

People Dancing: looking to the future

We're very happy to bring you this Spring 2018 edition of **Animated**. It features some new voices and contributors, as well as a couple of familiar faces, who share their current thinking, programmes and practices. They offer some challenges and provocations too. I'm grateful to all our contributors but would like to particularly thank Caroline Bowditch for both her writing – a parting gift – and especially for her 13 years' outstanding service as a Trustee of People Dancing.

Our contributors are all very different, but they share a passion for the connection and intersection between dance and people. I'm writing this introduction having spent a day in the company of colleagues within a strategic network for participatory arts. Again, we're all very different – as individuals and organisations, and in terms of art forms – but we share a common ambition for better participatory arts. This ambition is deeply rooted in our individual and collective values.

And so, by way of a longer-than-usual intro to the magazine, this feels like a good moment to share with you People Dancing's refreshed purpose, organisational and artistic values, as well as a sense of our plans and priorities for 2018 – 2022.

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Our vision and values

People Dancing creates and develops opportunities for people to experience dance in all its diversity, and drives forward excellence in community and participatory dance practices.

Its **vision** is of a world where dance makes a positive difference. Its **mission** is to make engagement with dance important and relevant to individuals, communities and society.

The organisation's work is underpinned by **values** defining how we work:

- **Excellence** in participation and progression in dance for all
- **Inclusion** is at the heart of what we do and why we do it
- **Collaborative** actions give greater strength and voice to all involved
- **Openness** in our working practices.

Our **artistic values** give greater strength to our activities and the championing of equality, diversity and inclusion:

- Placing people, their aspirations, rights and choices at the centre in providing opportunities for individuals and communities to operate creatively and artistically
- Respecting everyone's right of equal access to quality experiences in dance of all kinds
- Not being limited by form, style or convention, and embracing digital possibilities
- Contributing positively to people's health and wellbeing, resilience, social relationships and creative learning
- The development of dance as an artform by highly skilled and professionally developed dance artists and practitioners.

Khloé Dean, Summer School 2017. Photo: Rachel Cherry



Be part of this year's Summer School

People Dancing's Summer School Monday 23 - Saturday 28 July

Returning to De Montfort University, Leicester for its 10th year the summer school is now even bigger and better. There's something for everyone whether it's learning to teach Performance-Parkour (2PK), developing your somatic practice, learning to work with new groups or exploring rep, with a range of morning technique classes, world-class course tutors and free business skills development advice.

You can apply for a day, for a series of courses or for the whole week, selecting the strands of greatest interest and potential value to your practice.

www.communitydance.org.uk/summerschool

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Our aims

We have three strategic aims that define our activities and shape impacts and outcomes. These are to:

- 1** Take a strategic overview and have UK-wide and international reach, acting as a driving force in developing excellence, nurturing talent and strengthening resilience, and ensuring provision and practice is networked and fit for purpose
- 2** Develop and sustain strategic alliances and partnerships in order to create new opportunities for individuals and communities to participate
- 3** Build organisational capacity, resources and resilience, including digital knowledge and innovation, through the critical contribution of staff whilst remaining true to Vision, Mission and Values.



People Dancing Glasgow conference 2017. Photo: Rachel Cherry.

Our plans 2018-22

This is about defining the territory and landscape for our work – and is the basis upon which we have secured National Portfolio Organisation funding from Arts Council England. We will have three strands of work:

Membership and services

We represent, support and provide services to our membership of around 2,500, responding to industry and employer demands and enabling diverse dance artists and teachers to deliver effectively and safely. Membership demonstrates year-on-year growth, and we plan to build on this, on our own and with others. We will continue to provide a countersignatory service and application processing for the Disclosure and Barring Service, for our own members and by arrangement with other membership bodies including Sound Sense (the community music association) and the National Association of Writers in Education.

Innovation

We're re-organising our current learning and creative work into seven programmes, each with a distinct identity but with synergies between them. This will help us to present our work with improved clarity and relevance. The programmes are:

- **Artist development and training** Short courses and innovative digital learning opportunities; quality standards; practice networks; publishing and information services; and a triennial international conference and informal international network (next planned for 2020).

- **11 Million Reasons to Dance** A creative campaign, touring exhibition and films that profile D/deaf and disabled people who dance; support and opportunities for disabled dance artists, and interventions to support inclusion.



- **The Museum of Us** A 'living history' of participatory dance enabling knowledge exchange about quality and an internationally unique learning resource and archive.

- **People Dancing: Together** A large-scale participatory performance project commencing 2019, including artist development and international distribution, the legacy of our learning from London 2012 and Big Dance.

- **Older People Dancing** Practice development, a specialist network, and a new digital learning programme for artists and volunteers; interventions to stimulate new opportunities for older people to participate.

- **Early Years Dance** A new digital learning programme for artists and a specialist network; interventions to stimulate new opportunities for young children and their parents/carers to participate.



People Dancing Glasgow conference 2017. Photo: Rachel Cherry.

• **Dance for Parkinson's** by continuing to champion the Dance for Parkinson's Partnership UK, we will test new approaches to increasing provision and participation and provide a peer network and opportunities to exchange knowledge.

Alliances & partnerships

To achieve our ambitions we will need effective alliances and partnerships with others who share our vision and values. We will work with organisations and networks in dance, in participatory arts, in health and wellbeing, with higher education and industry partners.

We'll be embarking on a new phase in relationships with five artists and two dance companies as Associates, enabling us to work in depth with internationally respected leaders, support mid-career artists into national leadership roles, and develop planned work and new ideas together. This will help ensure

that diversity – of people, and creative practices – is woven throughout our content and delivery. Associates for 2018 include Liz Clark, Louise Kateregga, Anusha Subramanyam, Cecilia Macfarlane, Diane Amans, English National Ballet – specifically around dance for people living with Parkinson's – and Luca Silvestrini's Protein Dance – on the creative programme People Dancing: Together.

So, that's us. What we really hope is that you can see yourself within these plans too. What I've described above is a route map, and there will be lots of unexpected discoveries and interesting detours along the way. We'd love you to be involved, and to help shape our thinking and priorities now and in the future.

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