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'A Whole New World' for 'So You Think You Can Dance' finalist Kirsty Swain encourages those with hearing difficulties to follow their dreams

BBC One's 'So You Think You Can Dance' finalist Kirsty Swain has been unveiled as one of the first in the UK to wear Siemens' new waterproof and shock resistant hearing instrument, Aquaris™ and speak out about the stigma associated with hearing loss. The truly waterproof hearing instrument has opened up a whole new world to her.

Kirsty's active lifestyle as a dancer, teacher and performer has posed a number of issues for her when it comes to wearing her hearing instruments. Unable to find a hearing aid that could withstand the sweat and rigours of dancing, Kirsty preferred to dance without. As a result, her dancing career has been shaped by the struggle to hear rhythm and she has learnt to dance by music vibrations plus copying others to pick up routines.

Kirsty comments, "I have had trouble in the past with hearing instruments getting sweaty, slipping and being uncomfortable when exercising, but with the Aquaris I can run along hearing everything, without the slightest problem. I've been swimming with it and couldn't believe how amazing it was. I could hear people standing beside the pool chatting as I swam underwater, more than most people, which made me feel quite special!"

"Aquaris is absolutely brilliant. It adjusts to any situation I am in whether it's the bar, the studio, on stage or watching TV on the couch. I can also swim, dance, run

and jump in the shower without thinking. When I'm in the studio, I am able to hear the music and teacher's voice clearer than ever before."

Kirsty was also fitted with miniTek, a solution that uses Bluetooth® technology to wirelessly communicate sound between her Aquaris hearing instrument and television, mobile phone and MP3 player. She comments, "I spend a lot of time on the tube and for the first time, I can enjoy music on the way to work, without having to take my hearing instrument out, risk losing it, plus irritate the person sitting next to me. It also syncs with my mobile phone – the other day I was running along, and was able to answer a call at the same time, something I've never been able to do before."

Wendy Davies, National Sales and Audiology Manager at Siemens Hearing Instruments states, "When we saw the struggles that Kirsty was presented with, we offered her our new Aquaris as a solution to the very physically demanding lifestyle she leads. Knowing that she now has the ability to hear with comfort when she dances is an exciting prospect and we look forward to seeing how this remarkable technology can improve her quality of life and stage career."

Surrey based Kirsty, aged 30, has suffered hearing loss since birth but was only diagnosed partially deaf when she was 12 years old. As a child she was excluded and embarrassed to wear her hearing instruments and she continues to confront hurdles in her professional life. She states, "My whole life I've had to deal with many people's misunderstanding towards hearing loss, which can sometimes feel like bullying. People only saw one side of me and thought I was just stupid, I was embarrassed to wear my hearing aids at school."

Kirsty is determined to be a positive role model for others with hearing loss, demonstrating that it should never stop you from fulfilling your dreams. Her stage career continues to blossom with her next adventure seeing her take on the role of Jasmine in the Panto production Aladdin.

Notes to editors:

High res images are also available on request to illustrate.

Caption: BBC One's 'So You Think You Can Dance' finalist Kirsty Swain has been unveiled as one of the first in the UK to wear Siemens' new waterproof and shock resistant hearing instrument, Aquaris™.



About Siemens

Siemens was established in the United Kingdom 169 years ago and now employs 12,972 people in the UK. Last year's revenues were £4.4 billion*. As a leading global engineering and technology services company, Siemens provides innovative solutions to help tackle the world's major challenges, across the key sectors of energy, industry, infrastructure & cities and healthcare. Siemens has offices and factories throughout the UK, with its headquarters in Frimley, Surrey. The company's global headquarters is in Munich, Germany. For more information, visit www.siemens.co.uk

** Data includes intercompany revenue. Data may not be comparable with revenue reported in annual or interim reports.*

About Siemens Hearing Instruments

www.siemens.co.uk/hearing

Siemens Hearing Instruments Ltd (Crawley, West Sussex) provides a comprehensive range of digital hearing instruments and software, patient management systems and audiology equipment to the National Health Service, independent retail dispensers and national chains in the UK. It is the UK operation of **Siemens Audiologische Technik (S.A.T.)**, based in Erlangen, Germany. Part of the Siemens Medical Group, S.A.T. has been at the forefront of audiological innovation for over 125

years and is the world's market leader in the design and manufacture of audiological products. For further information on Siemens Hearing Instruments visit www.siemens.co.uk/hearing.

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