

London Evening Standard

Wednesday 19 March 2014

FREE READ BY 1.7 MILLION EVERY DAY



EVENING STANDARD WEDNESDAY 19 MARCH 2014

23

News

Thank you, nanny! Emma helps turn film stories into child ballet

Louise Jury
Chief Arts Correspondent

A CHILDREN'S ballet based on Emma Thompson's hit *Nanny McPhee* movies is to receive its premiere in London next month after the star gave the go-ahead for the show.

The Oscar-winning actress, who wrote the scripts and appeared in the films, offered to help with the dance show, with the backing of Universal Studios, after seeing an earlier production by London Children's Ballet.

The charity campaigns to make the art accessible to young people from all backgrounds.

Artistic director Lucille Briance said she read many books to try to find great stories for shows, adding: "I'm always looking for a story that has a really strong dramatic line."

But the charity, now in its 20th year, could not afford to spend money on rights, so Thompson's help was a blessing.

Mrs Briance said: "She is the most marvellous philanthropic person." Thompson,



Ballet stars:
Nanny McPhee cast and, inset, Emma Thompson in the film role

who wrote the films based on Christianna Brand's *Nurse Matilda* books, is set to attend the premiere of the ballet on April 24.

Annabelle Adey, 14, from Epsom, Surrey,

will take the title role. The teenager, who has been dancing since she was two, said it was "really exciting", adding: "It's such a big production and a much bigger stage than I have ever danced on before. It's like a dream."

Cameron Nolan, 10, from Banstead, Surrey, said it was "amazing" to have

the chance to play Sebastian, one of Nanny's charges.

Around 550 children aged nine to 16 auditioned for 60 parts.

■ *Nanny McPhee* is at the Peacock Theatre from April 24 to 27. Tickets at londonchildrensballet.com or sadlerswells.com.

Cambridge cancels ball with 'racist' film theme

Anna Davis
Education Correspondent

A CAMBRIDGE University college has cancelled plans to hold a Gone With The Wind-themed summer ball following complaints that the film is racist.

A spokesman for St Edmund's college said plans for their May Ball had been abandoned because of opposition from students.

The Oscar-winning 1939 film starring Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh has been widely criticised for the way it portrays black people and slavery.

Student Mamusu Kallon, who was born in Sierra Leone, told The Independent: "It's a film that glamorises the romantic dreams of a slave owner and a KKK member while rendering the horrors of slavery invisible."

The university's organising committee will instead hold a 'Journey through the Seasons' inspired ball in June.

A college spokesman said: "The college supports the change of theme and is proud of its record of friendliness and cordiality."