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# COUNTRY & TOWN HOUSE

## CONTRIBUTORS



### Beanie Major

Beanie Major is a jewellery consultant, personal shopper and stylist. A former designer at Shaun Leane, she launched her website *In Detail*, the leading online destination for jewellery style in 2011. The site delivers the latest trends, exclusive interviews,

emerging designers and insider access to tastemakers' collections. Beanie has been a regular contributor to *Grazia* and *C&TH's* Watches and Jewellery supplement and was named as one of *ELLE* magazine's top 20 people to follow on social media.

**Time well spent?** 'A night in with a glass of red wine and a TED talk.'



### Simon de Burton

Simon writes about watches for the *Financial Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, *Vanity Fair* 'On Time' and many other publications around the world, as well as editing *C&TH's* annual

*On Watch* special. He lives on Dartmoor with his wife Helen, children Cosmo and Daisy, a dog called Harley and an array of ancient cars and motorcycles. Plus a few watches.

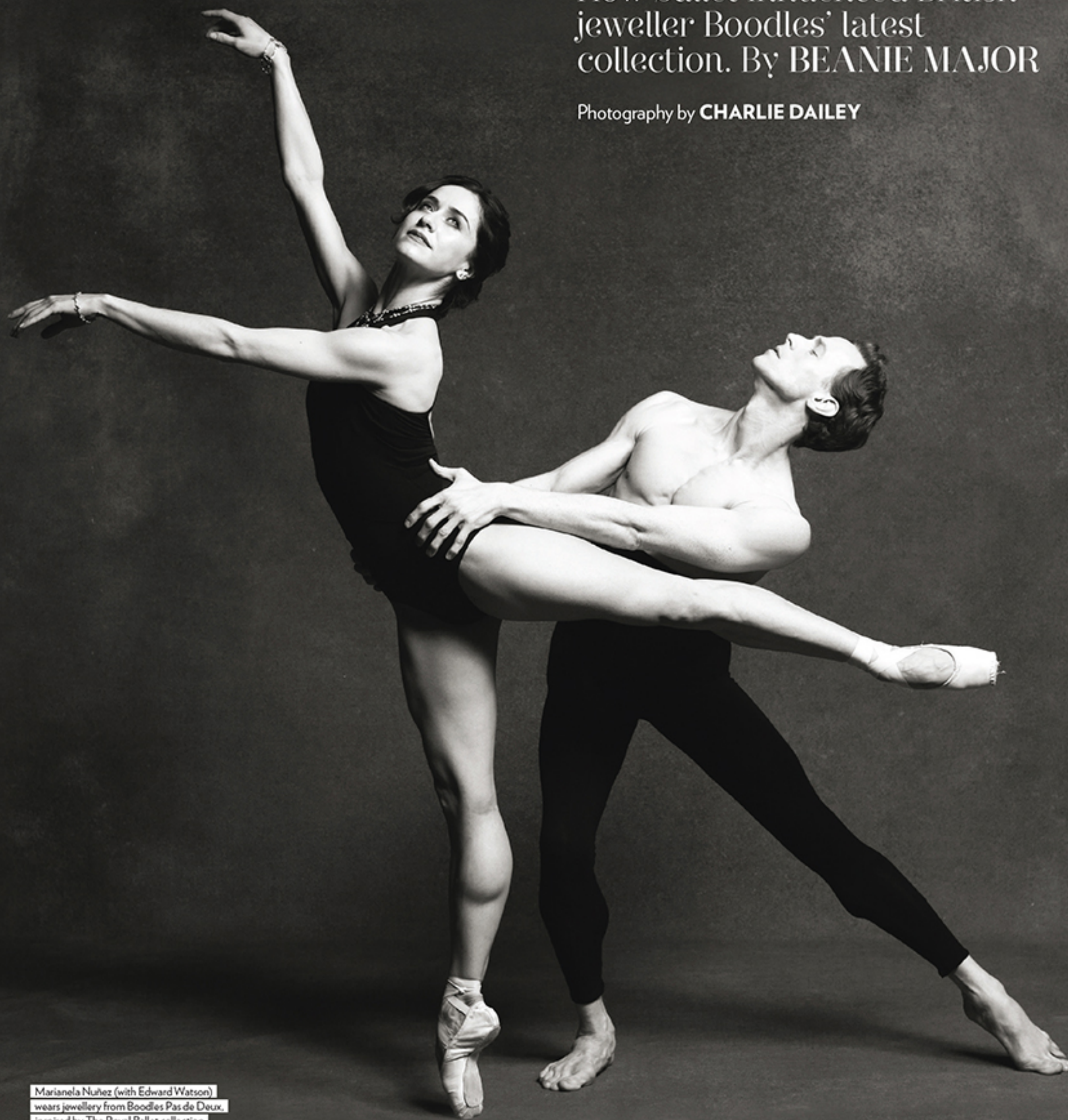
**Time well spent?** 'Riding motorcycles or driving old cars in the sun.'



# DANCERS IN DIAMONDS

How ballet influenced British jeweller Boodles' latest collection. By BEANIE MAJOR

Photography by CHARLIE DAILEY



Marianela Nuñez (with Edward Watson)  
wears jewellery from Boodles Pas de Deux,  
inspired by The Royal Ballet collection





ABOVE: Francesca Hayward wears a platinum set from the collection with marquise cut diamond necklace and bracelet. RIGHT: Bennet Gartside and Deirdre Chapman in *Ceremony Of Innocence*

While many have marvelled at the beauty and physical finesse of the ballet, few have had the opportunity to see the dedication that goes on behind the scenes. From warming up for morning rehearsals to physio and costume fittings in the afternoons, the dancers draw on their physical and emotional strength, until the curtain goes down at the end of the show.

Boodles, the family-owned British jewellers who have long been associated with championing the best of British sport, gives us a glimpse into this hidden world with their latest collection, created in collaboration with The Royal Ballet.

The title of the collection 'Pas de Deux' meaning the 'partnership of two' derives from a famous duet that features two principle dancers. This theme not only forms the basis of the collection but also symbolises the many parallels between the two brands; primarily, the Royal Ballet's high standards of production, which is echoed in the importance Boodles places on craftsmanship and design.

Finding a focus for the collection was no easy task for Boodles' Head of Design, Rebecca Hawkins. On her numerous visits to the Royal Opera House, she was blown away by the inspiration that surrounded her. She delved into the costume archives and meticulously studied the choreography notations, but it was her conversations with Associate Director of The Royal Ballet, Jeanetta Laurence, that really struck a chord.

'I wanted to know what it felt like to dance on stage,' says Rebecca. 'Through Jeanetta, I learned the importance of empathy between the dancers and the intense focus it demands.' Watching the rehearsals in the studio, Rebecca was able to appreciate The Royal Ballet's 'incredible ability to inhabit the characters and take the audience on an emotional ride'. Stripping away the costumes and the set on stage, she decided to focus on 'the very essence of the ballet; the dancers themselves.'

The 30-piece collection created in platinum and diamonds features some small wearable pieces that have been 'abstracted right down'. A pair of simple earrings featuring

two of Boodles' signature Ashoka diamonds, balancing on top of one another on a single point, capture the 'physical' tension between the two dancers. Rebecca explains that, 'although some of the pieces look very fine, the strength lies in the alignment and poise of the composition.'

In contrast, more elaborate pieces in the collection echo the 'movement' of the dance. Looking through a book in the Royal Ballet library, Rebecca was moved by a striking ghost-like image of a dancer that had been taken in slow motion as she moved across the stage. Inspired by the rhythm of the dancers tiny steps, Rebecca created rose gold and pink diamond motifs of a stylised ballet shoe.

Arranged to appear as if they are gliding across the necklace, the feet intercept a line of white diamonds going in the opposite direction, creating a dramatic effect.

Another 'hero' piece in the collection is a platinum cuff featuring 12 kite diamonds, surrounded by abstract shapes that spin out in repetition across the design. 'Even though you think of ballet as gentle and soft, some of the angles are really dramatic,' says

Rebecca, who drew on the positive and negative forms created by the dancers. 'I wanted to use the kite shape to represent the dynamic energy of the partnership, as they mirror each other throughout their performance.'

It was then Boodles' director and head of precious gemstones, Jody Wainwright's job to source the stones, which he declared 'rare and particularly tricky' to find. Always searching for excellence in every stone he buys, he spent six months commissioning very 'white' and 'lively' stones from Israel and Hong Kong. While the collection retains all the elements associated with Boodles, such as harmony and curving lines, the illusion of the kite diamonds give it a fresh and dynamic edge.

Once the collection was complete, the dancers were styled in the jewellery for a photoshoot. The specially commissioned fine art images, which also capture poignant moments, such as dancers putting on their make-up before the show, will be exhibited at The Savoy hotel alongside the jewellery at the launch, giving further access to intimate and rarely seen moments beyond the stage door.

Seeing the dancers in the jewellery was a rewarding moment for Boodles and the ballet alike. 'While I have always loved ballet I am an outsider looking in on their world,' says Rebecca who was thrilled with the feedback on how she had interpreted the dance. With the marriage of expertise from these two luxurious companies, it was Jeanetta who had the final word, exclaiming that Boodles' creations have 'immortalised the dancers in diamonds'. ■



FROM ABOVE:  
Boodles 'Pas de Deux'; Inspired by The Royal Ballet's double Ashoka diamond stud earrings;  
Pink and white diamond necklace;  
Kite diamond cuff

