



BEAUTY

Darcey's next stage

Back in the spotlight and starring on our TV screens, Darcey Bussell chats with Nadine Baggott about finding her feet on *Strictly*, and the beauty buys that keep her dancing on air



Five years after leaving the jeté set behind, Darcey Bussell, former principal dancer with the Royal Ballet, still looks the picture of graceful balletic beauty. Now, after years of living in Australia with her husband Angus Forbes and their daughters Phoebe, 11 and Zoe, eight, she made a dramatic comeback at the summer's Olympics closing ceremony, flying across the stadium on a flaming phoenix.

With a new photo biography out – *Darcey Bussell*, featuring images from her career captured by the likes of Annie Leibovitz and Mario Testino – a role as the face of Sanctuary Spa Active Reverse skincare and a judging role in the latest series of *Strictly Come Dancing*, she is back in the spotlight once more. Here she reveals her feelings about fame – and shares the beauty secrets that keep her in prima shape.

You've been living in Australia in relative anonymity for the past five years. Are you ready to be back in the public eye?

"I am not sure, to be honest. I did an exercise class the other day and someone came up and said, 'You are really quite flexible, aren't you?' I just smiled. She had no idea who I was."

How did *Strictly* tempt you back?

"I couldn't resist, could I? I'd been a guest on the show a couple of years back and really enjoyed it. I've met Bruno [Tonioli], Craig [Revel Horwood] and Len [Goodman], and the professional dancers and competitors. They have all been so welcoming. If I can promote dance in any way and get people dancing then I am happy – the only thing that makes me nervous is the thought of live TV."

Will you be a nice or nasty judge?

"Nice, definitely. The other day I danced an American Smooth with Ian Waite, who is only a couple of years younger than me. And even as a dancer, learning new skills wasn't easy. So I will be firm but fair."

What's it like living in London again?

"It's nice to be settled here once more, although I will miss the lifestyle and weather in Sydney. I think after a career like mine you have to escape for a little while and I craved that anonymity. But then my husband reminded me that I am happiest when I am busy and so I was tempted to come back. It was a big decision to move. The children are in school here now and I think if we are relaxed, they are relaxed."

How will they handle having such a famous mum?

"They are used to seeing me perform but maybe not being recognised at the school gates. But I encourage them to think of life as an adventure and to enjoy the experience."

You are the face of the new Sanctuary skincare range – have you always been a big fan?

"Yes. The Royal Ballet is in the same street the Sanctuary Spa [in London's Covent Garden] so we would pop next door"





for a swim, a massage and to relax – heaven. It is still the best day spa in London. So when they asked me to team up with them I was delighted.”

Ballerinas put their bodies through hell. What are your top tips for looking after yours?

“I love a sea salt scrub in the shower; it leaves your skin feeling alive and bright. And cod liver oil capsules are good for you, full stop. I read that Elle Macpherson takes them after every meal, and I had a knee reconstruction after I dislocated it last year so I will try anything to keep me moving. But the truth is that my body is worn out. That just goes with the territory.”

Do you have a favourite beauty treatment?

“Pedicures. I discovered them in Australia. Before that, my feet were for working and so to have them pampered and look nice is a treat.”

How do you stay in shape?

“Zumba twice a week. I am addicted. I can’t go to the gym and I can’t run as all of my joints are worn out. I realised that although I do not miss the punishing schedule of ballet I do miss dance; so now I’m happy to dance away anonymously at the back of the Zumba class, having fun.”

Do you also have to watch what you eat?

“I didn’t have to when I was performing as I was constantly exercising, but when I had children my body changed and I am fearful of losing my waist. Now it’s about nutrition and protein and

energy and giving my body what it needs.”

You danced in the Olympics closing ceremony. Did it take a lot of training?

“Yes. I knew that if I was going to have to look like a dancer again I had to be taut. Luckily I knew I was taking part around a year before, so I had time to get back to ballet and back en pointe. It was hard – really hard – work. It had been three years since I danced properly.”

Was it a memorable experience?

“Oh yes, nothing I have ever done could compare to it. I knew the eyes of the world would be watching and my husband and daughters were in the crowd; it was such a special experience. I was strung up over the cauldron and you could feel the heat from the flames.”

Do you ever miss ballet?

“I miss the people but I don’t miss the discipline. And I was lucky; I had my time.”

Will you be dancing much on *Strictly*?

“Each of the male professionals wants to dance with me, but I keep saying no. I haven’t even watched the Olympics closing ceremony. It’s hard to watch myself dance. I guess I am too much of a perfectionist.”

• *The photo-biography book Darcey Bussell (£30, Hardie Grant) is available now.*

DARCEY OPENS HER MAKE-UP BAG TO SHARE HER BEAUTY SECRETS... 1. Laura Mercier Tinted Moisturizer SPF20, £33 2. MAC Lip Pencil in Nice ‘n’ Spicy, £14 3. Sanctuary Spa Salt Scrub, £11.50 4. Benefit Ooh La Lift, £16.50 5. MAC Fluidline in Blacktrack, £14 6. Sanctuary Spa Active Reverse Lipid Recovery Facial Oil, £22: “My all-time favourite. I mix a little in to my day and night cream,” says Darcey. 7. Giorgio Armani Sheer Blush in 10 Beige, £31 8. Sanctuary Spa 30 Day Thermal Transformation Mask kit, £27.50, with Peptide Transformation Serum and Thermal Rose Clay Mask, from Boots, Debenhams and sanctuary.com.