

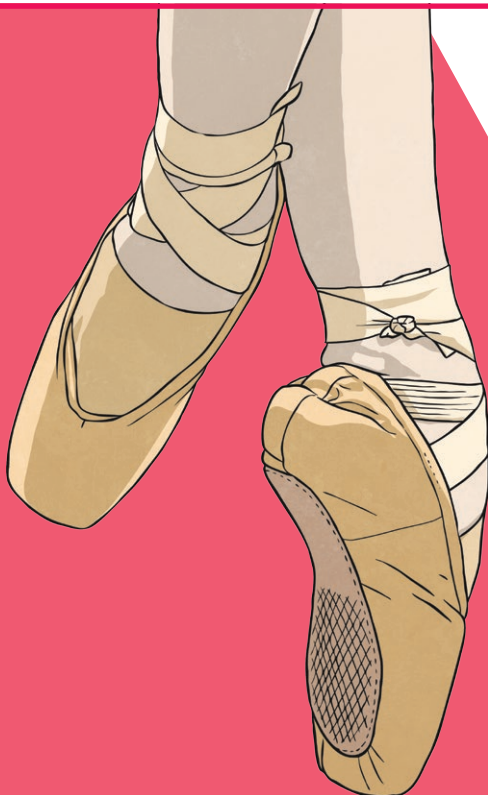
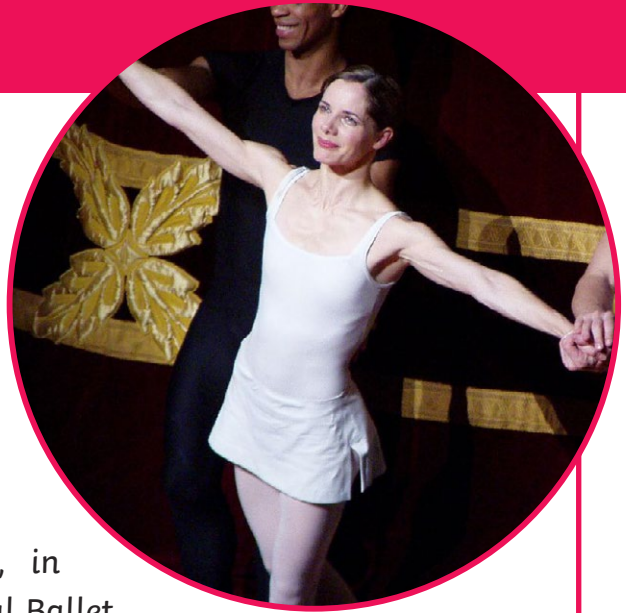
Darcey Bussell

Early Life

Darcey Bussell was born on 27th April, 1969 in London. She started at the Arts Educational School at the Barbican until she auditioned for and joined the Royal Ballet School at White Lodge at the age of 13. In 1985, when she was 16, Darcey was accepted into the Royal Ballet's Upper School at Barons Court.

Success

Her fantastic technique was spotted quickly and, in 1988, while she was a member of Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet company, a lead role was created for her in the new ballet 'The Prince of the Pagados'. This led to her move to the Royal Ballet. In December 1989, when Darcey was just 20 years old, she was promoted to principal dancer, becoming the youngest ballerina to achieve this at the time.



Throughout her career, she played many iconic roles, including Princess Aurora in 'The Sleeping Beauty', Odette/Odile in 'Swan Lake', the Sugar Plum Fairy in 'The Nutcracker', and Giselle in 'Giselle'. In total, she performed more than 80 different roles and 17 roles were created for her. She was a guest performer with many of the most popular ballet companies around the world, including the New York City Ballet, Paris Opera Ballet, Hamburg Ballet and the Australian Ballet.

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Accomplishments

Over the years, she has won many honours and awards for her contribution to dance, not to mention an OBE and a CBE. She has performed for the Queen of England and several American presidents, and had the lead role in the closing ceremony of the 2012 Olympics.

Retirement

Darcey Bussell retired from ballet on 8th June 2007 with a performance of MacMillan's *Song of the Earth* at the Royal Opera House in London. Nowadays, Bussell is best known for being a judge on *Strictly Come Dancing*, a job she has been doing since 2009. She is married with two daughters and is still active in the world of dance as the President of the Royal Academy of Dance and is a patron for many dance companies around the world.

