



HOTF20T ONLINE

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

PAVING THE WAY
REBUILDING AND REIMAGINING



SPRING 2021

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IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS ACCESSING ANY ARTICLES IN DIFFERENT FORMATS,
PLEASE CONTACT US.**

HOTFOOT@ONEDANCEUK.ORG

WELCOME

Dear members and friends

This edition of *HOTFOOT Online* marks the one-year anniversary of George Floyd's murder in the United States. This tragedy, along with too many other instances of racism, has seen long-overdue conversations take place around diversity in the arts, including in dance. In many cases these conversations have led to changes of approach, however there is more work to do.

As the sector support organisation for dance, we represent all dancers and all dance styles. Highlighting artists and practices of dance of the African Diaspora, both in *HOTFOOT* and across our programmes, is enshrined in our constitution and central to our mission. Through other platforms such as U.Dance, the One Dance UK Awards and our work in advocacy, education and dancer health and wellbeing, we aim to offer platforms and support for our vibrant and diverse dance community. I am proud of the team's inclusive approach and our continuing commitment to listen, learn and reevaluate.

I am pleased to welcome our new Head of Workforce Development, Jazlyn Pinckney, who will work closely with our members and partners on equity, diversity and

inclusion in dance. Read a message from her on page six. I would also like to thank Mercy Nabirye, former Head of Dance of the African Diaspora, for her contribution to One Dance UK's work, to the DAD community and to the dance sector more broadly. We all wish her the very best of luck with her future endeavours.

HOTFOOT approaches a special 20th anniversary celebration later this year. This edition takes the theme 'Paving the Way', and you will find articles looking at new approaches to education, careers and artistic expression. We are, as ever, grateful to the wide range of contributors and the magazine's Editorial Focus Group.

What unifies us is our passion for the art form and the unique resilience dancers possess. We are all paving the way forward after such a turbulent year, and I believe we will emerge to see a fairer, more vibrant and diverse sector, which can only be a positive thing.

ANDREW HURST MBE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
ONE DANCE UK



WAX PRINT

Each edition of *HOTFOOT* features a traditional African wax print. For 2021 we have chosen the pattern '**Akyekyedia Akyi**', which means 'the back of the tortoise.' Its rough, oval shape resembles the tortoise shell, and is particularly popular in West Africa.

This print symbolises longevity and resilience. Even though the tortoise is slow, it is wise.

As we 'pave the way' toward more diversity, opportunity and fairness in dance, staying creative and inspired, we are grateful to those who have shown their longevity and resilience. The next generation need role models who are willing to generously share their wisdom, and you will find many experienced, resilient sector voices in these pages.

BLACK PEOPLE IN DANCE IN THE UK – PANEL DISCUSSION P.20
ACTION PLAN: CONTINUING ACTIONS P.22
DIVERSITY OR SKIN COLOUR BY GRETA MENDEZ MBE P.24
BLACK ARTISTS IN DANCE (BAID) BY JOYCE GYIMAH AND GERRARD MARTIN P.26
BLM: A YEAR ON BY UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON STUDENTS P.28

DANCE CHALLENGES – AN INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS TALAWA PRESTØ BY CAMERON BALL P.34
STITCHING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE BY ATHENA MAZARAKIS P.37
LET'S DANCE INTERNATIONAL FRONTIERS 2021 – REVIEW BY PAWLET BROOKES P.40
HIP HOP CONFERENCE BY DR. ROSA CISNEROS WITH DR. ALEX MASON P.42

THE NEW AFROBEATS GENERATION BY ALISON RAY WITH PATIENCE JAMES AND FUMY OPEYEMI P.48
PODCASTS BY TAMAR DIXON AND CHLOE SPRACKLING P.51
PAVING THE WAY BY ASHLEY JORDAN P.54
DANCING WITH NO BOUNDARIES: GESEL MASON BY DR MALAIKA SARCO-THOMAS P.56

REACHING CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS BY ALISON RAY P.62
A CURRICULUM FIT FOR PURPOSE BY MEZZE EADE P.65
PLACING DIVERSITY FRONT AND CENTRE WITH THE PLACE P.68
**WHAT DOES A DANCE CAREER LOOK LIKE TODAY? BY OFELIA OMOYELE BALOGUN, CHARLIE WALTON-HARROD,
KADAFI MULULA AND REMI FERDINAND P.71**

FOREWORD



JAZLYN PINCKNEY
HEAD OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

I'd like to offer a *"hello"* as a new member of the One Dance UK family. I'm beyond thrilled to join the team and bring with me a passion for inclusion, equity and community through dance.

When we start something new, we allow ourselves to dream about future possibilities. What do we want to bring with us, and what traditions will we hold?

I'm joining in a time where marking moments in celebration and remembrance feels really important. They give us the framework for our personal and collective experiences to be held and recognised.

HOTFOOT is also celebrating; the magazine is in its 20th year. I consider it an honour to be part of something that has been building community for two decades. Whilst longevity allows for deeper conversations and stronger connections, it also means we are stable enough to welcome new voices and understand the importance of innovation.

This last year we had to mark anniversaries in different ways but that hasn't changed the power or potency that they hold. May 2021 marks a year since the devastating world news that became the catalyst for the June Black Lives Matter marches. Whilst we honour this in memory, let us recognise that it is our actions that *will* transform our futures.

The year of light and shade feels particularly formidable as the spark which can move us all towards change. Because doing something meaningful for a continued amount of time is important; noticing, celebrating and honouring it gives it weight; and allows it to be part of our future makes it our legacy.

I look forward to meeting you and working with you in the coming weeks and months, and being part of these more equitable futures, together.

Join Us

Find out what we can do for you

One Dance UK membership benefits include:

- A range of tailored products and services and resources at your disposal
- Free advice on business, teaching, health and regular talks on a wide range of subjects
- Add your voice to our advocacy work
- Industry news and updates
- Free copies of dance industry magazine *One* delivered to your door or inbox
- Option to join our Choreographers Directory or our Healthcare Practitioners Directory
- Promote your work through our social media channels with over 100,000 followers
- Significant member discounts on advertising across all of One Dance UK's platforms including *HOTFOOT*, *One* magazine and more

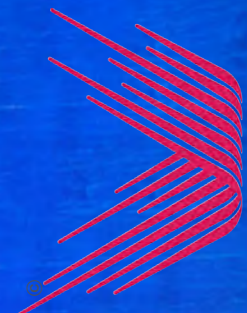


Axam Dance Theatre Experience at Re-generations International Conference 2019,
photo Foteimi Christofilopoulou

**One
Dance
UK**
Supporting
Dance

View the various One Dance UK memberships [here](#).

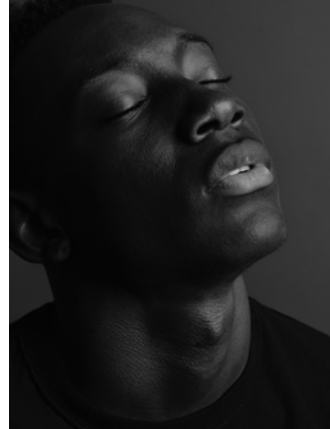
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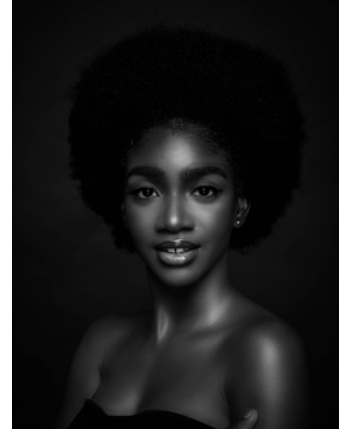
BLACK THEATRE AND FILM DIRECTORY



The Black Theatre
& Film Directory



© Collis



© Kehinde Ogunsanya

The Black Theatre and Film Directory is now live! It is free for performers and behind-the-scenes creatives to join and be found by the global theatre and film industry. This unique and much needed resource is already making a positive impact in the performing arts industry internationally.

"We are thrilled to see the creation of the Black Theatre and Film Global Directory, which will be an invaluable resource for our members and for the industry as a whole", say The Casting Directors Guild of Great Britain and Ireland (CDG).

The UK and international dance community has already established a strong presence on the platform. The Black Theatre and Film Directory features the profiles of leading Black choreographers and dance educators, alongside rising and established performers, such as: Shaq Taylor, Samuel Nicholas, Abiola Efunshile, Andre Fabien Francis and Dujonna Gift-Simms.

Solange Urdang and Omar F. Okai have created this trailblazing and much needed directory, along with the help of Vanessa Fisher.

Solange Urdang and Omar F. Okai, who are also Co Founders/Directors of the Black British Theatre Awards, now in its third year, say: "After the success of the BBTAs, this is a natural progression. To keep highlighting the

phenomenal black talent from Britain but now also through this platform ensure visibility internationally. A new voice of reference!"

2020 will be remembered historically as the year of global change. As well as a devastating pandemic, it became the year that the Black Lives Matter protest around the world demanded that racial awareness and inclusivity became non-negotiable.

Rt Hon David Lammy MP says: "Bridging the gap between the copiousness of black talent and the absence of recognition, The Black Theatre and Film Directory is a celebration of intersectional achievement. The Directory proves that Black performers and creatives have not just contributed to British art and culture. They are part of Britain's artistic and cultural fabric."

All black creatives and performers can create their own profiles, detailing skills, experience and interests within the Theatre and Film Industry. Everyone from agents, casting agents, lighting, set and costume designers, directors, choreographers, educators, to performers can sign up and be included in this black theatre/film database, worldwide.

**Black creatives includes anyone that is of direct or descendent African heritage.*



WWW.THEBLACKTHEATREANDFILMDIRECTORY.COM

GERMAINE ACOGNY RECEIVES INTERNATIONAL AWARD



Germaine Acogny © Antoine Tempé



Germaine Acogny performs
Somewhere at the beginning © Thomas Dorn

The Senegalese and French dancer and choreographer Germaine Acogny, known around the world as ‘the mother of contemporary African dance’, received the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement in Dance 2021.

The Lions for Dance 2021 were approved by the Board of Directors of La Biennale di Venezia which accepted the recommendations advanced by Wayne McGregor, director of the Dance Department.

From 1977 to 1982, Germaine Acogny directed Mudra Afrique, a dance school founded by Maurice Béjart and by the President-poet of Senegal Léopold Sédar Senghor, which would serve as a model for the entire continent. It was there that Acogny developed her own original technique and became a protagonist of contemporary African choreography.

From Maurice Béjart to Susanne Linke and Olivier Dubois, Acogny wove relationships and activated collaborations, stimulating new energy in the activity that radiates today from the École des Sables – both a school and a dance company (Jant-bi) – one of the major centres driving contemporary dance, which attracts dancers and choreographers from around Africa and the rest of the world.

Wayne McGregor wrote “Her influence as a creative and mentorship of countless young dance makers from Africa and beyond is a legacy we should highlight and celebrate as she continues to inspire and guide with her restless vision”.

Germaine Acogny said, “For me, the reception of the Golden Lion Award of the Venice Dance Biennale is like a whirlwind of light in the gloomy sky of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is a recognition of my work, but it is also a recognition of the dance world in Africa.

I am deeply touched. This Golden Lion has also put me in the spotlight in my own country because the Lion is a prestigious symbol of Senegal.

This has allowed the authorities to realise that the École des Sables is known and recognised worldwide and that it is a treasure that must be protected and supported so that it continues its mission of training African dancers and being a meeting place for dancers from all continents.”



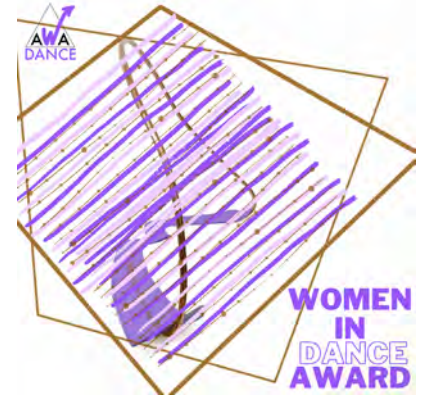
WWW.ECOLEDESSABLES.ORG

WOMEN'S DANCE LEADERSHIP AWARD

BY KATHRYN STAMP



Shortlisted nominees (clockwise from Top L) - Vicki Igbokwe, Lucy McCrudden, Tamsin Fitzgerald, Genevieve Say, Kamara Gray, Kate Stanforth



On Friday 26 March, the inaugural Women in Dance Award ceremony was held, online of course! Created by AWA DANCE charity (Advancing Women's Aspirations with Dance), the award celebrates the work of women in the dance sector, who have shown outstanding leadership during 2020.

From an initial list of 28 peer-nominated candidates, a shortlist of six was created: Tamsin Fitzgerald, Kamara Gray, Vicki Igbokwe, Lucy McCrudden, Genevieve Say and Kate Stanforth. During a fantastic evening of networking and interaction, we heard from each of the shortlisted nominees, learning more about their passion and their work. The evening was held on the innovative video streaming platform, Remo, which allowed guests to mingle and chat amongst the backdrop of the London skyline. It was a joy to interact with others, brought together by a collective passion for supporting female leadership in the UK dance sector.

Amanda Skoog, One Dance UK Chair and special guest speaker, was welcomed by the host for the evening, AWA DANCE founder

and Director, Avatâra Ayuso. Amanda spoke passionately about the need to raise the visibility of women in the sector and empower girls to be the dance leaders of tomorrow.

Graham Watts OBE was welcomed to announce the award participant. He shared the jury's recognition of two other shortlisted nominees, Lucy McCrudden and Kamara Gray, for their magnificent support of dance communities in 2020.

The award recipient was Vicki Igbokwe. She told us about her fantastic work in 2020, in response to the Black Lives Matter movement and developing the progressive work of her company, Uchenna Dance.

The event was a glorious celebration of the empowered work of women in the dance sector, during what was one of the most challenging years we have experienced. AWA DANCE charity looks forward to honouring another outstanding woman next year!



WWW.AWADANCE.ORG

MAKE NOISE!

YAMI 'ROWDY' LÖFVENBERG ON HER RECENT APPOINTMENT AS HIP HOP LECTURER AT TRINITY LABAN.

TRINITY LABAN CONSERVATOIRE OF MUSIC & DANCE



Yami 'Rowdy' Löfvenberg © Robert Alleyne

Accepting the role as the first-ever Hip-Hop Dance Lecturer at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance is an exciting and heartfelt moment in my career because it represents change and a step forward.

For over twenty years these styles have been an instrumental part of the growth and development within my community, and I can see how the attitude towards hip hop dance forms and culture has changed for the better and is being taken more seriously.

I am delivering lectures on the BSc Dance Science programme, and my vision is to develop the students' understanding of the nuances within the dance, the people and culture.

This information is not always taught in books, but from a personal lived experience and, therefore, gives them a deeper insight into the dance form that has brought so much to our popular history.

Trinity Laban has been very welcoming and is open to further discussion and feedback around hip hop within the curriculum. It feels good to be in a place that has embraced me and what I do, giving me an additional platform to continue my mission to grow the understanding of hip hop dance education.

I hope the future will see more contributions from the Black female artists, leaders, teachers and performers from my community so that we can improve the diversity and equality in the artistic landscape. Hip hop has always been about expression, storytelling and sharing a message and it's important that the conversations and action stay relevant. In particular, I focus on leadership, female empowerment and preventing sexual misconduct within the dance industry.

Using my teaching, performing, or directing work I will always continue to trailblaze and make noise!



WWW.TRINITYLABAN.AC.UK



@ROWDYAMI

NEWS



One Dance UK Awards 2021

Nominations now open!

onedanceuk.org

It's time again to celebrate your dance heroes as the One Dance UK Awards return for their fourth year. This is your chance to shine a light on the exceptional dance artists, advocates, and industry professionals who have helped keep the dance sector bright and alive over the past year.

Nominations for this year's Awards close on Friday 25 June!



Primary Dance Education Award
Secondary Dance Education Award
Inspirational Lecturer at College, University or Conservatoire Award
Dance in the Community Award
Work in Education & Outreach Award
Dance for Wellbeing Award
Research in Dance Award
Dance Healthcare Practitioner Award
Dance Healthcare Team Award
Applied Dance Science Award
Innovation in Dance Award
Dance Campaign Award
Dance Programming Award
Dance on Film Award
Dance Advocacy Award
The People's Choice Award
The Rising Star Award
The Dance of the African Diaspora Lifetime Achievement Award
The Lifetime Achievement Awards
The Jane Attenborough Award

HOTFOOT ONLINE

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS



Dr. Funmi Adewole © Irven Lewis

CRITICAL DISCOURSE, INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE

DR. FUNMI ADEWOLE

**SENIOR LECTURER IN DANCE, DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY
HOTFOOT ONLINE EDITORIAL FOCUS GROUP MEMBER**

The magazine you read today has a very interesting history, and was set up 20 years ago by some incredibly dedicated, passionate people. In 2001, the steering committee of the Association of Dance of the African Diaspora (ADAD) led by Sheron Wray (now S.Ama Wray) shifted the organisation's focus from supporting Black dancers as an ethnic minority group to promoting choreography and dance practices based on forms of dance of African, Caribbean, African American and Afro-Latin origin. The first publication that ADAD produced was a compilation of interviews and article by Deborah Baddoo. Besides this, there was very little reference material on Black dancers in Britain, so it was an essential resource.

The new focus was to engender the production of a critical discourse for the work created by mainly Black choreographers. It was agreed that without more detailed discussions around the cultural politics impacting the work of Black dancers, reviews of performances and documentation of work and the dance industry, little would change in the perception of dance by Black people or dance as a profession for Black people.

With the strapline "from the margins to the mainstream", the organisation decided to upgrade the newsletter to a magazine. The name 'HOTFOOT' was proposed by the readership of the newsletter through a competition organised by Debbie Thomas, then Development Manager. She was ably assisted by Alicia Howard, who now lives in Canada.

The members of the steering committee included Sheron Wray, Judith Palmer, Carolene Hinds, Kwesi Johnson, Robert Hylton and myself.

Six of the seven aims of ADAD at the time were focused on the production of critical discourse. One of the projects that was organised towards this was the *Critically Crucial* writing scheme which I facilitated, under the mentorship of Colin Prescod and with guest writer Donald Hutera, leading the session on review writing. The participants were a mixture of experienced and new writers; Thea Nerissa Barnes, Jenny Rosier, Shavanti Lowton and Sheba Montserrat. They had their articles published in Issue 5 of *HOTFOOT* in 2003.

Later that year, with ADAD struggling to survive, I led on strategic alliance between the organisation and Dance UK. Following the alliance, the publication went online. Though we missed the print copy, cyberspace enabled *HOTFOOT* to become an international resource. *HOTFOOT* has not only contributed to the critical discourse for the sector, it has helped raise the profile of Black British dance artists and companies.

Looking through *HOTFOOT* over the years you get a sense of the challenges and debates that took place in the sector, the major events, the range of dance platforms, major productions and tours – an overview of British dance history. I am proud of the range of artists and dance styles we have featured, reviewed and given a platform to. At 21, *HOTFOOT* is part of the history it was set up to create.



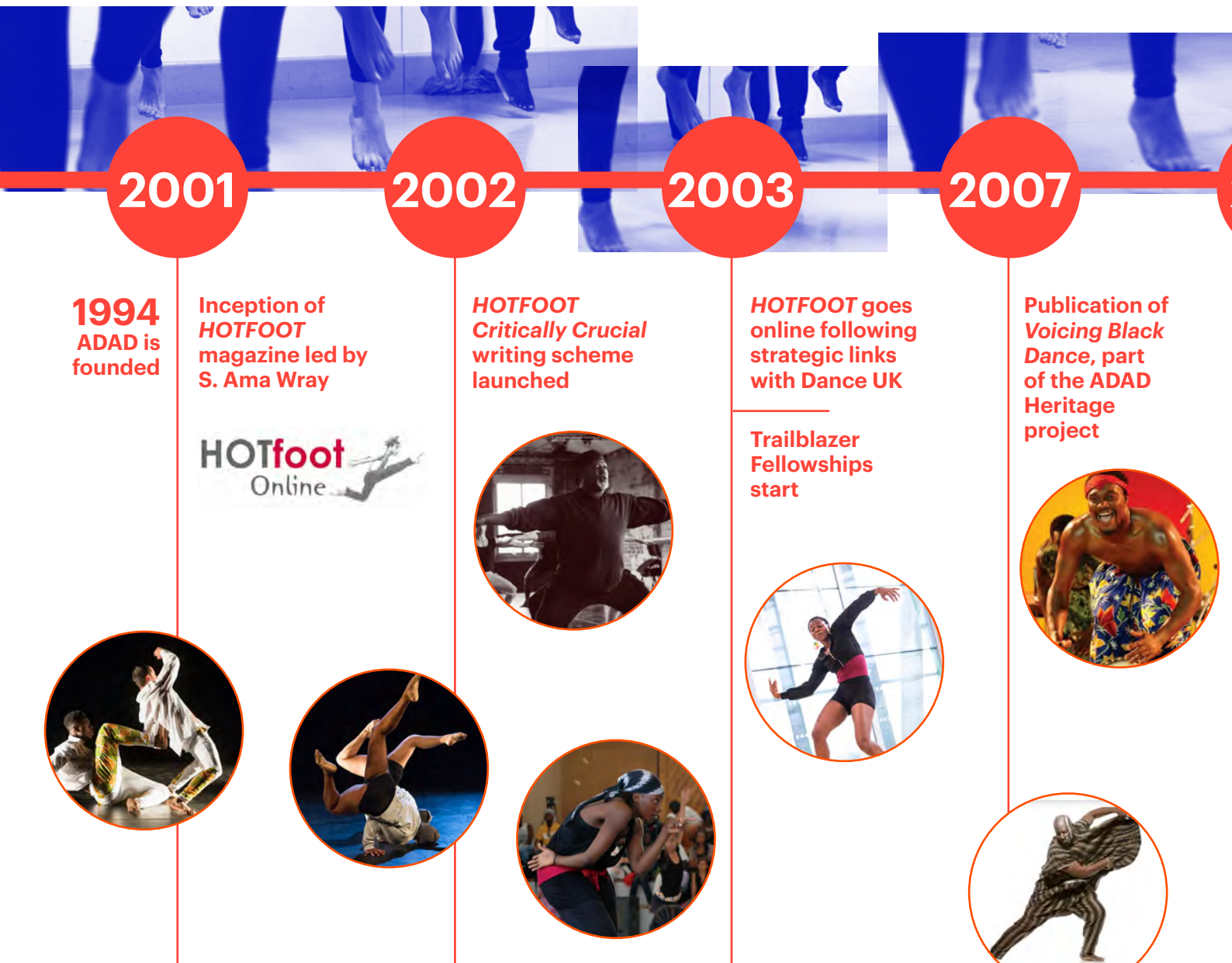
HOTFOOT ONLINE

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

A TIMELINE

HOTFOOT Online, the UK's only magazine dedicated to dance of the African Diaspora, celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. Read how and why this magazine has amplified the voices of Black dance in the UK and abroad.

Throughout 2021, One Dance UK will be celebrating this milestone, with a special anniversary edition planned for Autumn 2021. We are grateful to the passionate, talented people who founded the magazine, and the dedication and generosity of those who continue to support it by advising and contributing content, and sharing its message.



“ **SECTOR VOICES**

“If anyone thinks Black dance in Britain is a new thing, they haven’t read HOTFOOT. HOTFOOT has led and set the pace for African and African diaspora dance in print and online in the UK and has been a pivotal recourse in documenting the many artists, thinkers, writers, educators, supporters and audiences in the promotion and visibility of Black dance.”

ROBERT HYLTON
CHOREOGRAPHER,
MOVEMENT DIRECTOR,
DANCE RESEARCHER
AND FILMMAKER

“HOTFOOT was borne out of a need to network, profile and develop opportunities for ourselves as Black dancers, producers and administrators in the UK. This need resulted from collective experiences of exclusion and an inherent sense of inequality.”

HOTFOOT has grown from a newsletter into an online magazine, giving Black dancers a national profile with a global influence.”

JUDITH PALMER MBE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER, AFRICAN
HERITAGE UK LTD,
FORMER CHAIR, ADAD

“HOTFOOT is not simply a magazine; it is a living artefact that embodies the histories, tells the stories of the now, then, and what might be, and maps the roots and routes of the dances of the African Diaspora. It calls and responds and calls and responds.”

DR. SARAHLEIGH CASTELYN
READER IN
PERFORMING ARTS,
UNIVERSITY OF EAST
LONDON,
HOTFOOT ONLINE
EDITORIAL FOCUS
GROUP MEMBER

“I am always excited and full of anticipation in preparation for the latest issue of HOTFOOT. This is a publication dedicated to documenting the voices of DAD as practiced in the UK and illuminating the impact of the styles globally. HOTFOOT is critical for holding the history, detailing developments and leaving a legacy of the form.”

BEVERLEY GLEAN MBE
FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC
DIRECTOR, IRIE! DANCE
THEATRE



2010

2016

2019

2021

Inaugural Re:generations International Conference led by Jeanette Bain-Burnett

ADAD 15th Anniversary – special HOTFOOT edition



ADAD 21st Anniversary - special HOTFOOT edition

One Dance UK launches with ADAD as one of the merging partners



DAD Mapping Project maps dance of the African Diaspora in the UK



HOTFOOT Online turns 20





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BA Performing Arts

MA Dance

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Our BA Dance, BA Performing Arts, and MA Dance courses nurture dynamic performers, choreographers, teachers, and producers through exciting practical projects with industry connections throughout the North West UK. Investigate choreography, site dance, teaching, urban and street dance, musical theatre, community practice, performance technology, and more in our specialist facilities. As a citizen student you will be challenged, supported, and inspired to make dance for the 21st century, apace with our changing world.

We are now accepting applications for 2021 entry, with auditions online and at our Creative Campus.

For BA courses through UCAS, use codes Dance W500 and Performing Arts W470. For further information on these courses including how to apply for the MA Dance please visit:

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**THE SEC
MOVES FORWARD**



CTOR
WARD



BLACK PEOPLE IN DANCE IN THE UK

A PANEL DISCUSSION

BY TAMAR DIXON
DANCE OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA
ADMINISTRATOR

YOUTUBE: 

SOUNDCLOUD: 

IF YOU HAVE FURTHER THOUGHTS ON THE ISSUES RAISED, PLEASE EMAIL THE ONE DANCE UK TEAM AT HOTFOOT@ONEDANCEUK.ORG

TO CONTACT BLACK PEOPLE IN DANCE IN THE UK AND FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THEIR WORK, CONTACT BLACKPEOPLEINDANCE@GMAIL.COM

One Dance UK's Deputy Chief Executive Christopher Rodriguez joined members of the Black People in Dance in the UK (BPDUK) for a conversation to explore the newly founded group's pledge to dismantle inequalities that are faced by Black dancers across the sector. This was an open, frank discussion, looking at the effects of this past year on Black people in dance, and what further change the sector still has to make.

ABOUT BLACK PEOPLE IN DANCE IN THE UK (BPDUK)

BPDUK is an initiative that works to take direct action advocating, campaigning, and lobbying to address specific issues impacting Black people working within the UK dance sector. They work to support the development and progression of leaders, raise visibility, strengthen representation, and improve opportunities to promote social change.

Akosua Boakye BEM

Founder & Director of AkomaAsa Arts,
Disney's The Lion King Children's Casting
Director, dance practitioner

Jeanfer Jean-Charles

Creative director, choreographer and creative consultant

Sharon Watson

CEO & Principal of Northern School of Contemporary Dance

Vicki Igbokwe

Creative Director of Uchenna Dance

Caramel Soldier

Creative dance entrepreneur

Joseph Toonga

Artistic Director of Just Us Dance Theatre & Co-Founder of Artists4Artists

Martin Hylton

Founding Artistic Director of Gateway Studios

Dr. 'H' Patten MBE

Artistic Director of Koromanti Arts, practitioner and lecturer in African and Caribbean dance

BPDUK works voluntarily with the team meeting on a regular basis, and activities offered to members include open online meetings and newsletters.

FOR MORE INFORMATION EMAIL
blackpeopleindance@gmail.com

“IT SHOULD BEGIN WITH NOT PIGEONHOLING BLACK PEOPLE IN DANCE IN THE UK... WE ARE NOT JUST ABOUT DANCE OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA. WE ARE THAT AND MUCH MORE”.

Akosua Boakye BEM

GUEST PANELLISTS



AKOSUA BOAKYE BEM

Akosua Boakye BEM is founder of AkomaAsa Performing Arts Academy which amalgamates Western and African

diaspora dance and performing arts for young people aged 6–16. Akosua’s portfolio career as a freelance creative practitioner is focused on delivering in educational, theatrical and community settings.

She is the Cub Academy coordinator and Children’s Casting Director for Disney’s West End musical *The Lion King* and a Dance Lecturer at Canterbury Christ church University.



JEANEFER JEAN-CHARLES

Jeanefer Jean-Charles is a creative director & choreographer specialising in large-scale outdoor performances.

Since starting her journey as Co-Founder and Artistic Director of Bullies Ballerinas Jazz Dance Company, her work has taken her to over 21 countries.

Some other projects she has been involved with include being Mass Movement Coordinator for all four of the London 2012 Olympic Opening Ceremonies and Artistic Director for the 2013 Rugby League World Cup Opening Ceremony.



VICKI IGBOKWE

Vicki Igbokwe is a Choreographer, Movement Director, Facilitator and the Founder & Creative Director of Uchenna Dance company.

Vicki is also a Trustee for One Dance UK and an Associate Consultant at People Make it Work who help cultural organisations and leaders to change and develop.

Internationally, she has worked as a Mass Movement Choreographer for Olympic and Paralympic Ceremonies including London 2012, Sochi 2014 and the Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2014.

SOME SELECTED THOUGHTS FROM THE PANELLISTS SHEDDING LIGHT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF REPRESENTATION.

“We need to take hold of the narrative. We need to tell these organisations what we want.”
Jeanefer Jean-Charles

“We are the people working on the front line. We are the people working on the ground... working with participants and audiences. People that look like us are not around the decision-making tables. We have influence but we don’t necessarily have the power.”

Vicki Igbokwe

PART 3 OF 3

ACTION PLAN

CONTINUING ACTIONS

based on One Dance UK's Dance of the African Diaspora Mapping Report

Starting with Spring 2020 we are sharing two goals, with a call to action, across three consecutive editions of *HOTFOOT*.

[SEE PART 1 OF THE ACTION PLAN HERE](#)

[SEE PART 2 OF THE ACTION PLAN HERE](#)

FULL MAPPING REPORT

INFOGRAPHIC 1

INFOGRAPHIC 2

In the past two editions of *HOTFOOT* we have shared key findings, themes and goals that resulted from One Dance UK's Dance of the African Diaspora Mapping Survey, along with outcomes from the World Café discussions at 2019's Re:generations International Conference.

In this edition we share the final two goals that were identified. These goals and actions are not immutable, and so with the turbulent events of the past year, the approach to these goals, and the actions needed to achieve them, have changed. As part of an overall review of our programmes, and listening further to the needs of the sector, organisations like One Dance UK must expand and adapt their offer to best meet current needs. What does not change, however, is the need to stay connected and visible.

One Dance UK has continued to listen to and amplify the voices of diverse dance artists. In the autumn, One Dance UK was a sponsor of Inc Arts' *Speak - Listen - Reset - Heal* sessions, an anti-racism conference for the UK's theatre and dance sectors. This saw real commitment from leaders of hundreds of organisations to implement change, developing an anti-racist approach to their work.

One Dance UK has continued to be active in promoting and connecting DAD artists and projects. The *I Move* campaign shines a spotlight on artists, art forms and initiatives, and increases visibility for DAD. Be sure to follow our social media channels for this and other content promoting diverse dance artists and companies.



Delegates at Re generations International Conference 2019, Salford. © Foteini Christofilopoulou



Delegates take part in Mojah Technique Masterclass. © Dani Bower for One Dance UK

SIX EMERGING THEMES, SIX GOALS

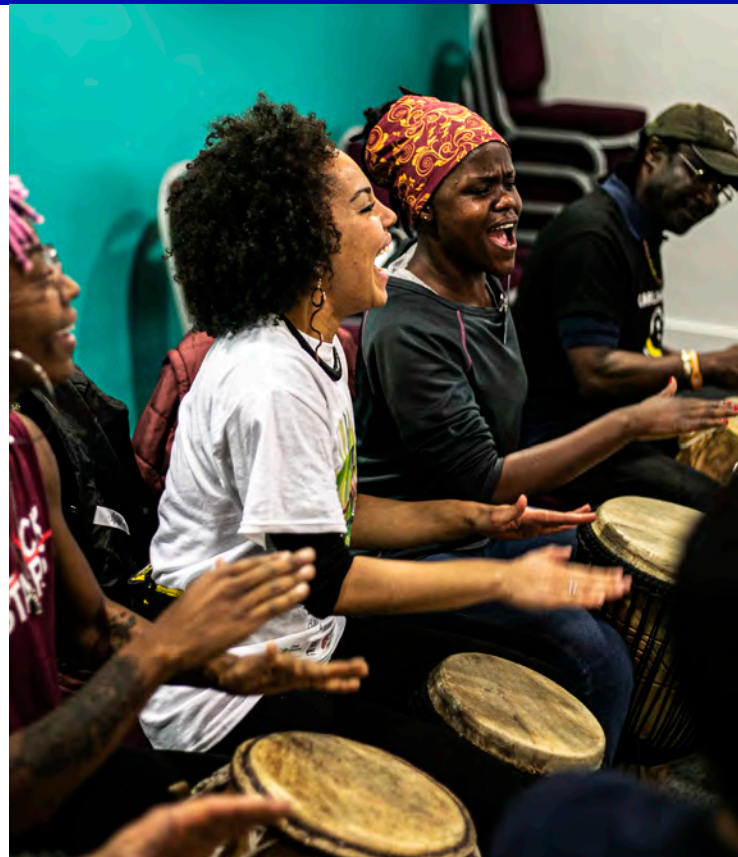
THEME	<i>FUNDRAISING AND SUSTAINABILITY</i> GOAL: IMPROVEMENT IN SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING AND SUSTAINABILITY
THEME	<i>EDUCATION AND TRAINING</i> GOAL: IMPROVEMENT FOR A DAD EDUCATION AND TRAINING INFRASTRUCTURE
THEME	<i>NETWORKS AND KNOWLEDGE GAP</i> GOAL: PROVIDING SUPPORT TO BUILD NETWORKS TO SHARE AND REDUCE THE KNOWLEDGE GAP ACROSS THE SECTOR
THEME	<i>VISIBILITY AND PLATFORMS</i> GOAL: INCREASING THE QUANTITY, RANGE AND STRENGTH OF VISIBILITY OF DAD STYLES
THEME	<i>LEGACY AND ARCHIVES</i> GOAL: URGENCY TO DOCUMENT LEGACY, OPEN UP AND INCREASE ARCHIVES
THEME	<i>AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT</i> GOAL: MORE AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY AND INCREASED ENGAGEMENT ACROSS A RANGE OF SETTINGS

The final two goals identified are Visibility and Platforms, and Legacy and Archives. Since the Mapping Report was released in 2019, the range of possibilities and the conversation around both these areas has changed dramatically.

One Dance UK is reviewing these and other goals, to identify how best to approach these in the current climate. The valuable input and suggestions from the World Café attendees has been collated and noted, and continues to be a point of reference for the team as we navigate through these uncertain times towards a more diverse, inclusive industry post-pandemic.

**WE WELCOME YOUR THOUGHTS
AND SUGGESTIONS.**

EMAIL YOUR FEEDBACK, COMMENTS
OR FURTHER SUGGESTIONS TO
HOTFOOT@ONEDANCEUK.ORG



Ghanaian Traditional African Drumming session led by Prof. Sylvanus Kwashie Kuwor.
© Dani Bower for One Dance UK

DIVERSITY OR SKIN COLOUR

BY GRETA MENDEZ MBE

WWW.GMENDEZ-OWD.CO.UK 



Greta Mendez MBE



Greta Mendez' *Ndulgence* © Tunde Shoderu, designed by Alexis Shepherd

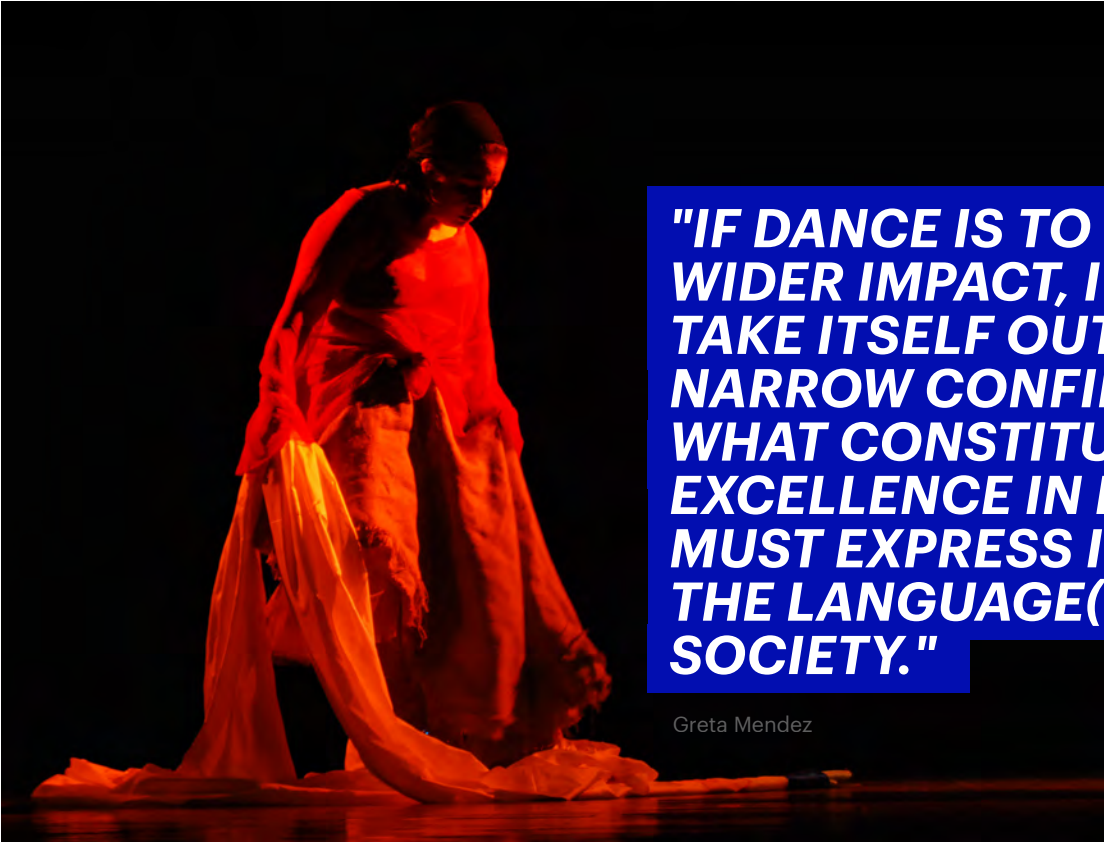
With the way we communicate leaping further online, Greta Mendez MBE asks the question: Are we embracing this opportunity to discover and celebrate more diverse international styles?

For the past year, we have lived mostly in a state of lockdown with very little direct human contact. This has meant that most of our art exchanges and consumption have been via the internet, which has afforded us a more international reach. Has this international reach meant that we are exposed to a truly diverse range of art/dance forms? Have we only engaged with dance forms that cater to Western notions of dance, peppered with a few African & Asian aesthetics?

If we examine most of the images used to promote dance, we would note that they, in the main, pander to Western ideals.

Lockdown gave me time to look at videos of young children, mostly in Africa, doing *their* dances which are not yet exposed to Western notions of dance. The children's dances were complex and dynamic, with the movements emanating out of their bodies in multifaceted, witty, energetic, joyous, and soulful vocabularies. In fact, *they were the dances and the dances were them.*

An eleven-year-old boy, Anthony Madu, was filmed doing ballet training in his backyard in the rain in Lagos, Nigeria. Needless to say, he, like so many of the other children, wanted to be a 'dancer.' This video was shown on worldwide news and the actress Cynthia Erivo, who is also Nigerian, introduced him to the prestigious American Ballet Theatre where he has earned a scholarship; brilliant. There were no such global clarion calls for the children doing their dances, with all the poetic sensibilities of new and challenging dance.



"IF DANCE IS TO HAVE A WIDER IMPACT, IT MUST TAKE ITSELF OUT OF THE NARROW CONFINES OF WHAT CONSTITUTES EXCELLENCE IN DANCE AND MUST EXPRESS ITSELF IN THE LANGUAGE(S) OF ITS SOCIETY."

Greta Mendez

Greta Mendez' *Ndulgence* © Inder Salim, designed by Alexis Shepherd

As we open up to increasingly international engagement, are we in danger of maintaining the inherent hierarchal structures? Or are we willing to embrace other forms of art/dance on their own terms and value?

Published in 1976, Naseem Khan wrote a report entitled, *The Arts Britain Ignores*. It drew attention to arts and cultural activities being undertaken by Britain's Asian and African/Caribbean communities as being integral to British culture. For a while, works which emerged out of these cultures were given mainstream platforms, but more recently they have been pushed to the margins.

Can dance heal the world? Yes, it can, if people are allowed to dance their dance to unearth *their* inherent unique richness and create works which speak to and about society's dreams, pain, and hallelujahs. These dances need to be celebrated at the highest level.

Currently, dance in the mainstream is not diverse; skin colour is not a reflection of diversity. For example, let us examine the diverse cultural communities in London. There are over 200 languages spoken in London, including Tigrinya, Vietnamese, Sinhala, Peruvian, and Farsi.

However, where is the evidence of these ethnic groups and the many others' cultural art forms on the mainstream stages? Where do we see their stories, the rhythms of these people and their dance forms?

In this globalised world and despite having an international outreach via Zoom, the language of dance, on the whole in the mainstream, maintains the narrow, colonised structures.

If we are to truly heal the world through dance, we must encourage the young to create and celebrate the dances which emerge out of their identities onto the main stages, so we can all witness and grow.

Ken Saro Wiwa, Nigerian novelist, producer, environmental activist, fought Shell for the rights of the Ogoni people.

He said:

*We dance to liberate ourselves,
Dance your anger and your joys
Dance the GUNS to Silence
Dance dance dance.*

Greta Mendez MBE is a performance artist, carnival producer and dance and drama producer, director and educator. She has performed and created works for the Royal Opera House, National Theatre, and created award-winning work on stages and screens worldwide.

BLACK ARTISTS IN DANCE (BAiD)

BY JOYCE GYIMAH AND GERRARD MARTIN

WWW.BAIDPROJECT.COM 

Founded in 2014 by Joyce Gyimah and Gerrard Martin, collectively BAiD represents 25 years of experience in dance management, producing, mentoring, educating, choreographing and performing. The BAiD vision is to build a sustainable and inclusive global dance environment where Black artists create, develop and thrive.

For *HOTFOOT*, the BAiD team outline their achievements, future aims, and how they recommend we 'pave the way' for future generations to succeed.



Gerrard Martin



Joyce Gyimah

EARLY YEARS

Since 2014, BAiD has been researching and gathering information on Black dance artists, with the aim of creating a directory that represents the scope of those working within the sector. Through lived experience BAiD is passionate about documenting journeys of Black dance artists in the UK as a means to drive strategic and radical change within the sector.

For BAiD, 'Black dance artists' represents those who are from an African Diasporic heritage who work within the dance sector. This includes, dancers, choreographers, teachers, dramaturges, costume designers, researchers and many more.

BAiD INITIATIVES

To date, BAiD have been working on the following initiatives.

BAiD ARTIST FOCUS: Developed in 2014, this series gives the audience an insight into the work of Black dance pioneers and artists. Contributors have included Kenneth Tharp CBE, Greta Mendez MBE, Seke Chimutengwende, Denzil Bailey and Coral Messam.



" TRUE REPRESENTATION COMES WITH INCLUSION; THE DANCE SECTOR CANNOT CONTINUE TO UPHOLD THE NOTION OF BEING UNATTAINABLE, ELUSIVE AND EXCLUSIVE IF IT WISHES TO DEVELOP FUTURE GENERATIONS OF ARTISTS, WHICH REPRESENT THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY"

Joyce Gyimah and Gerrard Martin

© BAiD

BAiD DIRECTORY: An ongoing resource of Black artists working within the sector. BAiD hopes to make this resource available to organisations and individuals as a means of addressing diversity and inclusivity within the sector.

POSITION AND PURPOSE

BAiD aims to support individuals and organisations, empowering them to question dominant societal ideologies and perceptions of the dancing body, aesthetic and language. BAiD creates a physical and digital platform that responds to the networking, educational, and professional needs of those working within the sector.

In championing Black dance artists, BAiD is currently building strategic partnerships with a range of dance institutions, unions, and advocacy organisations. In 2020, BAiD joined a small number of other organisations working alongside Equity, in a drive for equality, representation, and diversity within the arts sector.

PRESENT AND FUTURE PLANS

We support organisations in making changes to their diversity and inclusion policies, decolonising curriculums, developing sustainable health and wellbeing programmes as well as providing resources that support an ethnically diverse programme.

During 2020, BAiD developed an established team of therapists working in the areas of psychotherapy, counselling, coaching and dance movement therapy. This team is dedicated to supporting all dance artists from students to established professionals.

BAiD is committed to developing apprenticeships that aim to readdress the lack of representation of Black leadership at senior management level. Our work in this area is driven by our passion for future change makers to be representative of our ethnically diverse global society. Our work seeks to provide mentorship in a range of career pathways from artists to policy makers.

PAVING THE WAY

In paving the way for aspiring Black artists, it is essential to consider the work on a global and not just a national level. Sustainability is paramount in the development of our work, how we operate determines our longevity.

To actively champion Black artists, there has to be a shift towards developing strategic partnerships. We also champion an entrepreneurial approach, which requires considering sponsorships, aligning with businesses outside of the dance sector, developing the work on a global level and thinking outside of your immediate environment.

BLM: A YEAR ON STUDENT VOICES

BY UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON
(UEL) STUDENTS

WWW.UEL.AC.UK 

The impact of George Floyd's death and the subsequent wave of protest reverberated through the arts community and changed many perspectives, including of those in higher education.

Current students of the University of East London BA (Hons): Dance Urban Practice reflect on how the shift in conversation has affected them, their artistry, and their outlook.

KIEYANN FARQUHARSON

Of course, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement is still at the forefront of the cultural conversation today. In this current century, BLM has led to conversations about race in the dance industry by the way people judge. This could be recognised, for example, through the type of clothes dancers wear; a lot of people assume that dancers do a particular style simply by what they wear.

Also, I feel that there is favouritism within the dance field. There is the perception that a lot of jobs are given to particular dancers because of who they know, and often this has favoured white artists. However, in commercialised dance, there has been an increase in dancers of colour on TV. As a dancer myself it just goes to show how the dance industry is evolving.

BLM has led to our university course to be more inclusive of learning and exploring a wide range of dance styles and cultures. It gives everyone a chance to try something new, which is a special experience because most universities don't have an Urban Dance course. At the University of East London, this course encourages dancers to become more versatile which prepares us well for the world after we graduate, no matter what the conversation is.



Both photos: UEL students © Dr Jo Read



UEL students © Dr Jo Read

SANDRA MADUOMA

As students, I feel that the content [of dance courses] has adapted for us to involve more of our life experiences. There is more freedom to explore and research specific topics, like BLM, that matter to us on the course. For example, in one of our project modules, we have the complete freedom to create a dance on-screen film that is focused on activism. Black Lives Matter is the definition of a vigorous campaign to bring about social change.

As university students, BLM has always affected us, not just in 2020 but for our whole lives growing up as the minority in the UK. However, now with more awareness of explicit racism, institutional racism and minuscule racism, we are allowed to bring our reality into higher education and have been able to work on a project that we hold dear to our hearts.

A new perspective I have gained from this heartfelt movement includes that of the continuous corruption of the world: the prejudice, the people-pleasing and the pride of life. I believe that part of why racism still exists today is because of these three things. The decay and darkness of this world which has had many problematic consequences - one of them being racism - is a theme I would like to explore.

But also, other creative ideas can include solutions to this movement's root causes. Looking at more of a positive perspective, the BLM movement has also sparked choreographic ideas about unification. The work dance students have been making have not always necessarily been focused on racism and inequality. However, the effect of this movement has revived the numbness of racism within the dance industry and other aspects of life that went on for so long.

UEL students perform in *Collide 2018* © Donae Willis

Shaping the future of dance



Sharon Watson MBE
CEO & Principal

“As we exit lockdown, a return to the status quo is simply not an option.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of what we do. Through our courses, our teaching, our guest artists and our programming, we have an opportunity to create real change.

As our artists step out into the wider world, we are confident they can rewrite the narrative and be the change we all wish to see.”

nscd.ac.uk

Folu Odimayo © Nicole Guarino



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The
Guardian
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BE EXPRESSIVE BE CREATIVE BE YOU

Fuelling your passion and developing your artistic practice as a creator and performer of dance.

2021 OPEN DAYS

- Saturday 26th June
- Sunday 10th October
- Friday 29th October
- Saturday 20th November

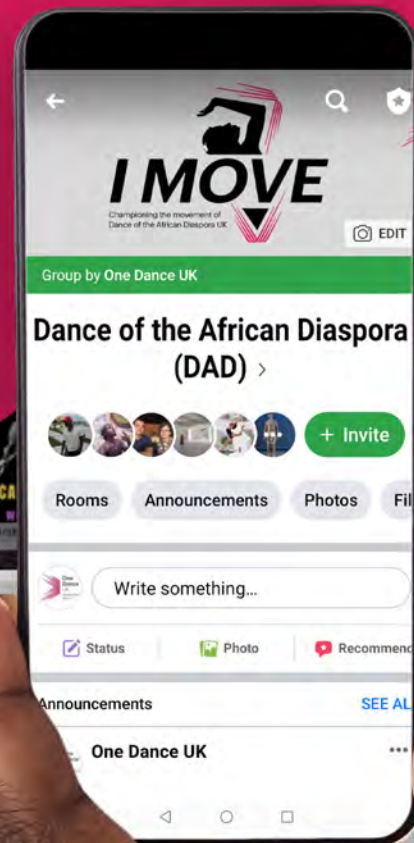
FIND OUT MORE

University of Chichester Dance | @UoC_dance | @uoc_dance | @chiuni | University of Chichester | chi.ac.uk/dance

Join the conversation

Have you joined our Facebook group yet? Build connections within the DAD community, share your practice and knowledge, engage in discussions and stay up to date with all the latest DAD news!

Click to connect





PROFESSION PERSPECTIVE



**NAL
VES**



INTERVIEW

DANCE CHALLENGES

AN INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS TALAWA PRESTØ

CAMERON BALL
HOTFOOT EDITOR

WWW.TABANKADANCE.COM 

Tabanka Dance Ensemble is based in Norway, and uses the rich aesthetics of Africa and the Caribbean in order to create vibrant contemporary work.



Thomas Talawa Prestø © Tabanka Dance Ensemble



Tabanka Dance Ensemble perform *Jazz Ain't Nothing but Soul*, co-produced with Dansens Hus © Maskinen

There has been a huge rise in dance 'trends' on social media platforms, particularly on TikTok which now has over 800 million users. As more people than ever take to social media to showcase their dance talents, it has revived much-needed conversations around cultural appropriation.

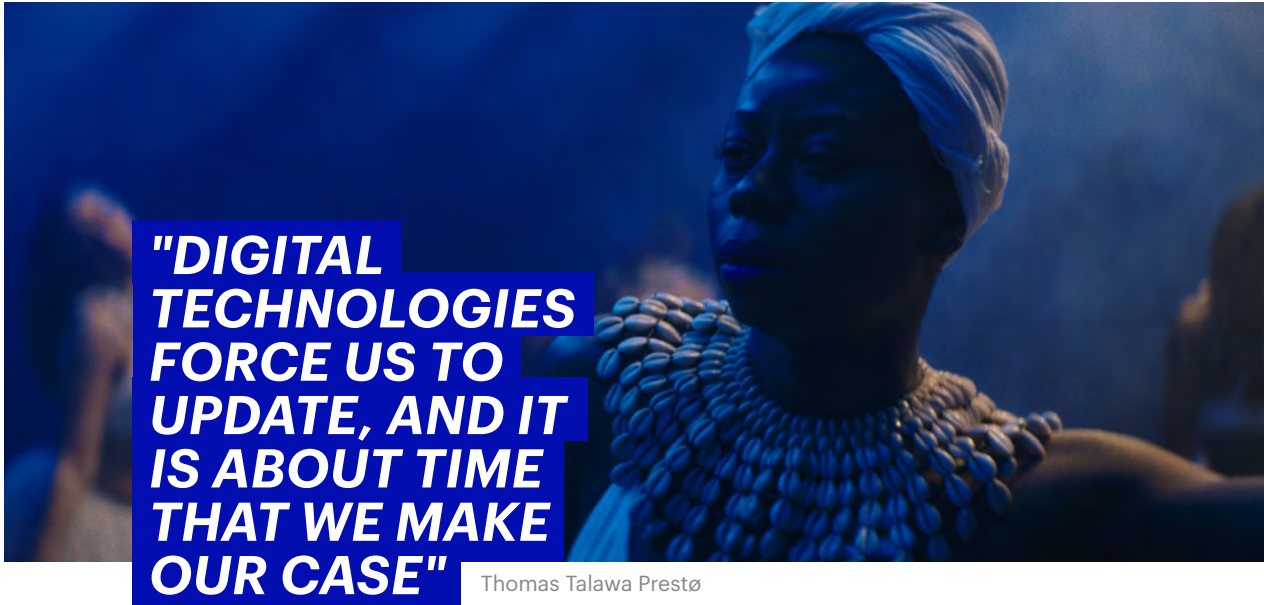
HOTFOOT Editor Cameron Ball talks about this development with Thomas Talawa Prestø, Artistic Director and Founder of Tabanka African & Caribbean Peoples Dance Ensemble.

How have you seen creativity and the communication of dance change with the rise of social media dance content, where dance styles of African origin are so often appropriated? Can you see parallels with previous generations?

I do not find that creativity has changed, but I would say that it is speeding up. Dance styles of the African Diaspora have always been appropriated and misappropriated, ever since the first forceful migration of African peoples across the Atlantic, and across the Mediterranean even before that.

What we can see - from the jazz era especially - is how dances and dance moves 'crossed over' the racial divide: by misappropriation first, and then with a sprinkling of black bodies to 'authenticate'. Usually these processes of dance craze adaptation took some years and then months. [Editor's note: Read an article on the development of jazz dance in the Autumn 2020 edition of HOTFOOT]

With TikTok and similar platforms, we have seen a dance movement being appropriated, the originating Black contributor overwritten and erased, and the craze ending in less than a month. This speed is newer and will test the limits of creativity over time I believe.



"DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES FORCE US TO UPDATE, AND IT IS ABOUT TIME THAT WE MAKE OUR CASE"

Thomas Talawa Prestø

Tabanka Dance Ensemble perform *Jazz Ain't Nothing but Soul*, co-produced with Dansens Hus © Maskinen

Do you see people doing dance moves that originated in African styles, which are very popular on social media, as a compliment to the forms and a natural progression of them, or as a problematic more modern example of cultural appropriation?

Several of our practices are inclusive. I have seen examples such as Carnival and even the 'Jerusalema dance challenge' which was trending much like the Electric Slide did. Our practices invite participation and I do not mind people giving in to the allure.

However, I do not believe that stealing, 'biting' or taking others' creativity for your own is complimenting. It is sabotage; it is immoral; it is everything we would say it was if it was done to white creativity.

Often when appropriation happens it is said that "no one can own culture or creativity". I find that interesting as we see Europeanist creators being protected, trademarking and copyrighting their work left, right and centre. It is hypocritical.

The disenfranchisement of African people from the labour of our own bodies has a history, and that history is racist. We do own our own creativity, and even if we invite people to join, we do not invite you to take the entire dinner table and move it to your house, to then uninvite us. We can be your chef, but then you have to pay, and the rates are high, because the food is flavourful and spicy.

Copyright is based on an understanding of ballet. Ballet is alphabetical in some ways. Certain movements are standard parts of the vocabulary,

and are executed in a prescribed way, much like shaping letters. Therefore, individual moves are not copyrighted, just like letters would not be. Phrases, and poetic paragraphs, however, would be.

African Diaspora dance should be understood more like hieroglyphs. One movement is a compound paragraph. Much like an utterance of the simple phrase "Uhhmm", can be an entire lecture from your mother.

Appropriation is seen in other digital technologies beyond social media. Fortnite and other videogames can steal Black dance movement, package and sell them in-game without having to credit anyone, nor share any profit with the creators.

This lack of crediting for Western commercial success has been going on since at least the 1940s with *Rum and Coca Cola*, the Calypso song which was a huge international hit for the Andrews Sisters and changed international copyright law. American songwriters claimed to have 'dreamt' the song, which had already been performed in the Caribbean for years. Calypsonians from Trinidad travelled to America to contest its origins, and won their case on behalf of the original creators.

Digital technologies force us to update, and it is about time that we make our case for DAD movement to be seen as image. As such, a singular move (hieroglyph) like the Dab or Nae Nae could be subject to copyright with the originator being protected. This would also be relevant for both African and Caribbean dancers who constantly find their movement being used in commercial music videos without being credited.



INTERVIEW



Tabanka Dance Ensemble perform *Jazz Ain't Nothing but Soul*, co-produced with Dansens Hus © Maskinen

When does a reference or a nod to a certain dance form become appropriation? How can people put their own spin on a dance style, as part of dance's natural evolution? People have certainly misused African culture, including dance, throughout history, in commercialisation and other ways, but are there instances more recently where this is a good thing for visibility and sharing of ideas and styles?

The question is always, good for whom? I am sure there are dancers reading this. How often has someone told you to perform for free because it is "good exposure for you"? How often has it contributed to your livelihood or bills? I am not saying it never happens, but it is so rare that it is nothing but devaluation to bring it up as a main argument.

A trained ballet dancer would not be performing in a company multiple times "for the exposure". They have invested in their training and would therefore expect to be paid, hired and compensated. Of course, we all know that ballet dancers can be mistreated along with the rest of us. However, we can say that both historically and now, DAD styles have received discriminatory treatment.

So, appropriation is almost always good for the appropriator, who is also the one who evolves. DAD is appropriated from all the time. Our enslaved ancestors have been appropriated from more than any other. What did they gain from it? Are we claiming that the Diaspora rhythms are way more advanced and complex than the Western ones? That Diaspora Africans are more creative?

That is not the case, and as such we can safely say that DAD practitioners are brilliant and deeply creative under any conditions. We cannot, however, claim that appropriation has benefitted the Diaspora (closer to the appropriators) nor that it has led to significant deepening of cultural practice.

If your personal work is truly valued, it would be more valued on you than on others. If one of Picasso's paintings was sold for £10 but one by his plagiariser was sold for £10 million, would we claim that that was a compliment to Picasso?

What responsibility do dance makers, even on more informal settings like Instagram and TikTok, have to reference dance styles in the correct way? They are, after all, some of the most influential creatives of this generation.

Our responsibility to be good people does not change according to platform. Not stealing is not about if it's at home or on the streets. We usually do not steal from major concert dance works because we know there will be repercussions. What is happening is that we believe that the "kids" on social media do not have the power to give consequence, therefore it is a free for all. That is the real process and we need to stop rebranding it as innocent. Kids will be kids but if you teach no morals, eventually you will have raised an immoral scoundrel.

So I believe we should credit. Tagging or shouting out the originator affording them followers, visibility and possible monetisation is a seconds-long effort. It does not even take minutes. I cannot for the life of me find a single argument for why that should not be both possible and expected.

Any other thoughts on how we can constructively adapt traditional African styles using today's technologies?

My thought is that we do not need to. Our genres are designed to be dimensional. They have energy and aura, and a charisma which translates well to media. That is why it ran and led to the success of MTV and the likes. How many international artists like Madonna, Lady Gaga, Usher, Michael Jackson, and Beyonce owe at least part of their success and reach to dance that accompanies their music? It is not a question that if we were comparing DAD's social media presence and digital presence to any other dance genre that we are winning by a landslide. So when it comes to our genres it needs no adapting.

Some readers might now say "the question was about traditional African styles". You see our styles are living. I can bust five 'traditional' movements right now, that are already viral and renamed for social media this month. Our traditional moves will always be hyper-contemporary.

REVIEW

STITCHING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

#MBMS21'S DEMOCRATISATION OF THE ONLINE FESTIVAL SPACE

BY ATHENA MAZARAKIS

WWW.FORGOTTENANGLE.CO.ZA



MY BODY MY SPACE:
PUBLIC ARTS FESTIVAL



Like many arts festivals across the world affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the My Body My Space: Public Arts Festival (MBMS) made the leap into the online space in 2021.

With this leap MBMS, curated by The Forgotten Angle Theatre Collaborative (FATC), transitioned from being a rural arts festival based in Mpumalanga, South Africa, to be the first arts festival globally to take place on a dedicated WhatsApp line.

The migration of MBMS into the digital space has been a complex process within the South African context, a country still marked by gross socio-economic inequality 27 years into democracy. The COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent lockdown has only amplified these inequalities and is evident in the very real digital divide within the country – in the way that so many are excluded from online activities due to high data costs, an unstable power supply, and limited access to computers.

As a festival deeply committed to inclusivity and access, the question “How do we keep the festival free, inclusive, and accessible?” became the driving concern that informed the migration into the online space and that ultimately led to the choice of social media platform, WhatsApp, as the festival’s primary platform. In this way, the MBMS festival became an exploration of how to democratize the digital space for arts practice.

Democratizing arts practice and access to the arts have been embedded in the festival’s DNA since its inception. As a flagship project of FATC, one of South Africa’s leading dance organisations with a strong socio-political dance conscience, MBMS has always been dedicated to providing free access to cutting-edge contemporary works that probe critical social issues.



Qash-Qash (MBMS 2018) Choreographed by Nomcebisi Moyikwa © Christo Doherty





"YOU CAN LITERALLY TAKE A QUICK TIME OUT AT ANY POINT TO GET SOME INSPIRATION OR BE MOVED. ON DEMAND BITE-SIZE ART IS THE FUTURE"

*Matlou (MBMS 2018)
Choreographed by Julia Burnham © Christo Doherty*

MBMS21 Audience Survey Respondent

From 2016 the festival has developed a distinct rural identity and is recognised for the way that it brings a diverse audience of local Emakhazeni children and youth together with national and international visitors. The way that the audience makes its way, communally and intimately, through the Emakhazeni landscape, encountering performances, installations, and exhibitions in a variety of public spaces, has become a defining feature of the festival.

The MBMS audience stitches diverse spaces together as it moves from one performance site to another. These are spaces still marked by the separating legacy of Apartheid spatial planning. By moving from site to site, the festival audience actively disrupt the familiar ways people move

through these public spaces, creating new routes and experiences that perforate socio-economic boundaries.

As with all public art, the MBMS festival has historically taken art to where people are. The primary challenge facing the festival team when considering the migration to the online space was how to retain this public arts ethos of free, inclusive access within the digitally divided South African context.

Research on other South African festivals that had already migrated to online platforms yielded some useful information. Over 60% of the audience accessing a major national arts festival online, did so through their mobile devices using cellular



Cindir Sile (MBMS 2018) Choreographed by Kwanele Finch Thusi © Christo Doherty

data. Further research revealed that 91% of the MBMS target audience had access to mobile devices. In order to make MBMS as inclusive as possible it became evident that MBMS had to become a 'festival on your phone' to take art to where people are. While it needed to put art at people's fingertips, it also needed to be low on data usage to be truly accessible.

The MBMS team settled on WhatsApp as the primary platform for the festival due to its low data usage and through the discovery of TURN.io, a cloud-based application that integrates directly with the WhatsApp Business API. TURN.io is a chat for social impact interface that enables organisations to engage efficiently at scale, with AI assistance. WhatsApp lines, powered by TURN.io, have been used since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic by organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), but MBMS is the first use-case, globally, of the TURN.io platform for hosting an arts festival.

So, how does it work and what makes it accessible? The audience, or end-user, navigates the festival menus through a chat with the fully automated MBMS WhatsApp line. All the content is available 24/7, which means that an end-user can view something, from an offering of over 90 works, on-demand.

A key factor in making the festival accessible in terms of data usage is that individual videos are restricted by a 16MB limit. Each work is therefore

fairly light on data and an end-user can engage the festival according to the data available to them. This data limit on content has influenced the shape of the festival.

The digital iteration of MBMS has evolved into a programme of short-format works, which contributes to the accessibility of the festival, as end-users are able to engage bite-sized chunks of content throughout the day as it suits them. While it has been impossible to retain the free aspect of the public arts festival, the data-light nature of content alongside the short-format works has gone a long way in making the festival as accessible as possible in the transition to the digital space.

While the intention of hosting the festival on the WhatsApp platform was primarily to make MBMS accessible to a South African audience, the online nature of the festival has increased the festival's reach dramatically. Over 3500 active users have engaged in the MBMS festival since its launch on 29 January 2021. The programme boasts a diverse range of performances, exhibitions, and educational activities. And while the majority of the audience is based in South Africa, users in several countries such as the UK, Australia, Italy, Germany, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe have accessed the festival.

To access the festival send 'Hi' to +27600110444 on WhatsApp.

REVIEW

LET'S DANCE INTERNATIONAL FRONTIERS 2021

PAWLET BROOKES
CEO AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
SERENDIPITY

WWW.SERENDIPITY-UK.COM 



LET'S DANCE
INTERNATIONAL
FRONTIERS

As one of the early adopters of working digitally following the creation of The Alternative LDIF20 in just six weeks, we knew that whether it be online or in person, we would make something happen for *Let's Dance International Frontiers 2021; Creating Socially Engaged Art: Can Dance Change the World?*

The event started with a gathering on Zoom where we celebrated International Dance Day, and we were fortunate to have the opportunity to share Joseph Toonga's *Born to Manifest* and also speak with Joseph for our podcast series *A Dialogue with Masters*. Toonga's work is particularly poignant given the continued urgency of Black Lives Matter. His new outdoor work *Born to Protest* will grace the streets of Leicester's Orton Square on 19 June, acknowledging the continued fight for equality and justice and the role that the arts, and in particular dance, can play in bringing people together.

This message was highlighted throughout the conference day. Digitally travelling around the world, I was delighted to chair the conversation with panellists which included Jeanette Bain-Burnett, Vivine Scarlett, Chanon Judson and Samatha Speis from Urban Bush Women, Greta Mendez MBE, Maya Taylor, Marlène Myrtil and Wanjiru Kamuyu who reflected on their own lived experiences as Black women and the role that dance plays in their own activism.



Maya Taylor © Diogo De Lima

This year Serendipity welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with Curve, Leicester, and return to the stage. We presented a livestream of BOP Jazz Theatre Company's exciting repertoire celebrating their 25-year-long legacy, alongside emerging artists Fubunation and Dani Harris-Walters for the *Black British Dance Platform*, in partnership with Dance4. Internationally based artists Yinka Esi Graves and Maya Taylor, who were unable to travel, instead took to venues in Seville and New Orleans respectively to share the first look at their new works *The Disappearing Act* and *Shape | Shifter* which will return for LDIF22.



Yinka Esi Graves © Miguel Ángel Rosales and Andres Zoilo

This is just a taste of what the full festival had and has on offer, with illustrator in residence, Patricia Vester, encapsulating the spirit and movement of each day with a series of drawings for her *Spot a Day Dance Diary*, which will form part of an exhibition in Leicester later this year.

We are delighted to present LDIF+ masterclasses with Jonzi D and Dollie Henry in June, alongside a chance to see the exhibition *Colonisation in Reverse: Jean-Léon Destiné in person* at Curve, celebrating the life and career of a seminal choreographer who influenced the work of Katherine Dunham, Geoffrey Holder, George Balanchine and many others.

Further information on this year's events can be found at:
www.serendipity-uk.com/programme



BOP Jazz Dance Theatre © Paul Jenkins

HIP HOP CONFERENCE

15 JULY 2021 - ONLINE

REGISTER:

bit.ly/HipHopConference 

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[@HIPHOP_HIGHERED](https://twitter.com/HIPHOP_HIGHERED) 

The Hip Hop & Higher Education Conference, presented by the University of Sheffield, is taking place on 15 July, featuring a mix of academic papers, performances and workshops. Dr. Rosa Cisneros talks to Dr. Alex Mason on the background to this event, and its particular relevance for the sector today.

Please describe the conference. What sort of content can people expect? Why now?

The Hip Hop & Higher Education Conference is a free one-day online event that brings together academics, artists and other members of the hip hop community to celebrate the critical, creative and communal elements of hip hop culture. It also provides a space for participants to explore the relationship between hip hop and higher education and interrogate the exclusionary practices that have historically seen hip hop marginalised by universities. Finally, it looks at ways to dismantle these barriers and ensure hip hop becomes part of higher education on its own terms.

For me this conference has been a long time coming, having been perpetually frustrated by the way universities have dismissed and derided its intellectual and creative merits. After working on some projects with hip hop artist Otis Mensah, which sought to highlight the philosophical roots of rap, I decided I wanted to connect with more people who were similarly convinced of hip hop's value, like Dr Stuart Green who is co-organising the conference. My own research background is on race and higher education, so I think current conversations about decolonising the curriculum and widespread dissatisfaction with the homogeneity of universities also form part of my 'why now'.



Dr Alex Mason and Otis Mensah © A. Mason



'Nathan Geering, (c) Tim Thumb

You mention performance, lectures, workshops taking place digitally. If so, how do you imagine you will keep the spirit of the embodied experiences alive through the digital?

The original plan was for the conference to be a physical event. There have been some clear benefits to taking it online, however. It's meant that some brilliant educators and artists in other parts of the UK and across the world will be able to present papers and perform, which would almost certainly not have happened otherwise.

That being said, one of the key priorities for us when planning the conference was to capture the energy and communality of hip hop, which is admittedly harder online. I think the performances will be key to addressing this problem. Performers like Otis Mensah, Lady Sanity and NikNak (all featuring on the day) have the ability to reach through the two-dimensional box on Zoom, establish a connection, and with their energy and craft make you move and make you feel in freeing and profound ways.

What are some other key elements of the event?

A crucial thing for us is that the conference reflects the five pillars of hip hop. All too often people focus on MCing, but forget about the fundamental importance of graffiti, DJing and breakdancing to hip hop culture. So we've made sure that each of these elements will feature on the day.

Not only is this representative of the roots of hip hop, in an event that is concerned with higher education it also expands our approach to knowledge production. The practices and principles that underpin b-boying, for example, provide new ways to understand the self and society, and explore the relationship between the two. This is something that numerous academic fields should be drawing on but refuse to engage with.



*Nathan Geering and dancers perform Sight Specific

It is exciting that Nathan Geering is on the programme, with him being a former recipient of a One Dance UK Trailblazer Starters mentorship. What can you tell us about his involvement?

It's really exciting to have Nathan involved. As an award-winning artist from Sheffield who has achieved international acclaim, it was really important to have him on board. For me, he's an artist that really highlights the boundlessness of hip hop, taking it into the theatre, the Special Olympics, injury prevention and even neuroscience. He's also someone that is centrally involved in social justice movements, particularly around racism and ableism, and it was important to the organisers that we platformed people who had that political dimension as well.

As well as generously sharing knowledge and advice behind the scenes, Nathan will be presenting a paper on the day which discusses the Rationale Method he has developed; an innovative approach to improving access and inclusion for disabled people that is underpinned by principles of breakdancing and beatboxing. He will also be sharing an exclusive dance performance, which I can't wait for everyone to see!

You are using social media, particularly Twitter, to open up charged topics or highlight different books and critical arguments. How can people follow this?

Another major inspiration for this conference was #HipHopEd, originally created by Christopher Emdin in America, which uses Twitter to connect people from across the hip hop community and facilitate a democratic discussion about education. I am trying to do something similar in the buildup to the conference.

By sharing the ideas of various hip hop artists and educators through our official Twitter page, I hope to spark conversations and engender a sense of community that will be continued in the conference itself. For anyone who wants to follow or take part in this, our account is @HipHop_HigherEd.

The Hip Hop & Higher Education online conference is funded by BAAS (British Association for American Studies) and co-organised by Dr Alex Mason, Otis Mensah, Dr Stuart Green and Parise Carmichael-Murphy

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**"AFROBEAT WAS
CREATED BY AFRICAN
ARTIST FELA KUTI, AND
THE NEW SCHOOL IS
KNOWN AS AFROBEATS!"**

Patience James and Fumy Opeyemi

Alison Ray talks to two leading figures in the new social media-savvy, vibrant, empowered wave of Afrobeats dancers and teachers: Patience James, founder of Afro in Heels, and Fumy Opeyemi of Afro Dance Sensations. Together they have co-founded Gop Dancers. They talk about heritage, their inspirations, and what they have planned next.

How would you describe the dance styles you teach?

FUMY:

African artist Fela Kuti created Afrobeat, and this Nigerian genre can be fused with various African dance styles. Afro is big! There are so many styles under the umbrella from different countries in Africa. We know that once there is an Afrobeat song playing, everyone brings energy, support, and a joyful aspect of the dance to the music.

I call my style 'Afro Vibez' for this reason: it's a mixture of Afro and other styles I've learnt through out my training. One day I do modern and the next thing shoes are off and we're doing traditional or a mix of Coupé-Décalé and flamenco, Amapiano with hip hop and so on. The class is not just about learning, but about coming together as a family to enjoy the beauty of dance. It's not only about the style/technique, but the feeling, the attitude and 'vibe' that comes with it.



Fumy Opeyemi © Szep Photography

PATIENCE:

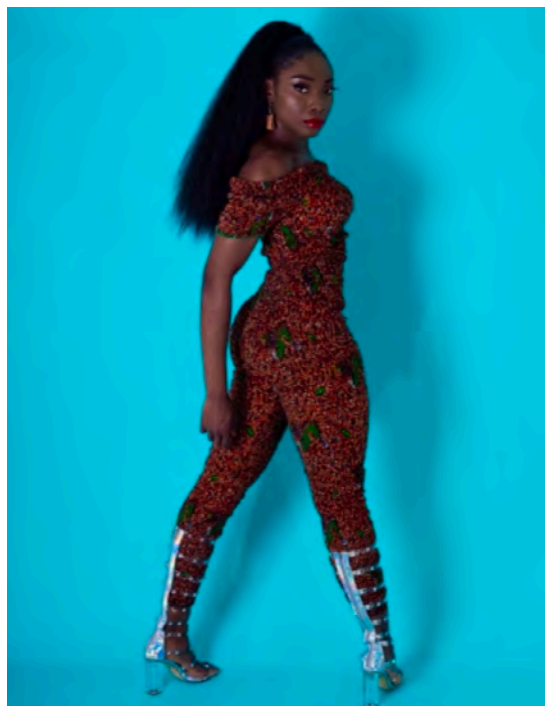
'The New School', also known as 'Afrobeats', was created by the likes of Burna Boy's new school style. Sometimes people confuse Afrobeats dance styles. If you are going to be technical, it's collectively called Afro, which includes: Afro House, Kuduro, Coupe De Cale, Azonto and more Afro dance styles. My brand is "Afro in Heels."

I was surprised how my career has developed with Afro dance, because I didn't think it was something I could do full time. I love dance, and I enjoy creating. I was scared of creating "Afro in Heels" when I first started out, but the popularity has grown quickly and some of my classes have had over a million views on YouTube.

Tell us about your training and your first steps into the professional world.
FUMY:

We both trained at WAC Arts in ballet, contemporary, jazz, Lindy Hop and other dance styles. I thought maybe I could have a professional career, but my family were not sure if there was a career in dance.

My training led me to my first job, straight after graduating from WAC Arts. I was invited by my Lindy Hop teacher to audition for the Lindy Hop (NHS) section in the Opening Ceremony of the 2012 London Olympic Games. From this performance at the Olympics, my family have become more aware of the career prospects in dance, and my career has developed since then.



Patience James © Szep Photography

PATIENCE:

Before I finished my training at WAC, I would always be working on choreography with Fumy in the studio, even during breaks. At that time, YouTube wasn't as big as it is now, but we posted a video of us dancing Afro style and it led to a booking. So, we decided to continue developing online dance content, and this has led to performances for artists at O2 Indigo, Breakin' Convention, Afro Dance Xplosion and others.

Why do you think that dancers have to be versatile? And what advice would you give to young dancers starting out?
FUMY:

Some dancers limit themselves when they navigate just one style of dance. Dancers who are interested in different styles, can have greater employment opportunities within the performing arts industry.

For me it's important to be open to different styles of dance. I sometimes blend multiple styles in my Afro Vibez classes: this is linked to how I feel the music and what inspires me.

PATIENCE:

I would say that you have to be passionate about what you are doing and stay consistent. Stay true to yourself and don't follow the trends. Also, if any readers want to learn Afro Dance styles, make sure you focus in classes so you can understand the choreography.





Participants after a Gop Dancers class © P. James

You might go to Home Bros who are brilliant at teaching the feeling, the connection to the music and Ghanaian styles, while Cory D Lionne will teach many elements of the history of the dance. My class is about developing performance technique through Afro Dance and learning a fusion of styles.

That is the level of the confidence I would like to have: they own it! Ghanaians have a strong work ethic, so they are producing daily dance content.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU IN YOUR WORK?

FUMY:

I love the creativity behind each video I make, and I don't want to limit myself to dance. It's about opening my eyes to the possibility for dancers to create concepts and narratives.

I have always been interested in different styles of dance, for example the various commercial dance styles. Janet Jackson inspired me - I wanted to be like her!

PATIENCE:

A choreographer called Galen Hooks inspires me, even though her work isn't Afro Dance. Also, the people in Ghana are inspiring as they are so hungry for Afro Dance. Some of them call themselves "Afro Beast/ Dance God", or "The World's Best Dancers"!

WHAT ARE YOUR AIMS AND GOALS FOR THE FUTURE?

FUMY:

I would like the opportunity to connect with producers, artists, event organisers, and promoters. I might be starting off with my own production team, to create my own films and aim to have them shown on Netflix or other digital platforms.

PATIENCE:

I love dancing and teaching, and the feedback I receive from my students on how Afro dance has transformed their lives fulfils me. I would like to develop my choreographies, dance theatre pieces and to have my work commissioned.

In these works, the employment of Afro dancers is important as this exposure would give them experience in the performing arts industry and develop their artistic discipline.

PODCASTS

PODCASTS

HOW ARE PODCASTS BECOMING A NEW MEANS OF ENGAGEMENT FOR DANCE ?

BY TAMAR DIXON

DANCE OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA
ADMINISTRATOR

AND

CHLOE SPRACKLING

MARKETING AND
COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT



Tamar Dixon © Dani Bower for
One Dance UK



Chloe Sprackling © Dani Bower
for One Dance UK

In recent years, influencers and content creators have opted into the world of audio. The global pandemic was an unexpected storm, where dance artists, practitioners and enthusiasts witnessed the sudden halt of live dance. However, this did not diminish the creative horizons of some dance artists, as they began using podcasts to sustain and expand audience development and engagement.

As we think more about why we dance, and how inclusive and diverse our sector is, podcasts have provided an excellent outlet for information sharing, debate and discussion.

RAPID GROWTH

The variety and popularity of podcasts have been growing for a number of years, and show no signs of stopping. In the UK alone there are over 15 million regular podcast listeners¹. Several dance artists and organisations have embraced podcasting as lockdown restrictions have prevented traditional methods of sharing art and ideas.

Podcasts generally have a youthful audience profile. According to *Forbes*², podcast listeners have a median age of 34, which is younger than broadcast radio (47) and network television (57). And this audience is growing: the percentage of monthly podcast listeners among 12-to-34 years old grew from 27% in 2017 to 49% in 2020.



PODCASTS

KEY BENEFITS FOR THE LISTENER

With increased time spent at home, people have been finding new ways to fill their time and new content to consume. Enter podcasts. The range of content on offer is endless, with Apple Podcasts hosting 1.96million podcasts in March 2021³. Part of the appeal of podcasts stems from how easy they are to consume, being generally free, easily managed, and completely portable.

Podcasts offer a welcome break from looking at a screen. Engaging with a podcast is not necessarily a passive activity, however. Listeners are more engaged with podcasts than they are with other media, according to a recent study from Pompeu Fabra University⁴, generating more vivid mental imagery. In addition, it has been reported⁵ that this increase in focus can bring with it an associated rush of endorphins, adrenaline and/or oxytocin which can either excite, inspire, or relax the listener.

KEY BENEFITS FOR THE DANCE SECTOR

The benefits of podcasting aren't just practical. Podcasts offer personal experiences: listeners can feel like they're getting to know someone, whilst also engaging with important discussions such as the development of the dance sector, covering topics such as racial discrimination in dance, career development, accessibility in dance and new developments in dance science.

Dance podcasts can also offer insight behind the scenes, allowing dance artists to talk about their journeys and inspirations. In an ever-changing sector, it appears that podcasts can provide a new creative outlet for artists to branch out, build their skill set, reach new audiences and tell their story.

START YOUR OWN

What message do you have to share? If you are interested in starting your own podcast, we recommend [this comprehensive guide](#).

RECOMMENDED LISTENS

A list of topical discussions, interviews and perspectives touching on dance of the African Diaspora: identity, history, participation, education and more.



BBC World Service: Witness Black History

Interviews with people who were there at key moments in black and civil rights history

[🎧: The Dance Theatre of Harlem](#)

[🎧: Josephine Baker – Black American Superstar](#)



INSiGHTZ: An insight into your dance journey

Hosted by Unique 'Dancer' Tay

[🎧: Series: Jamaica: Dance, Culture and Identity](#)



Yams and Yuca Podcast Hosted by Heather Benson and Kamara Gray

[🎧: yamsandyucapodcast.com](#)



Serendipity Podcast

Episodes: Temperature on the Streets. A Dialogue with Masters Podcast. Black Manifesto Podcast.

[🎧: serendipity-uk.com/listen](#)



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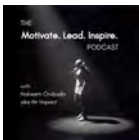
Be/Come Immersive Podcast

Hosted by Andre Bright
Episodes: The Lion Learns to Write
Episodes: #BecomeTalks

[becomeimmersive.co.uk/podcast](#)

[becomeimmersive.co.uk/becometalks](#)

Please note: #BecomeTalks are set up as a live safe space for the Black creative community.



Motivate Lead Inspire

Hosted by Hakeem Onibudo,
Founder of Impact Dance

[motivateleadinspire.podbean.com](#)



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Episodes: The Digital Spring Stage; including provocative podcasts discussing topics troubling our

artform, informative insights into the roles that underpin our community, and bespoke commissioned films.

[artists4artists.co.uk/the-duke-ldn-podcast](#)



The MDC Talks – A Screendance Podcast

Hosted by The Motion Dance Collective Team, Omari Carter, Anna Clifford and James Williams.

[anchor.fm/themdctalks](#)



BBC Radio 3 – Sound of Dance

Caribbean Dance, features Dr H. Patten

[bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0b0wlh4](#)

Carlos Acosta Celebrates 30 Years in Dance

[bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m0000h8v](#)

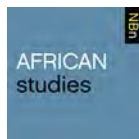
[Please note, you would need an account to access these podcasts. The option to download the podcasts is available]



One Dance UK #DanceInterviews

Episodes: HOTFOOT Online. Past editions

[soundcloud.com/user-103172572](#)



New Books in African Studies

Joanna Dee Das, Katherine Dunham: Dance and the African Diaspora (2017)

[On Apple podcasts](#)



The Dance Edit Podcast

Podcast from US-based Dance Media, breaking down of all the news that's moving the dance world, led by people who 'nerd out' about dance for a living.

[thedanceedit.com/podcast](#)



ROOTS 40+

Hosted by Judith Palmer MBE

[On Facebook](#)



Disruption

Hosted by O'Driscoll Collective

[O'Driscoll Collective - YouTube](#)

REFERENCES

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- www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/wellness/a34100126/podcast-brain-benefits/

PAVING THE WAY

ARE LEADERS CHOSEN OR DO THEY EMERGE?

BY ASHLEY JORDAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
ASCENSION DANCE COMPANY

WWW.ASCENSIONDANCE.CO.UK 

Ashley Jordan is a freelance dancer and performer. He has an MA Dance Performance (University of Chichester) and was chosen by Coventry City of Culture Trust 2021 as one of 15 city-wide cultural leaders



Ashley Jordan © Imagineer Productions, captured by Andrew Moore



Ashley Jordan © Taryn Muller Photography

For years I grappled internally with an idea presented to me by others: of me being 'a cultural leader'. I dismissed the notion that I had the capabilities for making positive things happen and so, when asked, I would underplay my achievements. Instead, I tried to let my passion for activism and the physical outputs from projects stand as a testament to me. I felt (and still feel) that your legacy of creating lasting positive ripples speaks much louder than the applause in the moment.

I think this feeling of staying humble and letting your actions speak louder than your words comes from my Black heritage. My parents were born in Barbados and migrated to the UK in the 1960s as children. Although they are both not the most forthcoming with talking about their childhood in the UK, a few stories about their steep adoption of UK culture, losing accents, understanding new UK slang, and trying not to stand out is enough information for me to understand parts of their journey. They worked extremely hard; I can't remember a moment when they complained about their circumstances. I think that attitude has been passed onto me.

From my own personal experiences and education, I now have a passion for changing the narrative when it comes to representation in the contemporary dance scene, as well as building opportunities for young people to experience dance. I wrestle daily with finding the balance between business/financial security and the barriers to dance engagement for low-income families and ethnically diverse young people.

For me, paving the way is not just starting a business and having a youth group, but consistently reflecting on the walls that are in place for young people from all walks of life to engage in the available provisions. I know that one opportunity might spark something extraordinary in a young person's life. Why should that come with a high price tag?



**"YOUR LEGACY OF
CREATING LASTING
POSITIVE RIPPLES
SPEAKS MUCH LOUDER
THAN THE APPLAUSE
IN THE MOMENT"**

Ashley Jordan © Laura Martarere

I'm aware though; it's not just about removing barriers and making platforms but also about representation in the industry. I often share a story about teaching a Year 3 class in a school in Coventry because it highlights the reason I'm passionate about being active and present in the dance industry. The school was situated in a culturally diverse area of Coventry, with young people from a mixture of backgrounds and living circumstances. The workshop was aimed at using the arts to reimagine how primary-aged children think about education. I arrived and set up my equipment as I always do, and waited for the teacher to lead the children into the school hall.

She led the class into the hall in single file. I had my back to the students, checking my laptop to make sure that I had everything in order before the session started and as the class walked in, I hear the words "Oh, he looks like my dad" come from a young Black girl near the back of the line. I looked up and was met with a large toothy smile.

At the time it made me laugh: I had never witnessed a comment like that before and it has stuck with me since. She had clearly never had a Black male teacher deliver a session in her school. It reminded me of the importance of seeing people like you in the roles and jobs you want to do as you're growing up. These encounters make you realise that there are things outside the more prescribed career routes that are ready to be explored.

I now know that my role as a Director of an arts organisation is to make space for others and myself in the dance sphere. To make space for young people from all colours, creeds, and financial backgrounds to feel welcome and supported in projects and in our youth groups, to build space for artists to express themselves in roles and positions within the company. To question when I think a space is non-inclusive from a diversity and inclusivity standpoint. To make sure that an invitation is extended to artists who might not have had the opportunities to be at a particular table, but have something to learn or contribute to the conversation. To address some of the infrastructures in place and build opportunities in communities for people that are representative of the current UK demographic. In my opinion, these are the minimum standards.

And I think that all stemmed from my parents and their journey.

My parents paved the way for me to be here; it's now my turn to pave the way for others like me to be listened to, heard, and represented correctly. I start by being present, making the most of the opportunities to build other people up, while using my platform to open doors for others.

DANCING WITH NO BOUNDARIES

A CONVERSATION WITH GESEL MASON

BY DR MALAIKA SARCO-THOMAS
SENIOR LECTURER & PROGRAMME LEADER BA
DANCE, UNIVERSITY OF CHESTER

**CHECK OUT THE DEVELOPMENT
OF BOTH PROJECTS AT:**

WWW.GESELMASON.COM 

Malaika Sarco-Thomas dances, choreographs, and writes. She leads the BA (Hons) Dance programme at the University of Chester's Department of Music, Media and Performance.

With more force than a Texas water pipe in the winter storm of February 2021, Austin-based Gesel Mason is encouraging dancers to 'burst' through limitations perceived and felt during a year of lockdowns, conversations about identity, and political unrest. By asking "Who would you be if you could be your fullest self without apology?", "If you didn't feel you had to answer to racism, what might you make, and/or create?", and "Who would you be if you had nothing to worry about?", her latest project, Yes-And uses these starting points to explore performance with an online community.

Sitting down with Mason (over video call, of course) to reflect on her creative work, I was struck by her ebullience and a sense of forward motion that reminded me of a zen archer. It could have been due to the time difference between Texas and Chester (which had me in almost-bedtime mode, and her on a chair in a sunny at-home dance studio on a late afternoon) but there was also a precise, unstoppable momentum behind her.

This momentum has been building for years. Since 2004 Mason has built and developed the *NO BOUNDARIES* project, a collection of ten solos by contemporary African American choreographers. She performs the solos interspersed with documentary footage of the choreographers, including Rennie Harris, Bebe Miller, Donald McKayle, and Dianne McIntyre. The project began, in part, as a way to problematise the question "What is Black dance? Is there such a thing?" Probing this term became key to revealing the expanse of this work. Mason explained, "Black dance—as a term that made no sense to me—really had no boundaries."

"The term 'Black dance' was coined by critics and created a monolith. This was a way of drawing a boundary to show you were either in or out of the club. I was like, no—these choreographers brought



Gesel Mason © Enoch Chan



Gesel Mason in *NO BOUNDARIES*
© Amitava Sarkar



"WHAT IS BLACK DANCE? IS THERE SUCH A THING?"

Gesel Mason

Gesel Mason with (Bebe Miller taken 1982 by Nat Tyleson), part of *Bebe Miller Legacy* © Gesel Mason

something to the field, and what did this unlock for all of us? I focused on recentring: instead of working from a place of absence, let's work from a place of abundance. Instead of 'please add me to the canon', let's all think about how we all are impacted by the works of Black choreographers!"

Having embodied so many different styles, stories, and perspectives, Mason is a dance history treasure. "My body became the living archive of these works, which is why I began to shift to the digital realm. I also wanted the audience to know these choreographers as people. And I wanted to document this journey."

The *NO BOUNDARIES* digital resource is under development and aims to be a new format of dance archive that is accessible and inspiring. It will invite us to consider, "How might we think about extensibility, connectivity, and resource-sharing?" Mason wants it to prompt new performance modes: "I continue to be really interested in: how we can focus on and emphasise the live performance and its kinesthetic and empathetic virtues in the digital realm? Not: it's digital or a performance, but how can it be both? An archive can be past, present, and future!"

In the spirit of *Yes-And*, I have to agree: Yes—and digital spaces can be a rich garden to seed living, breathing dance.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Gesel Mason is a choreographer, performer, educator, and arts facilitator. She is Artistic Director for Gesel Mason Performance Projects and Associate Professor of Dance and Choreography at the University of Texas at Austin. She was a member of Liz Lerman Dance Exchange and Ralph Lemon/Cross Performance Projects. She has also performed with Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company, Repertory Dance Theatre of Utah, and under the direction of Chuck Davis, Jacek Łumiński (Silesian Dance Theatre), Murray Louis, and Victoria Marks.

Her company, Gesel Mason Performance Projects (GMPP), serves as a medium for her creative work. GMPP is a project based dance company that seeks to create meaningful, relevant, and compelling art events as a way to encourage compassion and inquiry. In her work, Mason utilizes dance, theater, humour, and storytelling to bring visibility to voices unheard, situations neglected, or perspectives considered taboo. Numerous venues and festivals have presented Mason's choreography including John F. Kennedy Center, American Dance Festival, Bates Dance Festival, the International Association of Blacks in Dance, and numerous colleges and universities.



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DIASPORA EDUCATION AND TRAINING

TION
NING



REACHING STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS

MAINTAINING HIGH STANDARDS OF DANCE OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA EDUCATION AT KEY STAGE 3 AND 4

BY ALISON RAY MA
FOUNDER OF
ALISON RAY DANCE COMPANY

WWW.ALISONRAYDANCECOMPANY.CO.UK 

For suggestions on practitioners who deliver high quality school workshops in dance of the African Diaspora in your area, or for teacher resources and advice, contact:
info@onedanceuk.org



The teaching of DAD styles in schools is extremely important in order to develop a cultural understanding of their history and techniques. We can engage students by connecting them with an appreciation of diverse dance styles, and for some, show the range of opportunities to create a fruitful career in the dance industry.

HOW DO WE DEFINE DANCE OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA?

Dance styles of the African Diaspora originate from the African Peoples' cultural dances. Over time they have evolved and can be identified in different guises around the world. They include Afrobeat, dancehall, tap, hip hop and other street dance styles, jazz, modern dance, Latin styles such as salsa and tango, Caribbean dance styles and more.

TEACHING DAD STYLES IN KS3 AND KS4

Teachers of dance in the secondary school sector are often under pressure to ensure the subject is maintained on the curriculum. So, dance teachers are challenged with creating an engaging curriculum at Key Stage 3 (KS3), which should inform options at KS4 for GCSE Dance. Hence, dance of the African Diaspora will often be delivered in the most 'popular' styles: street dance, stomp, Capoeira, and contemporary/modern.



Students at Harris Academy © Brian Slater



Total Dance at Re:generations International Conference 2019, Salford Lowry, © Foteini Christofilopoulou

The delivery of these dance styles on the school curriculum requires intense planning and movement research to ensure school directives are met and that the lessons are engaging enough to motivate students. This motivation can depend on the demographic of the students and the school. However, due to time restrictions in schools, sometimes the history of dance styles, of particular importance with DAD, are not always delivered.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING HISTORIES AND TECHNIQUES OF DAD STYLES

Learning and appreciating history and techniques allows students to identify with the styles' cultural roots and their wider contribution to society. They will become familiar with the origin of the dance movements, which will help demystify any stereotypical images of dance of the African Diaspora.

In addition, teachers can discuss career paths and the impact these styles have had on dance artists who forged successful careers. It is important to name companies from the UK and around the world, which embrace DAD styles, so that students can identify some of the opportunities available. Some examples include, in the UK, Tavaziva, Phoenix Dance Theatre and Boy Blue Ent, and further afield, Tabanka Dance Ensemble, Philadanco and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

HOW TO REACH AND INSPIRE STUDENTS

The lack of specialist teachers in schools was confirmed by the Audit of Dance Provision (YST 2008) which found that "the majority of dance teaching in schools is often delivered by non-specialists, including classroom teachers in primary schools and physical education (PE) teachers in secondary school, specialist dance teachers making up 7% of teachers of dance in schools."

It also states, that although "dance is a subject within the PE National Curriculum benefiting from hard work and determination of specialists, it is difficult to imagine non-specialists in other subject areas teaching outside their specific field of expertise."¹

There can be issues teaching various dances of the African Diaspora. Often teachers are not specialists in the particular dance styles, therefore they would often have to upskill in that style. If budgets allow, schools can employ external teachers to engage students with particular styles. However, from my teaching experience students appreciate teachers who plan effectively to engage students no matter what the style.

¹Dance Education Issue 2 (2009: 12)



TEACHER SURVEY: TEACHING DAD STYLES IN KS3 AND KS4

Which styles of dance do you use as part of the dance curriculum for KS3/KS4?

- Jazz
- Hip hop
- Other street dance styles
- Afrobeat
- Modern
- African Dance (traditional styles)
Authentic jazz dance
- Lindy and Charleston
- Capoeira
- Stomp

How has the teaching of these styles impacted on the students' overall interest in dance?

- Helped to engage, motivate & inspire!
- They really enjoy Street Dance and are quite shocked with the reason behind its origins
- Helped them to pick GCSE and A level

Do you have sufficient time and resources to discuss with the students the history of these dance styles? What might help you deliver this more effectively?

- Workshop with visiting artist.
- Yes. A video clip may be useful.
- More teaching resources such as video tutorials
- We have a small amount of time as the focus is getting them moving, so if we can teach the history practically then we are winning

Going forward, what support would you like to see to further engage your students with dance of the African Diaspora?

- Possibly some specialised training embedded within dance teacher training. Most of my knowledge has been self-taught.
- More resources and training for other traditional African dance styles.
- More info on history and the development of African diaspora and video tutorials.

To summarise the short survey above, nearly all teachers who completed it would appreciate Continued Professional Development (CPD) on different DAD styles. Equally mentioned could be video tutorials in which teachers can access at their leisure, which would ideally include the history of the dance techniques.

BENEFITS OF TEACHING DAD STYLES TO KS1 AND KS2

Students from younger ages learn to appreciate the different rhythmical patterns and movement styles with dance of the African diaspora. Importantly, they also develop greater cultural awareness and appreciation.

Teaching DAD styles in the school sector has rewards for both teachers and students. Following the COVID-19 pandemic it is even more important for teachers to be supported in delivering dance, to encourage our young people to be creative and collaborative, and for the positive impact dance has on general wellbeing.



Students at Harris Academy © Brian Slater

A CURRICULUM FIT FOR PURPOSE

WORKING TO MAKE OUR SCHOOLS' DRAMA AND DANCE CURRICULA MORE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE

BY **mezze eade**

For information about the RinD project,
including resources, please email :
Representation.in.Drama@gmail.com

For updates on One Dance UK's work
on decolonising the dance curriculum,
please email :
info@onedanceuk.org

**"YOUNG PEOPLE
REGULARLY ENGAGE
ONLINE WITH THE
GLOBAL COMMUNITY
SO IT IS STRANGE THIS
IS NOT REFLECTED IN
OUR SCHOOLS AND
COLLEGES"**

mezze eade

Every child and young person should feel represented in the subject content they study at school. Every child and young person should be encouraged and inspired to learn about other ethnicities and cultures, and every child and young person should know that they have access to the broadest variety of knowledge in our schools and colleges.

RinD (Representation in Drama), led by Romana Fello and mezza eade, addresses systemic imbalances in KS3, GCSE and A-level Drama by supporting intersectional anti-racism work happening in UK schools, theatres and theatre companies. The initial focus of the project has been to work with exam boards to review the representation of writers on their GCSE Drama specification Set Texts lists.

In May 2020, between the four main exam boards there were 27 plays that could be studied by GCSE Drama students and 26 of these plays were written by a white playwright. The lack of representation of writers from the global majority* does not reflect the lives of young people and what is happening in the creative industries today. This lack of representation is found in Dance: five of the six set works created by white choreographers at A level and the careless omission of African American practitioners from jazz history at GCSE.

If you only have one type of flower in your garden, you don't have the best garden in the world. If you have every type of flower in your garden, then you have the best garden in the world.





seven methods of killing kylie jenner, by Jasmine Lee-Jones, The Royal Court Theatre © Helen Murray

This is a saying that a young person shared with us to convey the importance of an inclusive and representative curriculum. While our conversations and consultation have involved practitioners, industry professionals, teachers and exam boards the experiences of children and young people are at the heart of this project. Conversations with young people studying dance at school reveal a colonial viewpoint of the Black body still pervades and teachers lack cultural understanding and historical contextual knowledge of many dance styles.

Some teachers lack confidence and/or resources to introduce new texts to their students and RinD provides support to address these concerns. We deliver Anti-Racism and Representation in Drama sessions for trainee teachers, qualified teachers, facilitators and creative engagement staff. These sessions support teachers and facilitators to embed anti-racist pedagogy in their practice and build their skills and confidence in studying and directing new texts. We have created a list of plays suitable for KS3, GCSE and A level students and are creating written and filmed resources.

Tori Drew, Dance in Education Manager at One Dance UK and I are working with dancers, practitioners and companies across the UK to compile a list of works by global majority dance artists, with resources and music recommendation for teachers and students. This group has also shared recommendations with the exam boards on how the dance specifications need to change to be more inclusive and representative.

Sadly, resistance also exists in the justification that the students in a class or area are all white. In these schools and areas of the UK inclusivity in subject content is essential in preparing young people to engage empathetically with the UK's rich society of multiple heritages and ethnicities. Young people regularly engage online with the global community, so it is strange this is not reflected in our schools and colleges.

While we encourage young people to create work using their own voices and cultures, it is important to understand that some students prefer not to draw upon their heritage when making work. However, RinD aims to empower students, who



A Doll's House by Tanika Gupta, Lyric Hammersmith Theatre © Helen Maybanks

often suppress their creativity and conform to white western systems of theatre making, to utilise their knowledge and skills when devising work or writing monologues. And to educate those who mark students down for not conforming, stifling the creativity of our future theatre makers.

We are very pleased that Pearson Edexcel has added four texts to their GCSE Drama Set Text list. From September 2021, students studying this exam board specification can study plays by Bola Agbaje, In-Sook Chappell, Tanika Gupta and Roy Williams. Pearson plans to make additions to their A-level specification for study in 2022 and has begun to make changes to their BTEC Dance content.

In June Pearson will host an online webinar for teachers which will explore the new GCSE texts and share ways of working with existing texts to introduce global majority contexts and theatre practice. In 2022 we will create a podcast series exploring more plays by writers from the global majority.

RinD is an LTC (London Theatre Consortium) project working in partnership with Pearson Edexcel, the the Royal Court Theatre National Theatre, Open Drama, the Arts Council Bridge organisations and the DTEA (Drama and Theatre Education Alliance). RinD is the result of work, led by Romana Flello (Participation Manager, Royal Court), with the LTC Creative Learning group.

It is important to acknowledge that we could not have done this work without the sustained and tireless work that has been done by countless others. The configuration of events in 2020 enabled conversations, action and changes to happen that artists, activists and individuals have been asking to happen for decades and centuries. Acknowledge and include the truth.

** Global majority includes, but is not limited to, artists of African, North African, South Asian, South East Asian, East Asian, Caribbean, Latinx, Middle Eastern, Native American, Native Australian, Pacific Islanders, Roma and Traveller heritage or diaspora, and refers to people who have experienced racism due to the colour of their skin. We do not want to lump individuals into one category and try to be specific when talking about individuals and communities.*

PLACING DIVERSITY FRONT AND CENTRE



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The Place and London Contemporary Dance School (LCDS) look back on a 50-year history of paving the way within the dance industry, with innovation, internationalism and experimentation woven into its DNA. Mining its past as a pioneering arts school, the organisation is looking to challenge the notion of what 'contemporary' means leveraging a mission to power imagination and a vision for a world with more dance.

PROGRAMME REVIEW

In preparation for the Periodic Programme Review in 2020 – an academic process to reinvigorate programmes every five years - the team spent two years taking time to listen to students, artists, audiences and industry leaders, to understand the conditions needed for change and to take on board what they wanted to see within the industry and within society.

“There was a real drive from our Chief Executive Clare Connor not to be afraid of the scale of change we were going to make; this allowed us to fully free our imagination. If we really want to make a difference, what do we need to do?”, asks Baptiste Bourgougnon, Director of Undergraduate Studies. “The new programme allows us to build on what we have learnt but put these ideas centre stage.”

DIVERSITY OF DANCE STYLES

A central driver was the decentralising focus away from ballet and contemporary technique classes as the pinnacles of a hierarchical structure. LCDS is now introducing Kathak and hip hop classes, as well as practices from the African diaspora such as house, voguing, locking and traditional African dance practices into the curriculum.



Students at London Contemporary Dance School, The Place. © Camilla Greenwell



© Camilla Greenwell, 2019 Graduation Show, Holly Blakey work



**"THE NEW
ADMISSIONS
PROCESS WE'VE
DEVELOPED IS
MORE INCLUSIVE
OF PEOPLE FROM
VARIOUS DANCE
BACKGROUNDS."**

Dr Lise Uytterhoeven, Director
of Dance Studies at LCDS

Students at London Contemporary Dance School, The Place. © Camilla Greenwell

Another key factor in unlocking the change was a new validating partnership with UAL, University of the Arts London. UAL's Creative Attributes Framework and its structure of broad-stroke units rather than strict modules with specific learning outcomes opened up many more possibilities for creativity.

Jane Chan, a new LCDS guest lecturer introducing Kathak says "In Britain there is a colonial past that we as a nation have to grapple with, and that goes into every single aspect of society, dance just being one of them. Decolonising to me is about questioning what's deemed to be the default. At the moment it feels hierarchical: ballet and then everything else. I think it's that "everything else" that contributes as much to Britain's performing arts industry today and needs to be accounted for and acknowledged. For me, Kathak is definitely a contemporary dance form, if we define contemporary to be about the present."

Arran Green, a new guest lecturer introducing hip hop culture, adds "What I teach is ground-based foundation. Everything within the contemporary understanding of how to navigate the floor comes from techniques that already exist, for lack of a

better term, in the "Black" dance world – in hip hop culture, capoeira and other forms of martial arts." Contemporary dance has always been influenced by many other practices and art forms, and this is not a new discovery. In order to survive as a contemporary institution in today's world and to prepare graduates for an industry which they will become part of and shape, changes in the hierarchical system of teaching dance are essential. "This is nothing to congratulate ourselves for. The young people in higher education right now were all born after 2000, literally in a different millennium. A dynamic business develops with the times" says Green.

MAKING FAIR ASSESSMENTS

However, introducing more diverse dance practices is of course not enough. "A big part of the decolonisation process will be the way we assess, judge or place value", explains Bourgoignon. Traditionally in dance education, a technique class is assessed by certain aesthetic criteria a student has to fit, measured against invisible held standards of what excellence or success look like.





Students at London Contemporary Dance School, The Place. © Camilla Greenwell

UAL's method of assessing a portfolio the student produces for each unit, offers more freedom and space for self-reflection and individuality. Empowering students to choose aspects of the practices they have encountered within the unit to put into their assessments allows each student to play to their strengths, their backgrounds and culture and hopefully empower diversity.

"The feedback we got, especially from Black students, was that they felt the former assessment process was very violent - white peoples' eyes looking at them and judging them. At best, they felt it was just something you have to go through that doesn't really advance your learning, and at worst, it brought a lot of anxiety and psychological pressure. I think a lot of that anxiety comes from the students not having any ownership over the assessment. The new assessment strategy signifies a complete paradigm shift, putting the individual student at the centre of their own learning" explains Dr Lise Uytterhoeven, Director of Dance Studies at LCDS.

Another key to removing barriers and supporting diversity is the radical change of the admissions process, with a video submission and creative workshop replacing the traditional audition setting.

"We don't like the word 'audition' because it implies a panel of staff judging applicants by their talents", says Uytterhoeven. "Really, what we are looking for is potential, people who have that openness within them to engage with movement and conceptual ideas. The new admissions process we've developed is more inclusive of people from various dance backgrounds, already giving them a voice in the process, both verbally and creatively, through the way they present themselves to us.

Applicants might come from a ballet background or be focused on improvisation, or

someone with a very strong hip hop background can now share this with us and hopefully not feel like it doesn't fit within the institution."

EMBEDDING THE CHANGE

The changes LCDS are implementing are a "work in progress" and part of a commitment to reframe the conversation about equality, inclusion, and social justice through dance. This work is running through The Place as an entire organisation, questioning cultural practices, behaviour, and policies, with a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee established centrally and permanently in the corporate structure. Leaning into the difficult realities of our industry and the need to continue to learn, our ambition is to intentionally develop new paradigms where everyone is invited, and people are empowered to use their voice.

"People often think that decolonisation is connected to race" says Arran Green. "I believe it has more to do with intellect and opportunity. The decolonisation of dance-based education will happen within the minds of the students in the classrooms. We have to educate very smart, confident, agile minds that can move and think and create a better future for themselves and those around them. It will not be visible to the eye, it does not happen on somebody's social media page, or on a badge that says 'we are now successfully decolonised'. The decolonisation happens in the imagination of the student who believes that they can now achieve anything, all the opportunities out there within the dance industry are now completely accessible to them."

YOUTH VOICES

WHAT DOES A DANCE CAREER LOOK LIKE TODAY?

New technologies, new ways of working and new perspectives have changed the dance landscape. How has this affected the next generation of professionals?

Four graduates from universities and colleges offer an insight into their career plans, offering diverse ambitions and approaches.



Ofelia Omoyele Balogun © Joe Belial for InsightDproject



UEL Dance Collective perform *Permeable*, choreographed by UEL Dance Alumni Brian Gillespie of B-Hybrid Dance. ResTec 2016 Stratford Circus, London. © Victor Tse



Kadafi Mulula © Jason Senior – Redpix.co.uk



The Ferdinand Twins © Ben Roberts mfep_uk



CHALLENGING YOUR INNER PERCEPTION AESTHETIC

OFELIA OMOYELE BALOGUN

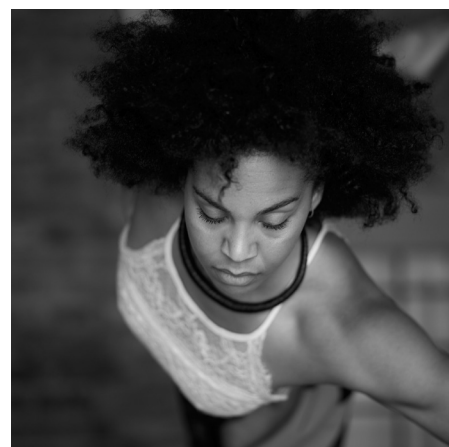
*BA (HONS) DIVERSE DANCE STYLES,
IRIE! DANCE THEATRE, VALIDATED BY
UNIVERSITY OF ROEHAMPTON*



I have found that as one of the next generation of dance artists, there is recognition of the value of my diverse backgrounds and a realisation of the power held in my stories. This has enabled me to challenge traditional dance aesthetics. The more I learn about myself and my cultures, the more I am able to connect to my authenticity and artistry.

Our changing societies are moving towards creating communities above separatism, acknowledging the need to transform the narrative and to educate ourselves about the value of different cultures and aesthetics. Platforms are being created where we can share our truth in order to uplift others through dance making the practice transformative and inclusive.

I have recently achieved First-Class Honors in my degree. This extraordinary milestone made me reflect on my journey so far and the direction that I am moving in as a creative. My time at IRIE! enabled me to accept my heritage and actively challenge the perception of Africanist aesthetics as perceived in the West. Studying and training in diverse dance styles opened my eyes to how cultures through dance are connected, how



Ofelia Omoyle Balogun © Ayzoh!

history, ritual and technique are beautifully complex and how much more there is to uncover. I see my journey to a career in dance as a continued transformation where my main responsibility is to keep diving deep into my hidden potential, learning new methods and passing them on. I see my journey as a pathway where the more I challenge myself, the more bridges I am able to build for and with others.

Social media too is a powerful tool to connect with global communities and provide each of us with a platform to share our truth. As artists, we dancers discipline our bodies. So too must we discipline our minds. Mastering your craft while shaping a career is a job. Mastering your craft and supporting the Africanist aesthetic and heritage while shaping a career is a mission.

My Caribbean dance and history teacher, the late Lincoln Fleary Allert, used to pose this question: "Choose who you want to be, a technician or a performer?" As I am paving my way my intention is to do the work and allow it to speak for me. I will continue to follow the signs that reflect my authenticity and inspire.

YOUTH VOICES

CHARLIE WALTON-HARROD
BA (HONS) DANCE: URBAN PRACTICE
UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON



Charlie Walton-Harrod © C. Walton-Harrod



When the UEL Dance: Urban Practice students were asked how careers have changed to respond to the pandemic, their answers changed significantly. The results were varied, with some choosing to focus on teaching and performing, whereas others wanted to go into dance management and fundraising.

Many of my peers who wanted to perform full time have now decided this is no longer a viable option as finding this work is very unpredictable in the current climate. For some students this has really changed their perception of the dance industry, questioning whether this is the correct sector for them to pursue a career in. Optimistically however, some students wish to create screen dance pieces, which seem to be a more suitable pathway for the foreseeable future. Another student who is interested in dance management and finance/marketing as a result of uncertainty in the arts industry, wishes to move away from arts accounting to more general accounting.

Looking at the skills UEL students have gained on the Dance: Urban Practice course, we are equipped with a variety of physical and mental skills to prepare them for the industry as a whole, rather than vocational training that prepares students solely for performing; we are ready for a portfolio career. Throughout the time on the course, students are taught how to create dance on screen, how to produce and manage events, as well as how to create strong and analytical writing on specific dance topics.

These skills broaden our possibilities for future careers. One clear example of this is motion capture, which involves the capturing of movement through attached technology equipment. This is used in a variety of industries such as the military, medical studies, and most notably in entertainment. As companies increase budgets for their projects, motion capture work will likely become more prevalent as it offers such realistic and immersive results. We dancers are trained to have a greater awareness of our body and movement, and so we are the best match for this work, which involves a great deal of accuracy and knowledge.

Personally, I find this line of work interesting as I also enjoy gaming as a hobby. I have witnessed high quality motion capture in several games I have played and always found this a fascinating career option. Hopefully by pursuing a career in motion capture, this would allow me to apply my knowledge of spatial awareness and body control. Alternatively online businesses have become hugely successful over the last year which has inspired me to potentially pursue a career in online business.

This is just an example of one of the many career options we as dancers can take, opening up of new pathways as we actively respond to the uncertainty of the arts industry during the pandemic and beyond. We are ready for now and the future!



YOUTH VOICES

KADAFI MULULA
BA (HONS) DANCE
DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY
ONE DANCE UK AMBASSADOR



Kadafi Mulula © K. Mulula

I am in the last year of my degree at De Montfort University. My immediate goals after graduation are to find a dance company which feels like home where I can represent my dance style. I would describe my way of dancing as a fusion of dance forms and techniques including hip-hop. I perform with an acrobatic, explosive style.

I want to take what I learn back to my hometown and teach the next generation. Whilst growing up in Leeds, I participated in two dance projects, with Northern School of Contemporary Dance and Phoenix Dance Theatre. Other than that I was self-taught.

Since coming to university, I have had good experience working with dance companies. I volunteer with SideKick Dance and work with dancers with disabilities. I learnt a lot there, such as how to translate my way of dancing to dancers in the company and understand how they learn to adapt my ways of teaching. Working with SideKick Dance has opened up several opportunities such as workshops, performances and chances to watch live professional dance work.

In addition, in 2020 I became one of the first members of an upcoming company called We Are Epic which was absolutely amazing! This revealed more opportunities, such as workshops with James Cousins, Tim Casson, Rosie Kay and at the end of the year, a staged performance for members of the Leicester City Council in which I performed a duet with Lauren, my We Are Epic dance partner. This was an extraordinary experience, which also raised my confidence as a performer.

My interest mainly lies in dance in live performance. Technology is not my forte. However, the pandemic has made me, like everyone else, engage with technology more than usual. At first, I was nervous, but I have found a way of choreographing online, and I could now more confidently create dance for film, if commissioned. I could work with the medium through collaboration: I created a piece recently putting a lot of emphasis on connecting with the dancers. I interviewed the dancers and got a sense where they are at, their energy and creative mindset. The feedback was that viewers enjoyed the sense they got of the dancers' embodiment of the choreography.

My love of dance came after teaching at a summer camp with the Leeds West Academy. I was teaching children aged 8 to 10. At first it was just a job from which I could earn some money, but when I began to see the impact of dance on the children my outlook changed. The kids had fun and felt free and were surprised at what they could do physically. It made me remember why I had started dancing. When I was that age I did not have the opportunity to dance: my father wanted me to have a career in sport but I found the environment stressful.

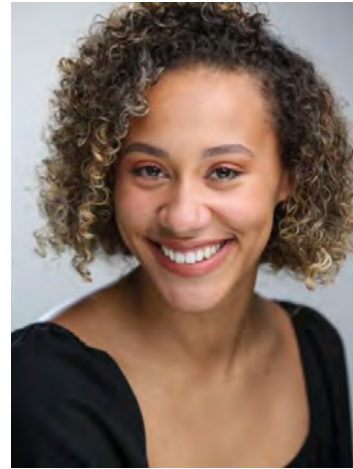
I want to introduce kids to the positive, uplifting freedom that can be found in a dance environment. Lots of young people spend too much time on technology, which makes me keen to see the next generation benefit from an activity such as dance.

YOUTH VOICES

REMI FERDINAND
BA (HONS) IN PROFESSIONAL DANCE
AND MUSICAL THEATRE
THE URDANG ACADEMY

 @REMI.FERDINAND

 @THEFERDINANDTWINS



Remi Ferdinand © Adam Hills Photography

I've loved to dance since the age of three. I come from a big family who held parties every month where I would lay my dance moves out on the dance floor! Growing up I attended the D&B Performing Arts academy, then The BRIT School, and I am now a student at the Urdang Academy.

My training is rooted in musical theatre jazz technique and ballet. The Urdang has really solidified my dedication to performing arts and refined my artform through intense training in other styles such as tap, commercial and street. My twin sister Anya has the same passion for performance, so we have been lucky to embark on our journey together. During lockdown we created our 'Ferdinand Twins' brand to showcase our dance and choreography talent.

Our industry has always bounced back from difficult times. The current global challenges have impacted dance students and professionals, but I think it is important to stay motivated for when the industry gets going again. I have been taught that "without passion in this industry there is no surviving it". Last year, during one of the hardest times for creatives and students, Anya and I stayed motivated by creating exciting content for social media and building our website.

I feel that I have a lot to offer the dance industry. Networking contributes to success and I have been fortunate to train at institutions that provide exposure to immensely talented practitioners and facilitate connections with industry professionals.

Many factors affect what our industry might look like in the future. The vast majority of people use social media for networking. Performers create accounts solely for the purpose of sharing content

for agents and other performers to view. Social media has exposed my talent nationally and globally. During lockdown Anya and I posted videos of us performing our own choreography resulting in artists engaging with us and reposting our content. It's been a great way to get our names out there. We have achieved recognition and it makes us feel as though no goal is too small on your path to higher success in the industry.

I can see our industry adopting a more digital approach. As technology evolves especially post COVID, self-tapes will become an even more common way to audition for roles. Dance self-tapes also enable performers to develop their on-camera skills and for casting directors to assess the performer's presence on screen.

Multiculturalism is growing in our industry. I am happy to see that the awareness of racism within institutions and the professional world is growing and being addressed.

Urdang African Caribbean Society

In the summer of 2020 the BLM movement inspired the creation of the Urdang Academy African Caribbean Society (ACS); I am proud to say that I am the current chair. Students were frustrated by racial injustices and the lack of acknowledgement of African diasporic cultures. Informal discussions between students led to the development of a support system and then the establishment of the Urdang ACS - an acclaimed, student-led society that is making changes in our industry. We create a safe and inclusive environment to help enlighten and educate students and teachers. The work we are doing here will help shape the future of our industry.

RESOURCES



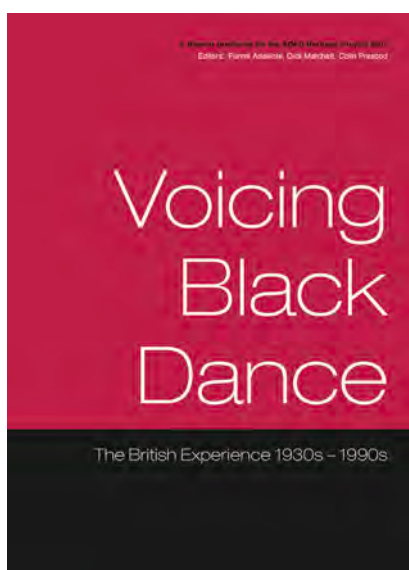
One Dance UK's Dance of the African Diaspora resources and publications cover issues from artistic to practical, political, theoretical and historical topics, along with influential African dance forms, from jazz, tap to hip hop and more.

PLEASE CONTACT

membership@onedanceuk.org for more information on the resources available at One Dance UK.

VOICING BLACK DANCE: THE BRITISH EXPERIENCE 1930S - 1990S

JEANETTE BAIN AND CAROLENE HINDS



Voicing Black Dance, an overview of the Black dance sector in the UK, has now been made available in PDF format on our online shop or via Amazon

The articles and interviews in this Reader demonstrate that the British context poses unique challenges to the expression of the aesthetics and themes emerging from dance artists within the Diaspora. This collection is by no means exhaustive but has managed to capture some of the 'moments' of Black dance in Britain. It is our hope that it will inspire others to commit pen to paper and tell their story.

It gives an insight into the lives of those artists who dared, against all odds, to dance within an environment that offered very little support. It is about the perseverance, power of conviction and positive attitudes of people determined to share their cultural heritage and to make a real contribution to the British dance sector.'

PURCHASE ON AMAZON:

www.bit.ly/VoicingBlackDance1

PURCHASE VIA ONE DANCE UK'S WEBSITE:

www.bit.ly/VoicingBlackDanceODUK

THANK YOU TO ALL THE CONTRIBUTORS FOR HOTFOOT ONLINE'S **SPRING 2021** EDITION

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