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As the sector support organisation for dance, One Dance UK is delighted that the dance sector has again been celebrated in Her Majesty The Queen's New Year's Honours list.

The awards include:

- Richard Alston CBE is awarded a Knighthood. For services to dance.
- Prof. Veronica Lewis MBE becomes CBE. For services to Higher Education in Dance, Drama and Circus Arts in the UK and abroad.
- Anthony van Laast MBE becomes CBE. For services to dance and choreography
- Farooq Chaudhry becomes OBE. For services to dance and dance production
- Darius James (Williams) becomes OBE. For services to ballet and community dance
- Sujata Banerjee becomes MBE. For services to dance.
- Pratap Pawar becomes MBE. For services to dance, culture and community cohesion
- Anita Young becomes MBE. For services to classical ballet and dance education
- Sheena McDonald becomes MBE. For services to Highland Dancing.
- Irene Hayes gets BEM. For services to dance and the community in Southwark
- Babette Langford gets BEM. For services to children in Stage Dance and Theatre in London
- Xander Parish becomes OBE. For services to dance and UK/Russia cultural relations

This acknowledges the strong contribution that dance – in all its diverse forms – makes to the nation and how dance is regarded as so much more than simply an artform. Recognising these talented dance professionals in this year's honours demonstrates how highly dance is valued.

The focus on the dance sector demonstrates the breath and diverse nature of dance, how the UK is leading the artform across many genres and recognises the impact and importance of pioneering and innovative work that these dance leaders have achieved.

Notable among these honours is the award of Knighthood to **Richard Alston CBE**. Richard Alston has been working in dance for over 50 years and is recognised as one of the most inspiring and influential choreographers in the dance community. He started out in 1968 as a student at the London School of Contemporary Dance and then went on to form the UK's first independent dance company, Strider, in 1972. After training at the Merce Cunningham

Dance Studio in New York he returned to the UK in 1980 and was appointed Resident Choreographer of Ballet Rambert, becoming Artistic Director in 1986. Next Alston went on to establish the Richard Alston Dance Company, based at The Place. In 2001 he returned to Rambert and also that year was awarded a CBE. Alston received the De Valois Award for Outstanding Achievement from the Critics' Circle National Dance Awards in 2008 and was presented with the Award for Excellence in International Dance by the International Theatre Institute (2012). Richard chaired Youth Dance England from 2009 until 2016, when he became One Dance UK Champion for U.Dance (the National Youth Dance Festival), and Young Creatives.

CEO of One Dance UK, Andrew Hurst, comments:

“The UK leads the way in dance. We are delighted to see so many exceptional dance practitioners recognised in Her Majesty The Queen's New Year's Honours list. This reflects the thriving and diverse nature of the dance sector and how the UK is leading the way in this vital artform.”

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For further information and images, please contact Communications at One Dance UK, on 020 7713 0730, or comms@onedanceuk.org.

About One Dance UK

One Dance UK is the sector support organisation leading the way to a stronger, more vibrant and diverse dance sector. We provide one clear voice to:

- Support all those working in the sector to achieve excellence in dance performance, education and management
- Advocate for the increased profile and importance of dance in all its diverse forms and settings
- Enhance dancers' health, well-being and performance
- Identify gaps, provide opportunities and improve conditions for dance to be learnt, discussed and seen

We provide membership packages for a range of individuals and organisations to support, advise and connect people across the dance sector.

Our aim is to create a workforce that is well-equipped to secure dance's prominence in the cultural landscape of the future. We do this by providing services, information and opportunities for:

- Dance organisations
- All dance professionals including:
 - Dance artists and choreographers
 - Dance teachers, educators and practitioners
 - Dance managers and producers
 - Dance medicine and science/research professionals
 - All children and young people.

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