet and Notator Mayumi Hotta. Her work with them has been invaluable, and it was a privilege to have her in the studio helping guide this process with such care and expertise". The final performances of the Images tour are 1/2 June at the Lilian Baylis Theatre at Sadler's Wells.

Visit: <https://www.sadlerswells.com/whats-on/london-studio-centre-images/>



Photo by Bill Cooper

The Sylph in *La Sylphide* from

"Scottish Ballet 40 Years" book by Mary Brennan

Anne Christie

It is with heavy heart that we learned of the death in France of former Scottish Ballet dancer, Anne Christie on 19 May. Born in Glasgow, Anne trained at the Catherine Marks Theatre School on the Scottish Ballet Scholarship Scheme, before joining Northern Ballet. She was invited by Peter to join Scottish Ballet in 1985. Anne performed a variety of important roles during her career at Scottish Ballet notably the Sylph in Bournonville's *La Sylphide*, Giselle and Queen of the Wilis in *Giselle*, Giulietta in *Tales of Hoffmann*, the Statue Fairy in Peter's *Cinderella*, the Woman in *Five Ruckert Songs*, the *Fascinatin' Rhythm* solo in Balanchine's *Who Cares?* And for her performance in Frederick Ashton's *Five Brahms Waltzes in the Manner of Isadora Duncan*. We send heartfelt condolences to Roddie Patrizio and Anne's family and friends. If you would like to pass on a message of condolence, please email us at peterdarrelltrust@gmail.com

Hold the Date: Summer get together! Please join us on 15 August for an informal gathering of Scottish Ballet alumni in Glasgow, following our August Trustees meeting, at a venue to be confirmed. Please email peterdarrelltrust@gmail.com if you would like more information.

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

Any donation will help the Trust in its work to promote the legacy of Peter Darrell. You can do this by setting up a direct debit. Contact us on: peterdarrelltrust@gmail.com

Or you can donate directly through our Justgiving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/thepeterdarrelltrust> or by a good old-fashioned cheque made out to **The Peter Darrell Trust** and sent to the address below.

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