

About FCD

Foundation for Community Dance (FCD) works to support the development of community dance in the UK and internationally. Our vision is for a world where dance is part of everyone's life, our mission to make engagement with dance important to individuals, communities and society.

What we do

We support a network of over 1,700 individuals and organisations – some 4,600 like-minded professionals and supporters – including dance artists, organisations and teachers; colleges and universities; funding and policy organisations and local government. We do this through:

- **Providing information and support** including a magazine, newsletters, an information-packed website, insurance scheme and Criminal Records Bureau disclosures.
- **Representing the sector and advocating on its behalf** across national and local government, arts policy makers and funders, and other sectors of the arts.
- **Leading strategic development programmes** that include: training events, conferences, publishing, networking opportunities and campaigns. Currently our focus is on: dance, health and well-being; London 2012; inter-cultural dialogue; disability; international profile and workforce development.

Benefits of membership

We offer a range of Membership schemes, open to all individuals and organisations involved in community and participatory dance at a professional level. Membership of the Foundation for Community Dance offers some brilliant benefits, which are all about supporting you in your work:

- Three issues of Animated magazine and access to an extensive on-line library
- An information-packed website and e-newsletters
- Excellent Civil Liability Insurance for individuals, and a CRB disclosure service
- Reduced rates for FCD events and professional development programmes
- A listing in our on-line members directory

It's about more than what you get, it's about what you're part of. FCD's leadership of the community dance network provides a platform for exchange, critical debate and peer learning, exposure to diverse dance practices, making new contacts, expanding professional horizons, your profile and professional identity. It is an invaluable resource for anyone working in community dance, and creating opportunities for people to participate in dance.

Annual subscription fees range from £17.50 – £160.

Editor's critical faculties

Guest editor **Donald Hutera** gets to grips with multifarious manifestations of group dance

Journalism – the actual business of writing – can be lonely. But, inveterate and solitary hack though I am, these days my brain is swarming with thoughts and visions of loads of bodies coming together to dance.

Animated is, but only in part, to blame. I didn't start out deliberately assembling articles about group dances for this issue, and yet that's turned out to be its focus. The stories range from Helen Cundy's musings on City Maquette, a collaboration between France and Woking sprinkled with cross-cultural challenges, to Retina's report on site-specific pieces staged throughout Belgium and beyond. Cecilia Macfarlane shares her experiences - and good fortune - working on community-based events in Japan, initially because Rosemary Lee couldn't make it despite having laid the groundwork. Lee is a dab hand at large-scale dance performances. A trio of authors looks at her latest human extravaganza, Common Dance, from different angles. And we've got a sneak peek of highlights from this summer's edition of Big Dance, a bursting-at-the-seams London-wide celebration of movement that's set to go national.

The issue also finds Jo Buffery delving into dance in health care settings, Lisa Craddock detailing efforts being made to raise Professional Standards, Georgina Cockburn observing Corali's 21st birthday and Louise Portlock waxing eloquent about opportunities in the dance and disability sector. On the professional development front, the folks at Siobhan Davies Dance are assisting artists in discovering the rewards of working in schools. Meanwhile, Step Out Arts bangs a drum on behalf of a new scheme showcasing the talents of British East Asian dance-makers – four of whom then offer insights into themselves and their practice. We've sprinkled in a few surprises too, including a poem masquerading as a manifesto (or is it vice-versa?) plus a couple of letters. The latter hang neatly on the issue's communal hook given that they're from women involved in, respectively, square dance and hip hop.

Continuing in the group vein, during the past few months I have on several occasions considered what dance means in some pretty severely challenging community contexts. Cuba leaps immediately to mind. I visited it for the first time last November. My purpose? To hang out with members of Danza Contemporanea de Cuba (DCC) and Ballet Nacional de Cuba (BNC). Although poles apart aesthetically, these two professional troupes are key in the country's post-Revolutionary cultural development.

Turning 90 this year, and blind for much of her stellar career as a ballerina, Alicia Alonso has been head of BNC for six decades. Half a century ago, at the dawn of the Revolution and with Fidel Castro's complete support, she

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Above: Donald Hutera. Photo: Rob Greig/Timeout.

was ready to bring ballet to the masses. Cuba can now boast of some of the most passionately informed dance audiences on the planet. But most importantly, Alonso stresses, she and her colleagues were on a mission to find and nurture young talent. The process continues. 'We pick out children from all over Cuba,' she told me, 'bring them here to Havana and teach them in our school. And it's for free. This doesn't happen all over the world.'

Alonso is remarkable, with a vast knowledge and an incredible drive. Ironically, however, she literally cannot see what's new in the art form to which she's dedicated her entire life. Essentially she maintains a stranglehold on a stable of thoroughbred dancers, many of whom are hungry for more innovation and risk than her programming provides.

Leave it to Alonso's poorer cousins at DCC to go out on a creative limb, despite Cuba's economic and political instability. Founded in 1959, this ensemble specialises in a pungent blend of Afro-Caribbean expression and American-style modernism with neo-classical inflections. You might've seen these stunningly capable dancers during a UK tour that ended at Sadler's Wells in March.

As DCC's resident choreographic wunderkind, the young (30) George Céspedes has little tolerance for clichés. And yet in *Mambo 3XXI* how smartly he used the familiar rhythms of Cuban popular music and dance to question his country's culture and, without worthiness, perhaps point a way forward for its youth. Musically his springboard was the big, bouncy beats of mambo king Perez Prado, cleverly deconstructed via an electronic makeover. With this work Céspedes was after more than mere crowd-pleasing. Starting out like grim, uncertain members of a militaristically rigid gym class, the dancers gradually discovered spectacularly vibrant, gloriously tactile new ways of moving, communicating and being. Romantic and subversive, Céspedes' dance was an exuberant triumph.

Cuba is deemed one of the eight most oppressive regimes on the planet. I also question that arbitrary number eight. Surely there's more oppression than that going round. Easy to forget when you lead a life that is, relatively speaking, as privileged and comfortable as mine or, I'd wager, that of most of you reading these words.

Last November, just prior to my week-long jaunt in Havana, I was reminded of what a lucky sod I am. The occasion was the Freedom to Create Prize 2009, a ceremony designed to highlight the power of art in fighting oppression. Held at the Victoria and Albert Museum, this was a bizarre blend of lump-in-throat emotion and obliquely queasy self-congratulation. Orient Global, a Singapore-

based private investment group, backs the Prize. What's so bizarre about it? Well, there I was, along with the likes of Bianca Jagger, the filmmaker Nick Broomfield and others, downing raspberry vodka cocktails and stuffing my face with shrimp, beef and beetroot risotto courtesy of tray-carrying catering staff. The point of this illustrious gathering was to hear who'd won a competitive award with a jackpot totaling \$125,000, to be split across three categories including youth and imprisoned artists.

I'm slightly embarrassed to admit I can't recall which of three nominees – a Cameroonian singer, Iranian filmmaker/playwright/journalist or Burmese poet and installation artist – actually nabbed the latter prize. I do, however, remember a mobile call being made to the imprisoned winner from the podium as the audience listened. Think Oscars meets reality TV, sort of, but with a political edge.

Among those shortlisted for the youth prize were a group of HIV-infected children and AIDS orphans in China who use painting to express their isolation; nine girls from Sarajevo who dance in various Catholic and Islamic sites as a gesture of peace, hope and unity; and a dozen former child soldiers from Sierra Leone who dance to heal themselves and seek forgiveness and acceptance from their communities. How would you even begin to determine which was worthiest? And why couldn't they all be rewarded for their brave creative efforts? In the end the child soldiers were designated the recipients of \$10,000, with an additional \$15,000 going to an organisation of their choice that furthers their cause. Accepting the prize was David Alan Harris, an American dance artist and mental health clinician specialising in torture rehabilitation who'd worked with the boys. Referring to them as perpetrators and survivors, he described their performance as a reconciliation 'realised through ritual and the healing power of art.'

Setting aside the event's glitzy, elitist trappings, here was an example of community dance by a small group that seems to have really mattered.

Donald Hutera writes regularly for *The Times*, *Dance Europe*, *Animated* and many other publications and websites.

contact donaldhutera@yahoo.com

This issue of *Animated* was guest edited by Donald Hutera and produced by: Ken Bartlett, Creative Director; Rosie Frances, Programme Coordinator; Chris Stenton, Development Director.