

50:50 Join the Equality Chant with Combination Dance at Westminster 100 Years After the First General Election in Which Women Could Participate

#AskHerToStand

9.00- 10.00 am 14 Dec Westminster

[50:50 Parliament](#) will be joining the award-winning dance company, [Combination Dance](#), at Westminster for the debut of a short but dynamic “Equality Chant”, choreographed by Anne-Marie Smalldon and performed by a cast of 25 dancers and sports women; see taster video [here](#). It will be fantastic spectacle of women calling for equality right in the heart of Westminster (by [Queen Elizabeth 2nd Conference Centre](#)) on this important centenary day.

The short performance will build on the popular event held in [Victoria Station](#) in February, referencing the centenary of British suffrage. 50:50 Parliament have been invited to participate and will be there on the sidelines shouting loud and proud for women to have equal seats and equal say in Parliament.

On 14 December 1918, just a few weeks after the Armistice, women could participate in democracy for the first time ever. After nearly a hundred years of campaigning they could at last vote and stand in the general election. The “progressive” legislation that allowed this was passed at the end of the first world war. This was a war in which women’s voice or vote had played no part. It took another ten years before women over 21 could vote, on the same basis as men.

So how far have we come in the hundred years that followed? Is the fight for political equality still on? Since 1918 over 5000 MPs have been elected but fewer than 500 of these have been women. Men still outnumber women by two to one in the House of Commons and three to one in the Lords (the name says it all). At the last election only twelve extra women won seats, at this rate it will take over 50 years to achieve gender balance in the UK Parliament. Over 40 countries already have better gender balance in their governments.

Frances Scott Founder and Director of 50:50 Parliament said:“It is great to stand with sports women and performance artists calling for equality on this significant date for our democracy. As we approach the end of the Suffrage Centenary year 50:50 Parliament want the UK to lead the way for women’s political equality. There is still a democratic deficit, men outnumber women 2:1 in the Commons and 3:1 in the Lords. It took a world war for women to win the right to vote, maybe out of the current [political turmoil](#) there will also be a chance for change. 50:50 have a clear aspiration, better gender balance in Parliament. We want women to be equally involved in all the big decisions that will face the country in future. We want everyone to celebrate this Suffrage Centenary by taking action today; if you know a woman who would make a good MP [#AskHerToStand](#) via the [50:50 Parliament](#) website. And if you are a women who might like to stand [#SignUpToStand](#) via 50:50 and we will help you take the next step along the path to Parliament. [Join 50:50 Parliament](#), let’s build a better democracy together! “

Quote from Leah Lyons player for Harlequins Ladies and Irish International: “We are delighted as a Club to support this dance – and celebrate 100 years of female empowerment. It is a privilege to be associated with this project and we look forward to seeing the end result in town on 14th December.”

Anne-Marie Smalldon, Artistic Director of Combination Dance said, “This project continues the legacy of an amazing centenary year with a pan London dance project inspired by the capital’s commitment to equality”

For more information or to set up interviews, please contact:

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Notes to editors

50:50 Parliament: is a cross-party, non-partisan campaign with a clear aspiration, better gender balance in Parliament. They are taking action to get more women [elected](#) to Westminster with their [#AskHerToStand](#) and [#SignUpToStand](#) programmes to inspire, support and encourage women along the path to Parliament. 50:50 have been putting pressure on Parliament and the political parties, see 50:50 [Submission](#) to Women & Equalities select Committee. They have been called the [modern day Suffragettes](#). Many [MPs](#) have shown support for their cause both [Amber Rudd](#) and [Harriet Harman](#) amongst others (see on their ["Get Inspired"](#) page). 50:50 have gained considerable [press](#) with their successful [#AskHerToStand](#) day in Parliament on 21 November being featured on [ITV News](#) & [London Live](#). So far this year over 350 women have signed up to stand via 50:50 and their volunteers are now helping them take the next step along the path to Parliament. In the 2017 election Rosie Duffield who had been inspired to stand by 50:50 won her seat. The [50:50 petition](#) is a call to action for Party Leaders and our Parliament to make gender equality of representation a priority. Join 50:50 at www.5050parliament.co.uk; [50:50 Parliament on Facebook](#); [Twitter @5050Parliament](#); [50:50 Parliament YouTube](#); Press Info at <https://5050parliament.co.uk/press/>

Please view the Combination Dance projects so far and examples of the dance created in February as featured on Channel 4 <http://100nehundred.com>

More about Dick Kerr ladies and the women's' sport ban at the end of WW1:

<https://www.theguardian.com/football/blog/2009/sep/09/england-women-football>

About Combination Dance Company CDC: CDC exists to provide professional dance performances for broad public audiences and opportunities to participate in dance, primarily but not exclusively in Greater London and in particular in Richmond upon Thames.

Our mission is to enrich the lives of individuals and the strength of communities through participation in dance activities and watching dance performance. We aim to offer experiences that connect with people and the issues that affect their lives.

Our vision is one where the people of the London and beyond are positively engaging with dance as part of their lives, enjoying its physical, psychological, creative, social, cultural and specific health benefits as individuals and communities.

The Equality Chant has been choreographed by Anne-Marie Smalldon, costume and prop design by Mike Lees, all films created by Luke Toddrey. All images by Scott David Photography.

Combination Dance Company is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.

www.combinationdance.co.uk info@combinationdance.co.uk Facebook

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About Victoria Business Improvement District (BID): Victoria Business Improvement District is a business-led and business funded body formed to support economic growth in Victoria and to create a vibrant destination for those who work, visit or live in the area. Formed in 2010 following

a ballot of local businesses, the BID's business partners determine the work programmes that contribute to the local economy and enhance the area. Work is focused around five themes: Clean & Green, Safe & Secure, Sustainable Prosperity, Destination Victoria and Public Realm. Now in its second term, Victoria BID is recognised as one of the most innovative BIDs in the capital, with its projects contributing to the ongoing transformation of Victoria.

About LBRUT or Sport Richmond

https://www.richmond.gov.uk/civic_pride_fund

<http://sportrichmond.org>

About Harlequins Rugby

<https://www.quins.london>

Please view and access a selection of photos and a film teaser here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ZNGKnytd6dlOnJDBMJowsFDfofl_tKJ5?usp=sharing

Please credit: Performers from Combination Dance and Roehampton University Main image features Female Rugby Players Davinia Catlin and Leah Lyons. Images by Scott David Photography Film created by Luke Toddrey

Teaser also available on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PF63T6UNC1s&feature=youtu.be>

Background on Female Rugby Players:

Davinia Catlin – Davinia is the starting hooker for the Harlequins Ladies first XV and is one of the squad's most senior players. Off the field, she runs her own business – a sports clothing store.

Leah Lyons – Leah is new to the Club, having signed for Harlequins over the summer. She is a full Ireland international. See [here](#) for a fantastic interview she did in the Telegraph recently about women's rugby and body shaming. Leah was also the guest of honour at this year's Girls Active Awards.