



# HOTFOOT ONLINE



**EMBRACING  
RESILIENCE**

*SPRING* 2019

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# FOREWORD

In 2019, *HOTFOOT Online* focuses on the theme 'Resilience', looking at the direct impact that the constant shifting of social, political, financial and many other 'norms' have on the way creatives navigate the dance sector today.

Looking at both sides of the education spectrum, we hear from students on the BA(Hons) Diverse Dance Styles Degree at University of East London and artist, scholar and tutor H Patten. Other experienced practitioners share their journeys of building resilient careers in dance: Kendra Horsburgh of Birdgang LTD in conversation with *HOTFOOT* Advisor Sarahleigh Castelyn; Karen Gallagher MBE and Maxine Brown, recent recipient of the DAD Lifetime Achievement Award, with Mercy Nabirye; and Greg Maqoma with Jane Sekonya-John and Mbulelo Ndabeni. Additionally, Robert Hylton and Mercy Nabirye both question the definition and onus of responsibility for 'resilience' of the creative.

On 28 December 2018, we sadly lost Thea Nerissa Barnes, a precious member of our Advisory Committee and someone who made significant contributions to dance in the UK and beyond. Tributes poured in from around the world, a testimony to her dedication to her art and to the field. For this edition, Akosua Boakye BEM collaborates with Thea's family to write in her honour. We dedicate this *HOTFOOT Online* Spring 2019 edition to Thea Nerissa Barnes.

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**HEATHER BENSON**

DANCE OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

PROGRAMMER - INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



# WAX PRINT MEANING.

This design was once given the name 'Nkrumah's Pencil', after Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana known for making strong comments and speeches both at home and worldwide; always with much thought given to what he said and wrote. Nkrumah's pencils were well sharpened, and his written words served as a weapon against any obstacle in his way. These words taken from [Vlisco](#) metaphorically embrace the importance of documentation, legacies and constantly "sharpening your saw" in order to remain resilient.



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One Dance UK supports the practice of dance of the African Diaspora, with the aim to make the form visible and valued as part of the British cultural experience

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# WELCOME

Welcome to the spring 2019 edition of *HOTFOOT Online*.

Our theme for this issue is 'resilience.' Since life is full of change and challenge, we require resilience at the best of times. In these times of austerity and anomaly, however, it is becoming something of a buzzword. One commentator went as far to say it is now almost meaningless.

In this edition we invite you to think along with us about what it does mean. In practice. Does it mean that if you go under due to stress, it is your fault? I do not think so but it does suggest that we take responsibility for how we navigate and negotiate the respective spaces we inhabit, personally and professionally. It requires a combination of independence and interdependence.

I like this definition of resilience: *The ability of organisations to adapt to change in order to continue delivering their mission.*<sup>1</sup> I would add 'individuals' to that. As individuals we need a mission too in all areas of life. It is a key ingredient of resilience.

Enjoy the magazine!

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**'FUNMI ADEWOLE**  
EDITORIAL FOCUS GROUP MEMBER

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<sup>1</sup>[Arts Council England, Great Art and Culture for Everyone: Ten Year Strategic Framework 2010-2020 \(Arts Council England, 2nd ed, revised 2013\).](#)

**FROM LIVERPOOL WITH LOVE WITH KAREN GALLAGHER MBE AND MAXINE BROWN P.20**  
**RESILIENCE AND THE DANCE ARTIST'S CAREER WITH MERCY NABIRYE P.21**  
**DIGITISING BLACK DANCE IN BRITAIN BY TIAH PARSAN P.22**

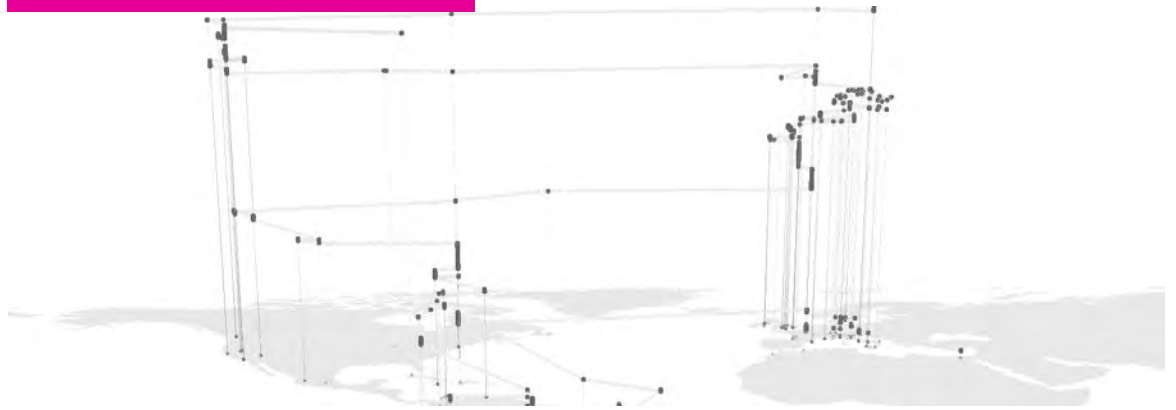
**RESILIENCE IN DANCE STUDENTS BY UEL BA (HONS) DANCE: URBAN PRACTICE DANCE STUDENTS P.28**  
**THE CHALLENGES IN EDUCATION: A TUTOR'S PERSPECTIVE WITH H PATTEN P.32**  
**TOOLS FOR HEALTHY PRACTICE BY ERIN SANCHEZ P.36**

**LAYERS OF RESILIENCE AND BLACKNESS BY ROBERT HYLTON P.40**  
**MECHANISMS OF RESILIENCE IN THE GLOBAL DIASPORA - THE CADD BY TIA-MONIQUE UZOR P.44**  
**BALLET BLACK TRIPLE BILL PERFORMANCE REVIEW BY JADE JOHNSON P.48**

**THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF FREELANCERS IN THE UK DANCE SECTOR BY LINDSAY JENKINS MSC AND NATASHA KING MSC P.52**  
**SPOTLIGHT ON GREG MAQOMA BY JANE SEKONYA-JOHN AND MBULELO NDABENI P.54**  
**SPOTLIGHT ON KENDRA HORSBURGH AND BIRDGANG LTD BY DR SARAHLEIGH CASTELYN P.56**  
**STRATEGIC PLANNING IN THE ARTS BOOK REVIEW BY SUSI PINK P.59**



## DUNHAM'S DATA: THINKING DIGITALLY WITH KATHERINE DUNHAM'S GLOBAL LEGACY



Spatialized sequence of Dunham's 1950-53 destinations; sequential from the base map upwards, starting with 1950 (bottom) to the last day of 1953 (top). Data: Bench and Elswit. Visualization: Center for Regional and Urban Planning, OSU. [Watch Now](#).

Scholars Kate Elswit, Harmony Bench, Takiyah Nur Amin, and Antonio Jimenez-Mavillard are working to bring dance history and the digital humanities together to represent the global legacy of renowned artist, activist, and scholar Katherine Dunham. With their project *Dunham's Data: Katherine Dunham and Digital Methods for Dance Historical Inquiry*, they are building datasets from materials saved in Dunham's archives in order to trace her physical travels, the diasporic imagination of her choreography, and the many practitioners who carry on her work throughout the world today.

These scholars believe digital research methods and data visualisation in the context of dance history can catalyse a better understanding of how dance movements are shared and circulated among people and geographies, and the networks of support that undergird artistic and

economic success. At the same time, they aim to show how dance-based approaches to embodiment and movement are necessary interlocutors for the increasingly digital representations of lived experience. Being in conversation with the many voices of those with deep knowledge of Dunham's history and legacy is critical to the research.

Crafting a digital project around Katherine Dunham—whose influence continues to touch so many contemporary practitioners—leads to new perspectives on what it means to engage in dance scholarship and the audiences and communities the research serves. There will be a presentation of some preliminary work at the *Re:generations* Conference in November. In the interim, you can follow the progress of the project on their [website](#).

## ARTISTS 4 ARTISTS



“Artists 4 Artists is going to provide a valuable addition to the UK dance ecology”  
Ian Abbott – UK dance producer & critic

Artists 4 Artists is the UK’s first artist led organisation championing hip hop dance theatre. Artists 4 Artists works to upskill hip hop dance creatives to ultimately help raise the visibility of the hip hop community within the wider dance sector.

Founded in 2016 by Emily Crouch, Joseph Toonga and Lee Griffiths, Artists 4 Artists has worked in partnership with some of the UK’s leading dance organisations to commission, support, broker and facilitate the hip hop dance landscape, working with over 250 artists nationally.

Supported by Arts Council England and Redbridge Drama Centre, this year Artists 4 Artists are undertaking the following:

- *Industry Innovators*; a 6-month programme in partnership with University of East London and ZooNation: A Kate Prince Dance Company
- Presenting *3 Rounds of Amp*, a triple bill of work from Krump artists Amanda Pefkou, Jordan Franklin and Joshua Nash at The Place
- Cultivating an *Artists 4 Growth* scheme in Birmingham in partnership with DanceX-change and Dance Hub Birmingham.
- A double bill at Laban Theatre presenting work by Chris Reyes and Kloe Dean.
- An *Artists 4 Growth* development programme in London facilitated by Freddie Opuko-Addaie and Peggy Olislaegers, resulting in scratch performances at Rich Mix.
- A 3-day festival at Redbridge Drama Centre, promoting artist led takeovers, with the headlining night from rapper and beatboxer Testament and his award-winning solo show *WOKE*.

Connect with Artists 4 Artists on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for the latest information.

# NEWS



## A TRIBUTE TO THEA NERISSA BARNES



Courtesy of Barnes Family

**Save the Date for A Tribute to Thea Barnes at The Lyceum Theatre in London on 12 August 2019!**

Join us as we pay tribute to dancer, choreographer, scholar, mentor and dear friend Thea Nerissa Barnes. *A Tribute to Thea Barnes* will celebrate Thea's legacy in dance with live performances and special guests.

The show will also serve to launch *The Thea Barnes Legacy Fund*, which has been created to support the work of current and future dance artists. Four holiday home-stays in four destinations will be on auction to help raise funds.

For more information visit the dedicated [Facebook page](#) or contact: [info@TheaBarnesLegacy.com](mailto:info@TheaBarnesLegacy.com).

## RE:GENERATIONS CONFERENCE 2019 TICKETS ON SALE!

### Re:generations dance and the digital space



**Tickets are now on sale for the 5th Re:generations Conference being held on 7-9 November 2019 at The Lowry, Salford!**

With a focus on dance of the African Diaspora (DAD), this event aims to bring the dance community together to stimulate critical debate, share current practice, research and innovation and encourage new perspectives for the future. Hosted in partnership by One Dance UK, IRIE! dance theatre, Middlesex University, dance Immersion and The Lowry, the theme for Re:generations 2019 is Dance and the Digital Space. We will explore the ways digital technologies can be used for artistic innovation and creative practice, unite global communities through online platforms whilst increasing the visibility of diverse work to mainstream audiences.

The conference provides an international platform connecting UK artists, practitioners and scholars with global leaders from Africa, Canada, the Caribbean, Europe, USA and beyond. Across the 3 days there will be panel discus-

sions, lecture demonstrations, masterclasses, workshops, academic paper presentations, performances, networking events and more!

The conference will provide development for dance teachers, healthcare practitioners and other dance professionals, in addition to bespoke programming for producers, new media practitioners and executive artistic leaders. A key event will be the launch of the report for One Dance UK's 'Dance of the African Diaspora Mapping Research'; presenting the current state and needs of the DAD workforce with a scope for future growth and development.

#### Early Bird Tickets and Discounts Available

Book your tickets before 20 September to take advantage of special early bird prices to save 20% off the ticket price. Further discounts are available for One Dance UK members and groups of 5 or more. [Click here](#) for more information and to purchase tickets.

# NEWS



# THEA NERISSA BARNES

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BY AKOSUA BOAKYE BEM WITH  
KAMILAH CUMMINGS

"I believe those who choose dance should be rooted to the past and connected to the future no matter what area of dance they pursue."<sup>2</sup> – Thea Barnes

Very little is known about Thea Nerissa Barnes. However, the dancer, teacher, mentor, choreographer, researcher and writer known to many as Ms. T, Ms. Barnes or simply, Thea, left an inimitable legacy in the world of dance.

Barnes was born in Columbus, Georgia and raised on Chicago's South Side by her grandparents.





**"SIMPLY  
EXTRAORDINARY  
AND NOT BY  
ACCIDENT"**

© Kenn Duncan courtesy of Barnes Family

Being born at the dawn of America's Civil Rights Movement and raised with the values and life lessons of grandparents who were born in the early 1900s had a tremendous influence on her work ethic and sense of herself as a Black woman.

From an early age, Barnes was driven by her unshakeable desire to dance. She studied a range of techniques in Chicago with noted practitioners including Richard Arve, Larry Long, Bentley Stone and Walter Camryn. Her professional dance career started with Julian Swain Inner City Dance Theatre (JSICDT).

Under the instruction of Swain and Najwa Dance Corps founder Arnell Pugh, Barnes developed her foundation in dance of the African Diaspora (DAD) with JSICDT. According to Swain, JSICDT was formed to explore African heritage in dance, gain knowledge of self, and relate it to the Black experience. With JSICDT, Barnes first performed Fanga – the Liberian welcome dance that she devoted the final years of her life to researching. According to her sister, Cheryl

Denise Barnes, JSICDT "taught Thea the importance of dance as part of African culture and not just as entertainment." She believes learning this at a young age alongside the teachings of their grandparents "impacted Thea at an ethereal level and informed the rest of her career."

Barnes trained with the best. She left Chicago to study with Arthur Mitchell's Dance Theatre of Harlem. In New York, she also trained with Igor Schwezoff and celebrated DanceAfrica founder Chuck Davis. A disciplined, physically and emotionally expressive dancer with a love for technique and attention to its detail, Thea joined the historic Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. She later joined the legendary Martha Graham Dance Company, where she became a principal dancer and soloist for whom Graham choreographed the critically-acclaimed work *Song*. Described as "compelling" and "spectacular" by The New York Times, Barnes earned rave reviews and graced international dance magazine covers. One of few Black female principals in a major American dance company, Barnes was a trailblazer who

## **"BOLD, GIFTED, STRONG YET GENTLE"**

embraced the opportunity to challenge convention and open doors for others to advance the legacy of Blacks in dance.

Her talent and commitment to excellence made her a much-respected artist. Barnes was a soloist and guest performer with esteemed American companies including Joseph Holmes Dance Theatre, Fred Benjamin Dance Company and Alfred Gallman's Newark Dance Theatre (GNDT). She also performed in Broadway, film and television productions, and even staged productions for her own company, Dancer's Eye, Inc.

Barnes believed you need a plan A and B because the game changing or moving goalposts are facts of life; it is your job to be ready. She would say, it is essential to have a direction you want to travel, and you must be clear of your intentions towards realising and achieving your goals. Throughout her career Barnes earned advanced degrees and certifications that prepared her to meet new challenges. She became a Graham technique expert after starting out as a Graham demonstrator - a role dancers took with pride. In England she taught Graham technique at Northern School of Contemporary Dance, Urdang Academy, and Laban Centre, where we met in 1992. She became the Artistic Director of Phoenix Dance Theatre (Phoenix), and in 2001 accepted the role of Resident Dance Supervisor for Disney's West End production of *The Lion King* musical - a role she held until 2018. Regarding the role, she said, "I was given an opportunity to build a department in a company that would draw on my knowledge as a dance teacher, choreographer, artistic director and dance researcher in a challenging and innovative manner."<sup>1</sup> Additionally, Barnes was a recognised dance scholar, researcher and writer of numerous published works.

"Thea had a vision for her career. She was always preparing herself to realise that vision, and she encouraged others to do the

same," says Cheryl Denise Barnes.

Barnes keenly understood her role in the lives of other artists. She stated, "learning about dance is a process not a product. Once involved and committed the acolyte is involved in the process that is ongoing and inevitable. I am only one influence of many in the process chosen by the learner to take her or him where they envision to go. My position is one of opening doors, taking a hand to lead in, or more likely, stepping aside."<sup>2</sup> This, she did.

She was an expert in her field and cared very much about her work and those she taught. She demanded your best and was consistent with her approach toward process. She was both challenging and rewarding in her professional, no-nonsense, "military" teaching approach. In my experience of Barnes, whether you were a beginner or a professional artist, you had to always have your "ship in shape." Barnes said, "I consider it my responsibility to support aspiring dance practitioners, novice as well as experienced aficionados."<sup>2</sup> This statement sums up the nurturing support and guidance she gave me through to the last days of her life.

Thea was a tough, humble leader who set high standards for those trusting enough to meet her half way. Darcel Osei, who met Barnes when she joined *The Lion King* in 2011, reflects: "For some of us achieving those standards was tough, but more often than not you found yourself growing as an artist and discovering more about yourself. . . She wanted us to achieve our fullest potentials, to always be growing and ready for the next thing."





**"A LEGACY THAT  
TRANSCENDS  
THROUGH MANY  
GENERATIONS"**

© Johan Persson courtesy of Disney's *The Lion King*

Helping to craft and shape the careers of others was something she did with great pride and intelligence. In addition to knowledge gained from experience, Barnes passed on what she learned from her great teachers. She stated, "it wasn't just me; it was about everybody."<sup>3</sup> As a result, her legacy extends beyond her illustrious career. It lives in the many artists, like myself, whom she mentored and supported.

One of those artists is Duane Cyrus whose relationship with Barnes spanned decades. He first met her as a Graham technique student in 1983, and with her guidance joined her in the Graham company in 1990. He later assisted her at Phoenix at her invitation. Referring to Barnes as a "chameleon," Cyrus says he learned from her how to be a professional at the highest level as well as how to be a "diversely abled performer." He calls Barnes an "exemplar in modern dance," adding, "I learned from [Thea] that being an artist is not about what you can get—it is about giving to others—especially in an art form and industry that seems to foster self-aggrandisement. Thea built

value for others by being an uncompromising agent for excellence." Now a professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Cyrus credits Barnes with introducing him to DAD scholars and inspiring him to attend graduate school.

Mbulelo Ndabeni, founder of N'da Dance, also benefitted from Thea's mentorship. He says, "my dancing and teaching skills improved because she encouraged me to take ownership of my embodied knowledge, cultural expressions and heritage, and to utilise it to serve my purpose. [She taught me to] take the risk of knowing who I truly am; where I come from [because] that will empower me from within."

Irene-Myrtle Forrester also speaks to Barnes' support of artists. After an injury forced her to leave *The Lion King*, Barnes provided weekly personal physical training sessions to help Forrester rebound and regain her role. Forrester, who currently performs in the musical *Tina* in London, says, "Thea's training and input have been instrumental in my career."

Always focused on the big picture of dancers' careers, Barnes taught the importance of cutting one's losses and having an "exit strategy." No matter how prestigious the position or great her commitment, she was never afraid to move on. Of the many lessons Barnes taught Zara Bartels, who was her *Lion King* dance captain for 10 years, Bartels says, "keep on moving" is the most significant. Osei echoes this sentiment, adding that as her dance captain Barnes entrusted her with roles that she says, have "opened a door for my life off the stage."

Barnes knew her role as an artist and how she could contribute to dance in society at many levels and within different contexts, specifically DAD. She was able to be a superb artist and scholar who passionately committed to the many roles and responsibilities she earned as well as to the many individuals she mentored. A woman of high integrity, her word was her bond, and she earned respect and admiration by holding herself to the same high expectations she held for others.

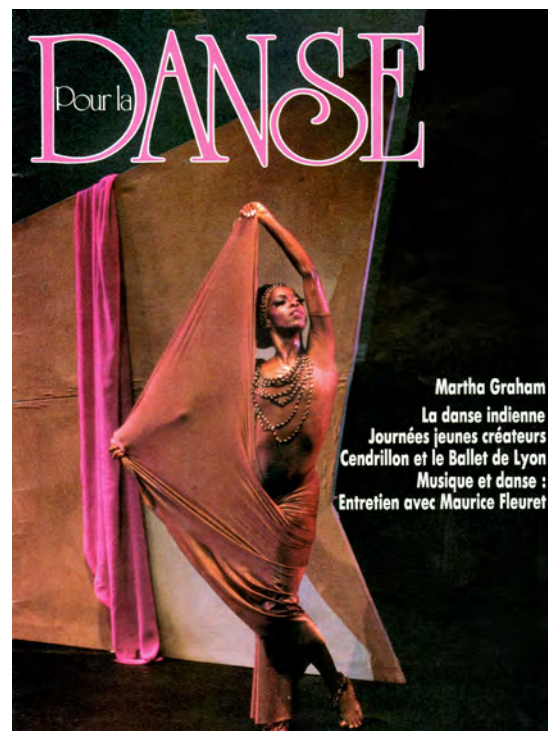
Barnes was a bold, strong yet gentle, gifted, and spiritually-connected black artist. From the start of her career to her forthcoming published work on Fanga, she demonstrated an uncompromising commitment to the perseverance of DAD. With determination, she reinvented her own career time and time again whilst she selflessly contributed to building the next generations of artists who will nourish, inspire and advance DAD to rise in the face of adversity. From her artistry to her appearance, she proudly embraced her identity; knowing that sometimes words were not needed because the silent statement of being who you are and what you represent is enough. In knowing herself, Barnes was always Barnes, down to the core and without pretense no matter the company she kept.

She was simply extraordinary, and this she did not become by accident. Her remarkable career was the result of carefully-calculated choices. Thea Nerissa Barnes was a woman with a plan - one she executed with style.

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Pour la Danse Magazine November 1985  
 © C Masson Kipa courtesy of Barnes Family




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**[CLICK HERE](#)**

to see footage of Thea performing *Temptation of the Moon* with the Martha Graham Dance Company in Japan, 1990

© Martha Graham Dance Company



© Toni Browning  
courtesy of  
Barnes Family

**In collaboration with Akosua Boakye and Thea's family, the *HOTFOOT* Editorial Team have collated a selection of Thea's writings including previous articles in *HOTFOOT Online*.**

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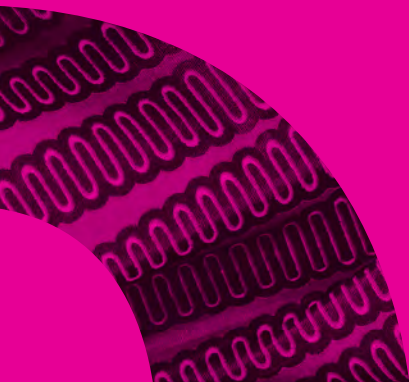
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**FORTIFY  
OUR LEGACY**



**YING  
CIES**





# FROM LIVERPOOL WITH LOVE

## WITH KAREN GALLAGHER MBE AND MAXINE BROWN

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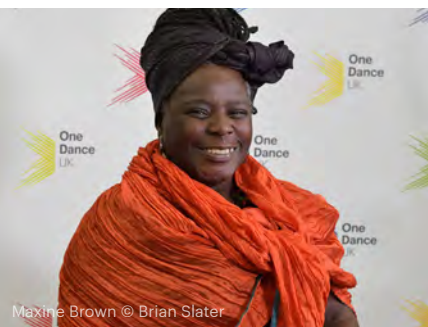
BY MERCY NABIRYE

*Karen Gallagher MBE and Maxine Brown, a recent recipient of the One Dance UK DAD Lifetime Achievement Award, share with Mercy Nabirye, Head of DAD, the influences and experiences that have helped to shape their careers in dance, and how they have kept resilient.*

Discussing their achievements, awards and impact over the years, both Karen and Maxine clearly demonstrate leadership fortitude. With careers in dance spanning over 35 years, they both have left a legacy and strong foundation at Merseyside Dance Initiative (MDI) for others to build on. Karen and Maxine have not stopped impacting others and continue to focus on dance, health, wellbeing and cultures of the African Diaspora. They are still navigating the creative space both within Liverpool and further afield!

Karen mentions her key influencers as Elroy Josephs, Barry Montcrief, Veronica Lewis MBE; people who gave her inspiration and sensible authority to push forward to ensure that dance is being seen in the city, albeit the landscape always shifting. For Maxine, inspiration came from the drumming and dancing by visiting artists like Mapopo and Matonga; Peter Badejo OBE, Sheila Barnet, Jackie Guy MBE and Ben Baddoo who were using dance styles more choreographically and then sharing the dance back into the communities. It was a game changer, enabling her to invest in self to get into educational workshops. Maxine is one of a handful of practitioners who has trained in somatic practice rooted in African and Caribbean cultures.

Watch the space for more creative works and dancing by thesetwo, as they globe-trot and juggle busy schedules as freelancers!



Maxine Brown © Brian Slater



Karen Gallagher MBE © Viktorija Grigorjevaite

# RESILIENCE AND THE DANCE ARTIST'S CAREER

## WITH MERCY NABIRYE, HEAD OF DANCE OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA AT ONE DANCE UK

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BY DR 'FUNMI ADEWOLE

In this hour-long podcast, Mercy Nabirye and 'Funmi Adewole discuss resilience in the arts in general and particularly the dance sector. Resilience for the artist translates as the ability to sustain a career. This is the same in times of plenty or austerity. According to Mercy, one of the roles of the dance support organisation is to create opportunities and platforms through which dance artists can make their own way. This no doubt demands a high level of inner resources from the artist. 'Funmi (playing devil's advocate) asks if the idea of resilience puts the onus on the dance artist to fend for self, whilst releasing governments, society or organisations from the responsibility of creating conditions which make that achievable.

There are no easy answers. The conversation turns to the idea of the "bigger picture". If practitioners can see how they are connected to a variety of people and places, they have more possibilities of moving through. The resilience of organisations is also broached, considering the closure or evolution (depending on how you look at it), of the Association of Dance of the African Diaspora (ADAD). Mercy talks about the legacy of ADAD and the role it still plays in the sustenance of dancers' careers. Lastly, 'Funmi asks Mercy about her own career in the arts. How does it demonstrate resilience?



Mercy Nabirye © Foteini Christofilopoulou



Mercy Nabirye © Foteini Christofilopoulou

# DIGITISING BLACK DANCE IN BRITAIN 1930'S TO 1990'S – MOMENTS...

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BY TIAH PARSAN  
[VIEW THE EXHIBITION](#)

By embracing today's technology, we can easily access information on dance. Social media plays a big part in bringing voices from the margins to the mainstream, creating more diverse representations in all creative and cultural sectors. In the new digital age, how can we continue passing down the legacy of Black dance to future generations? What do we see when we look at dance in Britain from a black perspective?

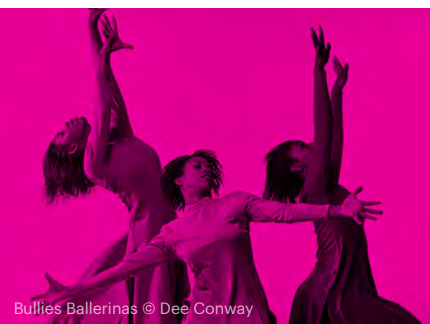
## **Moments..., A Dance of the African Diaspora Heritage Exhibition**

One Dance UK's Dance of the African Diaspora (DAD) team; previously the Association of Dance of the African Diaspora (ADAD), created a way of celebrating legacies of Black dance through an exhibition open to the public in 2007.

The *Black Dance in Britain 1930's to 1990's – Moments...* exhibition, originally conceptualised by Dr 'Funmi Adewole, aims to make a distinctive contribution to collecting, conserving, interpreting and narrating the history and heritage that informs the work of Black dancers in contemporary Britain. It features important moments in the history of "Black Dance" in Britain between the 1930s to 1990s. The heritage project is made up of two components: a photographic exhibition and a book called *Voicing Black Dance: 1930's to 1990's – The British Experience*. This book includes a collection of interviews with key professional artists and practitioners who have contributed to British dance since 1980's: including Peter Bajedo OBE, Kenneth Olumuyiwa Tharp OBE, Greta Mendez and more. *Voicing Black Dance* also



Adzido © Dee Conway



Bullies Ballerinas © Dee Conway



Gail Parmel (Claxton) and Steven Houghton at NSCD © Terry Cryer

includes chapter insights from Thea Barnes, Robert Hylton, Jeannette Brooks and more.

The exhibition increases an audience's view of Black dance and creates "...new ways of thinking about dance and performance" (Adewole, 2007). It's said that fusing British and African or Caribbean roots added to the concept of British dance. The exhibition was created to give an opportunity to creatively unearth archives which represent the presence of Black dance in Britain over seven decades. Beverley Glean points out that "There is certainly not enough written about Black dance in Britain and that has to change" (Adewole, et al., 2007: 61).

*Moments...* presents a variety of themes to categorise the varying experiences in British Black dance: Influences from Abroad, Mainstream Dance and Identity, Dance Companies and Racial Representation, and Diversity, Aesthetics and Form – all being crucial to Black identity in the sector. The exhibition initially explored the achievements of Black dancers and dance companies by celebrating

70 years of Black dance in Britain. "It celebrates their efforts to gain recognition and acceptance as professional contributors to theatre, dance and performance in Britain" (Adewole, 2007). The exhibition features artists whom have had a significant impact on Black dance in Britain, including Buddy Bradley, Katherine Dunham and many others. Whilst trying to increase the attention towards Black dance in Britain, Greta Mendez tells Jeannette Brooks that "...ADAD's (now DAD) work is so vital, because this history is just not getting passed on" (Adewole, et al., 2007: 39). In a separate interview with Brooks, Beverley Green addresses that "education is needed: cultural, historical, creative, social – it's all necessary" (Adewole, et al., 2007: 60).

#### #DancePassion

In addition to One Dance UK spreading awareness of legacies in dance, we recently worked closely with BBC Arts to collaborate on a new project; #DancePassion, a national moment in celebration of dance. During 1-5 April 2019, dance companies and

## "BUILDING LEGACIES OF DANCE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME"

artists across the UK shared their love of dance with a celebration online and on-air. The full week of events involved livestreams of performances, behind-the-scenes experiences, interviews, rehearsals, exhibitions and much more. Audiences engaged live during each event through social media, television, radio, Canvas and more digital platforms.

### How do we keep the legacies alive?

The One Dance UK DAD team worked closely with BBC Arts to change this photographic exhibition into a digital resource accessible online for the public. Through the Canvas commission, we were able to bring the vibrancy of the DAD sector to life through archived footage of performances and a handful of the original images from the exhibition. On 3 April 2019, Canvas launched the digitised version of the Moments... exhibition on BBC Arts during the #DancePassion celebrations. By including the exhibition as part of the larger #DancePassion campaign, we aimed to emphasise the importance of digital content as a mechanism for reaching wider audiences, preserving history and changing people's perceptions of dance.

Connecting with Canvas and BBC Arts helped us tell a sensitive yet compelling and significant story about dance in Britain. We were able to showcase a number of voices that contributed to the landscape

of the sector as we know it today. Reaching the BBC's wider audiences, the digitised exhibition was successful in connecting with the country's

dance sector in all its diverseness and was able to expose and unravel the history of dance in Britain, sharing stories globally. At One Dance UK, we hope to continue reaching national and international practitioners from other creative industries by showcasing our work on such impactful platforms as Canvas and BBC Arts.

For anyone who missed the celebrations, explore and enjoy the full range of content on-demand on the [BBC #DancePassion website](#); including performances, behind-the-scenes access, rehearsals, conversations and other exhibitions!

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# BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

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# RESILIENCE IN DANCE STUDENTS

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**UEL BA (HONS) DANCE: URBAN PRACTICE  
DANCE STUDENTS – SHUNITA LASKAR,  
KATIE HIGGINSON-TRANter  
AND GEORGIA KINGSMAN**

Resilience is the ability to push through and recover, somewhat easily, from difficulty. Professor Felix Arbinaga, from The Department of Clinical and Experimental Psychology at The University of Huelva, describes resilience as, “an individual skill for maintaining relatively stable levels of functioning and competence for physical and psychological health” (2018, p. 354). Dancers and dance students are quite often faced with sometimes negative criticism and setbacks in the industry, and therefore resilience is crucial for the success and longevity of their ambitions and career goals.





UEL Dance Collective Performing at ResTec 2016 © Victor Tse

### Resilience to dance injury

One of the most likely problems to occur for a dance student is injury. A dancer's body is their most valuable tool; without it they cannot train or work. Depending on the severity of the injury and the length of the recovery process, a dancer can lose significant levels of technique and fitness. There are many medical elements required for recovery from a dance injury such as nutrition, psychology, and orthopaedic care. These recovery tools require medical attention in an optimum setting. This can be both an expensive and lengthy process.

Physiotherapy, for example, is essential for the full recovery of most injuries, however, paying for weeks or months of physiotherapy is not always affordable on a dance student's budget. Consequently, it is often dance students themselves that must take on the responsibility for being their own physiotherapist; learning about their anatomy and how they will need to nourish, rest and exercise their bodies in order to recover from injury. This level of responsibility

and independent learning in self-care is often a skill a dancer must develop in order to receive the benefits of medical help without over-extending their monthly expenses and leaving them with too much downtime.

Resilience is key. Overcoming an injury is a lengthy and at times a draining process that requires a lot of knowledge, patience, consistency and discipline. Fortunately, many dancers recognise their ability to be resilient and are able to motivate themselves to overcome difficulty. Working with their passion for dance they remain optimistic and push forward with their training.

### What happens when your passion for dance becomes your business?

Dance is a creative outlet for people to express themselves, a way for people to connect and a great way to keep fit. However, pursuing a career in dance can become stressful and its initial enjoyment possibly dimmed. Going to class becomes a



## "WE PUT BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS INTO OUR PASSION"

necessity, your social media turns into self-promotion pages, and your free time slowly shrinks as you try to take advantage of as many workshops, auditions, and networking opportunities as possible.

It is important to acknowledge the setbacks and sacrifices when trying to earn a living through dance. We must invest into our career, with no guaranteed success, working "unpaid to gain experience and get a foot in the door", in hopes of earning money (Ball, L, Pollard, E, Stanley, N and Oakley, J. 2010, p. 5). When discussing the challenges for graduates and freelancers in the creative sector, Ball et al. explain how "micro-enterprises are happy to build capacity by taking on free labour" describing it as "unfair and even unethical" (2010, p. xii).

As dance students, taking responsibility for our own careers is essential, whether that means paying for classes or financing a dance degree. We must also accept the inevitable, that although our labour should be paid for, we must take unpaid jobs for further career opportunities. In difficult times, dance students must be resilient and remember why they started dancing; to socialise, make friends, out of joy, for fitness and much more. Without resilience, no dancer can continue to dedicate their life to dance, knowing there is no fail-safe path to longevity and success.

### **Dancers, mental health and resilience.**

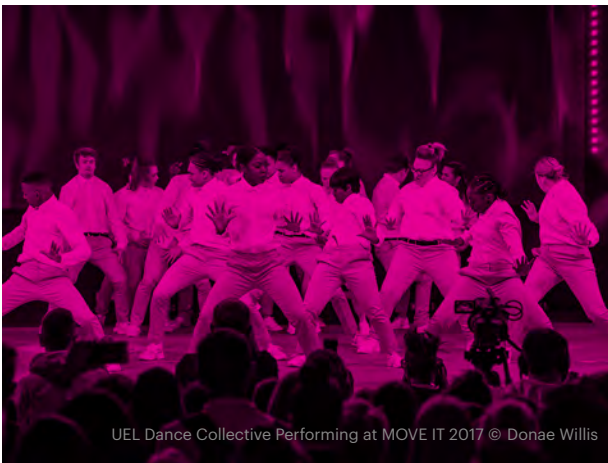
"Stigma is a powerful force in preventing university students with mental health difficulties from gaining access to appropriate support" (Martin, 2010). In today's climate, students are faced with many new challenges in life; living by yourself, taking responsibility for your own money, transport costs,

working to support your studies, focusing on university course work, making new friendships, and so on. So, this stigma can affect those who do need the

help whether it is for a public or personal issue. Universities offer many different ways of helping with this such as student support services or anonymous forums online. Sometimes however, dance students require something more.

We put our blood, sweat and tears into our passion and sometimes get knocked back when we are trying our absolute best; whether that be from a grade in an assessment, a cut from an audition or another student saying something discouraging. This can lead to a lack of motivation and inspiration, and some even start to question why they are still dancing. Although these comments and setbacks can be upsetting and hard to get over, it creates the resilience that dance students need to have. From these experiences, we are able to take on that criticism – be it good or bad – learn from it and then put it into practice. Development of our resilience helps us become more versatile and more pro-active when it comes to dance and our careers.

There are also fantastic websites and forums online which help with building resilience in dancers regarding mental health (NIDMS, 2019). For example, One Dance UK is a huge platform for dancers, offering a wide range of support and materials on their website; one really beneficial being their #dancersneedrest campaign (One Dance UK, 2019). This campaign stresses the importance of rest in the professional dancers training programme as working without rest is bad practice and could even result in injury. Some dance students might not be able to find the time to rest due to social life imbalances and working part time to fund their degree. However



amongst all of this, having rest is a vital part of resilience as it allows the dancer to recuperate and be prepared to return to training. Without rest, the dancer could suffer burnout and limit their ability to bounce back into practice. Dancers should therefore manage their time and focus on their mental health and wellbeing to ensure they are practising safely.

Dancers and dance students – no matter what stage in their career, have built a foundation of resilience to carry on. We suffer injuries, negative feedback, possible loss of motivation, however the skill of resilience aids our drive and passion. The best in the field of dance use these circumstances as tools to help them progress and grow.

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# THE CHALLENGES IN EDUCATION: A TUTOR'S PERSPECTIVE WITH H PATTEN

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BY BOB RAMDHANIE MBE  
[VIEW H PATTEN'S PROFILE](#)

*H Patten has been in dance since 1981. A powerfully built practitioner H, as he is most commonly known, has been teaching in a range of settings over the years, formal and informal, academic and community, national and international.*

## **Did you have any formal training yourself?**

Not in the early years of my career. I started by observing others. I would study the tutors we were working with, and then began working on my own style. Over the years, I developed my own choreographic skills in Ghana, and later, with the Black Dance Development Trust (BDDT) international summer schools. We had good and challenging international tutors. This was real live learning!

## **Tell me about your teaching practice.**

My community workshops began in 1981-82. From 1983, I was being invited to teach at different places around the UK. With DLA (a dance company Bob and I started), we used to run workshops as part of our performance programmes and I also taught other groups in Leicester through The Black Dance Development Trust Outreach Programme; Leicester Expressive Arts Dancers, Kizzy, Kalabash and others.

We ran open classes at the CAVE Arts Centre in Birmingham. Following that, I did outreach work with Kokuma and the BDDT. I was the dance animator for the BDDT and taught in Nottingham, Derby, Northampton, Leicester, Sheffield, and also ran open classes with young developing groups and





## "CULTIVATING A MORE BALANCED CURRICULUM"

H Patten © Jacob Ross

did sessions at the Black-E in Liverpool with Delado. I later moved to London and joined Adzido.

Internationally, I taught at the Jamaica School of Dance in 1986 when I was doing research on Jamaican traditional forms. In 1991, I was approached by the British Council and invited to work in Malawi with the Kwacha Cultural Troupe; after that with the Zambian National Dance Company and the University of Zambia Cultural Dance Troupe.

In those days, my teaching methodology followed that which I learnt from Adzido. You got drilled in the dance; the movements, the language, the rhythms etc. and you taught that first.

The BDDT opened my thinking to different ways to approach teaching and choreography. The late Sheila Barnett and Professor Opoku from the National Dance Theatre Company (NDTC) in Jamaica and Ghana, respectively introduced new ways of learning and teaching. Nii Yartey (Ghana), CK Ladzekpo

(Ghana), Mariama Ngom (Senegal) and Mbye Chow (Gambia) added to those; revolutionising the way I began to teach and choreograph.

I taught in South Africa and co-ordinated the Pan-Essent Move project in Zimbabwe as part of africa95, working with choreographers from twelve different African countries and perspectives. During this freelance period, I also taught on the dance programmes at Laban and a range of universities; Middlesex, Ipswich, Winchester and on IRIE! dance theatre's Diploma Dance programme.

### **Were the challenges in Higher Education (HE) different to your previous teaching practice?**

Yes, they were. In community situations, participants were there because they were interested in the forms, already working in dance groups and wanted to improve their practice. There were always positive vibes, and no one wanted the classes to end!



At Surrey University I was an associate lecturer in African People's Dance from 2006 to 2015. In 2013, I was also invited to contribute at Canterbury Christ Church University and then began lecturing there on the Popular Culture, Theology and Social Justice programme, where I still lecture and am completing a PhD.

Within the formal HE setting I was always given a 'free hand' in developing the curriculum, dance, except ballet or contemporary western dance, which remained on the fringes of formalised education. The allocated period is for practice only and there are no time-tabled slots for theory. Because of my approach to African and Caribbean dance, I introduced some theory so that the students receive a more balanced programme within the allocated period.

Similarly, I had to argue for an accompanying live musician to support my teaching practice. In African dance, there is no separation between the movements and the music, so I was continuously juggling during the three-year programme to include theory and live music in the curriculum.

#### **How were your classes received?**

Both in the community settings and the HE settings, the feedback from students was always very positive indeed. Participants and students alike enjoyed my class. I recall many students would come to me for guidance on the challenges they faced in other classes.

## **"THE MOVEMENTS, THE LANGUAGE, THE RHYTHMS"**

I was always trying to support my students with their all-round development. I wanted them to appreciate how dance fit into their own personal lives. Most of the students were white, with a small intake of black students.

Within the various institutions, I knew that the black students were treated unfairly on some occasions. I was fair to all my students although my teaching colleagues felt that my marking was too strict!






H Patten © Eric Richmond

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# TOOLS FOR HEALTHY PRACTICE

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**BY ERIN SANCHEZ**  
**TELL US HOW WE CAN**  
**SUPPORT YOUR PRACTICE**

“Stifling an urge to dance is bad for your health - it rusts your spirit and your hips” - Terri Guillemets

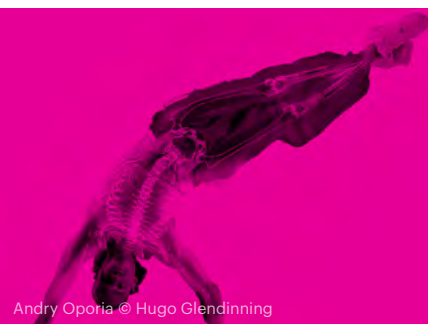
Resources can be a link to contacts, opportunities, and new ways of thinking. The right resources can open a path to solving problems and can support resilience by building connections and knowledge to help you solve problems and accomplish your aims.

For nearly 40 years, the [Healthier Dancer Programme](#) has provided information, resources, education, and advocacy on dancers’ physical and psychological health, informed by research and best practice in dance and other high performance environments. In 2012, One Dance UK’s Healthier Dancer Programme joined forces with six partners to form the National Institute of Dance Medicine and Science ([NIDMS](#)) to provide clinical support for dancers’ health. Through five specialist dance injury clinics within the NHS located in London, Birmingham and Bath, as well as hubs for research and education, the National Institute of Dance Medicine and Science has helped to raise awareness of the needs of dance professionals for specialist support and healthcare to help them enjoy longer, healthier, and more fulfilling careers.

A large part of raising awareness is about sharing knowledge and providing resources. Our information sheets share advice about health, injury reduction, and improving dance performance, written by knowledgeable and experienced practitioners. We currently have a range of information sheets, including advice on nutrition, warming up and cooling down, hydration, pregnancy and



© Germaul Barnes teaching at Regenerations 2019  
© Foteini Christoulopoulou



Andry Oporia © Hugo Glendinning





**"BUILDING  
CONNECTIONS  
AND KNOWLEDGE"**

Adesola Akinleye performing at The Place © Foteini Christofilopoulou

parenthood, safe dance spaces, burnout, how to find a healthcare practitioner, and first aid.

We are adding new sheets to our resources this year to improve our offer and raise awareness of key information for dancers. Planned new sheets include mental health, rest and recovery, safeguarding, hearing protection, strength and conditioning, and physical and psychological aspects of adolescence and training. The aim of these resources is to ensure that all dance professionals, students, and young people have access to information to support their health and performance.

We hope to initiate a new resource feature in *HOTFOOT Online* directly responding to the needs of the sector. We want to hear from you what new written resources we should develop, and how you would use resources in your work. Please take 5 minutes to share your thoughts on what information is needed to support a healthy practice in this survey [here](#).

### **Did you know...**

A broad range of resources are available to One Dance UK members, including:  
*Click each heading for more information*

[Networks](#)

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The areas of our work and the resources we provide cover the broad spectrum of the dance workforce, supported by our specialist teams within One Dance UK, our expert panels, Children and Young People, Dance of the African Diaspora and key stakeholders across the sector.





# PERSPECTIVE ON ACCOUNTING

**TIVES  
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# LAYERS OF RESILIENCE AND BLACKNESS

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BY ROBERT HYLTON

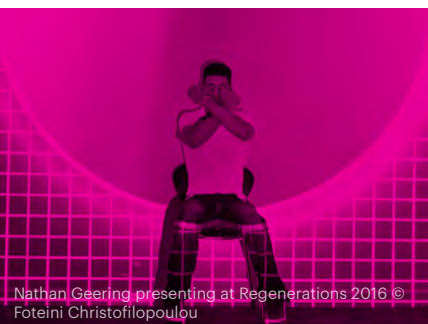
I have never seen the film *Green Book* (2018) and am not sure if I ever will. *Green Book* tells the story of African American Classical and Jazz pianist Don Shirley and his tour of the Deep South, USA, in 1962. Alongside Shirley, was his driver and bodyguard Italian bouncer Tony Lip. The film and Hollywood came under criticism, for it being a ‘white saviour’ movie; meaning Hollywood feels that a white protagonist lead is required to sell films. The film was re-contextualised as a buddy movie with Tony Lip being the hero. Truthfully Lip and Shirley were employee and employer respectively, thereby bringing forward uproar by critics, viewers and Shirley’s family about Hollywood’s intention and persistent use of the ‘white saviour’ role.

Why write this? I think the arts can relate to *Green Book* in that, and in my opinion, the arts and, in this instance, dance operates under a *Green Book* gaze. How many times do we see high level diversity panels with little or no black faces in the frame? Leaving me to think that those from the African Diaspora working in the arts (yes, it’s a lot broader) are carefully managed under such a gaze rather than facilitated as an asset to the sector.

What is the difference between managed and facilitated? No doubt those being ‘managed’ (and now requiring resilience) are working under circumstances where their ‘otherness’ is seen as something to be wary of and could potentially lead to an unstable career. Facilitated, it seems, means more stability; think of the most dominant arts organisations and how their gaze reflects stability. This is not a complaint more a reflection that aims to



Bantu Arts performing at Regenerations 2016 © Foteini Christofilopoulou



Nathan Geering presenting at Regenerations 2016 © Foteini Christofilopoulou



Heather Benson performing at Afro Dance Xplosion 2017 © Mateo Photography

broaden our understanding of where we are. More importantly, it hopes to provoke behaviours and patterns to develop change where necessary.

The Brexit mess highlights the concept of 'Britishness' bringing a mist of right-wing romanticism and post WW2 postcard Britain. A mist, which seems to cloak the reality of Britain as ex empire. Yet with many chickens coming home to roost over centuries bringing their food, labour, art and so on to help form 'Britishness', the idea that it has ever been picture perfect seems silly. Speaking of managing otherness - Windrush anyone?

Hip hop based dance (African Diaspora social dances) have on one hand been able to build an autonomous field through battles and workshops along with the corporate interest, such as Red Bull sponsored events and the possibility of breaking in the 2024 Olympics. That side of hip hop dance succeeds in those spaces and demonstrates the versatility of the form. I think this is a great time for hip hop dance in theatre and there is a lot of activity;

including Boy Blue, Avant Garde and others receiving Arts Council England National Portfolio (NPO) status along with many project funded works. Yes, my peers and I were Regularly Funded Organisations (RFO), but that can be saved for another discussion. Higher Education courses like UEL's Dance Degree and forthcoming courses from Swindon Dance and Breakin' Convention show that we've come a long way. However, I do feel under all this growing visibility there is still much work to do. I hope we don't get *Green Booked* along the way or like me (and many others) Windrushed!

In theatre and drama there is more noise against the disparity of opportunities and unfairness of colour, opportunity and place. The black voice is clearly heard and causing affect throughout the sector; directors such as Kwame Kwei-Armah being one of many whose prominence has helped to raise the visibility of blackness on and off stage. We in dance on the other hand, work with our bodies and we are not as noisy. Not that we don't shout, but maybe we don't shout loud enough.



## "WE DON'T SHOUT LOUD ENOUGH"

Maybe that's why progression seems slower.

Jordan Peele, writer, director of *Us* (2019) the black horror movie, purposely used a lead cast of black actors, reflecting unapologetic blackness within his work to bring forward change within film. In [Shadow and Act](#), Jordan Peele is quoted "I want to keep pushing these boundaries of representation." Through his work he hopes "to be able to normalise this idea of representation in film" (Obie 2019). To add the 'normalising of blackness' seems a harsh term given the history of black bodies. There is an active process of balance still needed in society so that one day appreciation and skill will be the focus, not otherness.

Until then, building layers of resilience is an everyday necessity. If you have placed yourself within dance especially conservatoire, contemporary dance and ballet, then imminent discussions on body image and skin colour will require additional layers. Meanwhile in hip hop it does not matter; you're dope or you're not. Colour and size are not an issue. In my opinion, inclusion is one of hip hop's biggest strengths and shows a maturity about 'otherness' that many in the dance sector could learn to adopt.

Which brings me to 'the talk': the phrase used in the black community to label the conversation parents must have with their children to explain what being black means in the world. This discussion typically includes a warning like "don't run down the street especially if you are in a hoodie." I am 49, mixed race and light skin and still to this day shop consciously knowing that firmly holding an item, whether interested in making a purchase or not, could give me unwanted attention. Imagine the daily experience of a young black person (especially boys). No wonder they are pxxxxd off – resilience seems too small a word.

Adding on to 'the talk' is the African Diaspora's positioning within the arts. I think we should wipe away the naivety from young black artists, pre-rather than post. It is not about

complaining that it is not fair; far from it. For me it's about an informed reality that can help them do better in business, negotiations and creating art. With the hope that adjusting from the potential spectacle experience of young black artists through a broader knowledge of place, our future artists are more equipped and push toward being 'facilitated' rather than 'managed'.

Recent social movements such as "why is my curriculum white", which questions and protests against the white dominance in academia, is also something to bear in mind when we speak of resilience. Meaning, the black experience is one of not knowing and having to gain a second education, one that reflects their blackness and their history. At times the relearning leads to disruption and demands further resilience.

I was asked by One Dance UK to write a think piece about resilience within hip hop dance, and I think there is so much to question before focusing on dance specifically. Therefore, my thoughts have been broader to interrogate our legacy and future. What are the changes we are making? In 100 years, will future generations look at us as primitive? Primitive in that the ideas and the prioritising of bodies via colour (gender, etc.) taken from the 20th century are being practised in the 21st; and we didn't say stop!

Hip hop dancers and practitioners succeed at being inclusive, so maybe in 100 years we will be running the show. Don't worry you are all included. My final thoughts are that we are better off facilitating our work instead of managing. We can be more effective, play a bigger role and be part of the progression – anything else should jog on.

Do you know someone who has dedicated their life to building a legacy and changing perceptions of dance of the African Diaspora in the UK? Nominate them for the Dance of the African Diaspora Lifetime Achievement Award today!

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# MECHANISMS OF RESILIENCE IN THE GLOBAL DIASPORA

## – THE COLLEGIUM FOR AFRICAN DIASPORAN DANCE

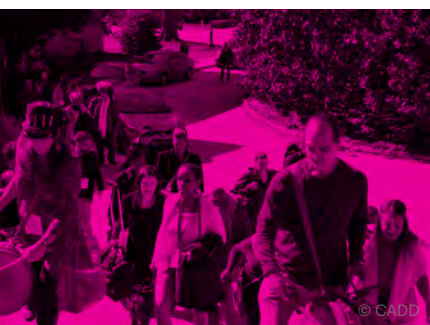
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BY TIA-MONIQUE UZOR  
[cadd-online.org](http://cadd-online.org)

Glancing at the current headlines in the western world, you would not be wrong to conclude that as a people we seem to be more disparate than ever. We see it highlighted in divisive headlines perpetuated by news outlets, in public debates, and through ideologies spread across social media in 280 characters. With populist political temperatures rising across the globe, understanding the tools of resilience has become salient in creating resistant spaces that reinsert hidden narratives and allow us to refocus on the humanity in each other. The creation of such spaces and communities is essential because they are forged by the people for the people.

They are spaces in which we can reconnect in meaningful ways with an intimate intention. They are formed around the collective response from the sacred call of our ancestors imploring us to not only remember our commonalities, but to celebrate our differences, knowing we are one at the very heart. They are counter-cultural spaces that allow for safe encounters. They are a bold signal to those who will join; supporting them to rise up and let their presence be known and the collective sound of their voice be heard.

The Collegium for African Diasporan Dance (CADD) is one such community. It is a place of assemblage for the global African Diaspora to pause and take a moment to re-root what was once up-rooted. This is seen through exchanges of intellectual knowledge, and the embodied knowledge that exists between our flesh, spirit, and soul – the knowledge that is only revealed when it is danced out.





**"A MOMENT TO  
RE-ROOT WHAT  
WAS ONCE  
UP-ROUTED"**

© CADD

Founded in 2012 at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, the collegium was initially known as the African Diaspora Research Group. This would change after a weekend of conversations led to the creation of CADD, which was to be a sustainable vehicle in which a dialogue around the research interests of the group could come together. Its founders (Thomas. F DeFrantz, Takiyah Nur Amin, Raquel Monroe, Andrea E. Woods Valdés, Makeda Thomas, C. Kemal Nance, Jasmine Johnson, John Perpener, Carl Paris, Will Rawls, Ava LaVonne Vinesett and Shireen Dickson) are a collective of scholars based in the United States who are interested in African and African Diasporic dance and performance. The collegium describes themselves as an egalitarian community that also includes artists. CADD's raison d'être is to promote, express and engage with dance of the African Diaspora as a method of aesthetic identity; achieved through publications, roundtables, public events and conferences.

It is in the international pilgrimage of the diaspora and beyond to the bi-annual CADD conferences

that we see the importance of making room for the gathering of bodies that are open to share and receive. The simplistic act of gathering produces the salient mechanisms for resilience against the hostility felt toward black and brown bodies in western society. Carving out a protected space within the 'ivory tower' of academia and [be]ing [be]comes a bold act of resistance. For example, the 2018 conference theme was 'Black Joy: Global Affirmations and Defiance'. Keynotes were given by, Brenda Dixon Gottschild who spoke on lessons in reclaiming her time, Mellisa Blanco Borelli who paid tribute to black feminist scholars through the focus of the different uses of 'hip(ped) pleasure', and Marianna Francisca Martins Monteiro, who discussed her research on Afro-Brazilian expressive culture. There were workshops on harnessing Black joy, reframing vulnerability, and Afro-feminist practice. There also were opportunities to break bread and celebrate through a good old-fashioned party. These aspects of the 2018 conference give a glimpse of the richness in thought and the expanse of the diaspora represented. In this way, participation in



## "LEADING FIRST WITH THE BODY"

CADD conferences provides possibilities for connection, interrogation, and liberation.

In 2016, Dr Charles "Chuck" Davies (may his soul rest in peace) opened with an invocation reminding delegates of the awesome responsibility we have when we come together, one that can only be undertaken when we are involved in the dance. This was the second conference that the collegium organised and although it focused on 'Embodying the Afrofuture' and its prospects, it did not neglect what has gone before. This is demonstrated in a statement by founding member Thomas F. DeFrantz, "the Afrofuture is yesterday and tomorrow..." and in Kemi Craig's presentation on 'Choreographing Ghosts' that considered the ways in which black bodies have embodied trauma and created resistance that actively shapes the future.

There is something sacred and empowering in honouring our ancestral practices and using them as tools to reconnect across fractured lines. Universality is most felt in the imagining of the future, the acknowledgement of our past, and the legacies that live in our storytelling. This, therefore, becomes an access point to develop resilience and understanding.

In my brief reflections on CADD's work, my thoughts are led to a wider question. What are CADD and other organisations creating similar spaces across the diaspora demanding of us? How do we further conversations,

create new initiatives, make, fashion and take-up space? What tools do we already hold in our hands and our bodies that can initiate dialogues that lead to such a gathering or start a movement? For me, the provocation of CADD is recognising the significance in leading first with the body, with uncodified murmurs of the soul sounding in accord, which can often be lost when trying to articulate what is meant only to be experienced.

The power of resilience is found in the positioning and prioritising of such methods. The CADD conference provides a moment to experience reconciliation, and even further, an embodiment through the gathering of thoughts and calls to action like those of Dr Davies. It is evident that in the assembly of internationally acclaimed voices of scholars, artists, practitioners, activists and the global community, that seismic waves of intransigence are sent forth; waves that build momentum, that refuse to succumb, be silenced, or seek validation from anywhere else but themselves.



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# BALLET BLACK TRIPLE BILL: PERFORMANCE REVIEW

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BY JADE JOHNSON  
[balletblack.co.uk](http://balletblack.co.uk)

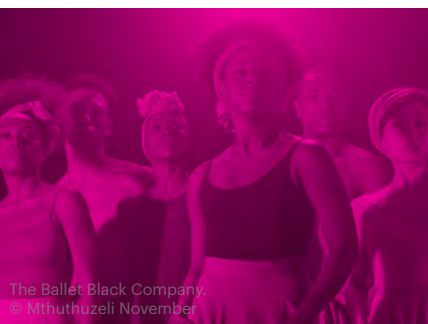
*Review of the Triple Bill showcase by Ballet Black performed at the Barbican Centre on 15 March 2019.*

A performance by the phenomenal Ballet Black leaves you mesmerised. Founder and Artistic Director Cassa Pancho MBE's Triple Bill is full of contrasts: abstract movements juxtaposed with dynamic partner work with captivating lifts, turns and impressive acts of counterbalance, friction, smoothness, softness and resistance. This performance is fascinating with its ballet fusions, taking the technique to a new level by merging with African dance. Ballet Black showcases exactly why having a diverse group of ballet dancers opens doors to culture and creativity.

In the first half of the Triple Bill we are fortunate enough to witness a revival of *Pendulum*. Choreographed in 2009 by Martin Lawrance, the duet begins with a heavy bellowing bass beat that eventually becomes a distant white noise. The audience falls into a trance like state watching Sayaka Ichiawa and Mthuthuzeli November swing and entwine around each other, in and out of sync with the composition. They explore unpredictable erratic sequences with a hint of improvisation. Following on, within the first half is a vivacious piece entitled *CLICK!* by Sophie Laplane. This vibrant piece showcases Ballet Black as you have never seen them before. In a distinct contrast from the start of the show, they set the scene with a burst of colour; moving from a groovy jazz feel with rhythmic finger clicks to funk locking moves. *CLICK!* includes diverse dance styles with traces of comedy and sentimental moments.



José Alves and Cassa Pancho in *Ingoma*.  
© Mthuthuzeli November



The Ballet Black Company  
© Mthuthuzeli November



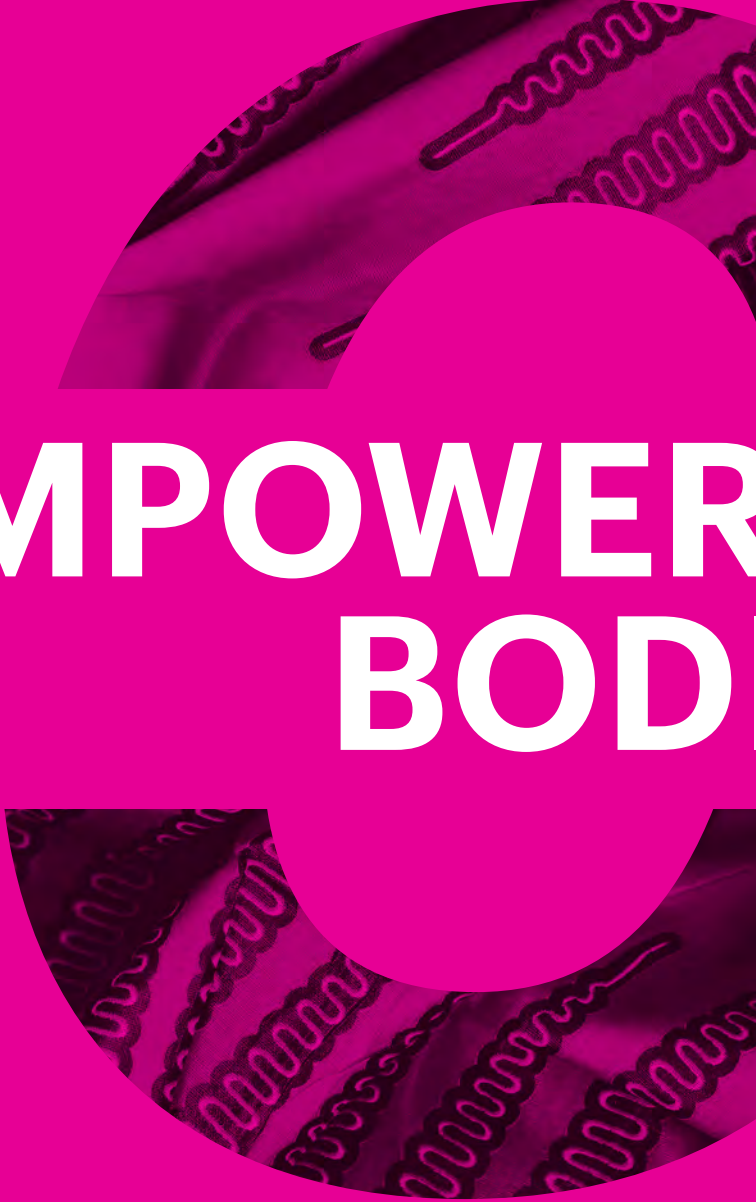
**"OPENING  
DOORS FOR  
CULTURE AND  
CREATIVITY"**

José Alves and Isabella Coracy © Rick Guest

After an interval we come to the final half of the Triple Bill and the highlight of the evening; *Ingoma*, choreographed by South African Ballet Black dancer, Mthuthuzeli November. *Ingoma* (meaning song) paints a picture of life, death, struggle and the will to carry on. Telling a story of truths behind a dark time in South African history, the piece sends its message across loud and clear, through ballet, African dance and live singing. This meaningful dance work concentrates on the experiences of black South African mine workers and their families during the strike and protest that occurred in the 1940s. Real gravel and dirt is scattered across the stage and the cast's miner helmets illuminate the darkened theatre.

*Ingoma* is most impactful to me as a Black British dancer; seeing an engaging performance that depicts tired husbands going home to worried wives and the empowerment of black South African women. As I am writing a dissertation based on the African Diaspora in ballet and the impact of African artists within the western world, I am truly inspired by Mthuthuzeli November. He uses his platform to tell the story of his people and to shine light on an untold period in history. With this Triple Bill, Ballet Black demonstrates why they are a thriving dance company and what we should expect from them in the future!





**EMPOWER  
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# THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF FREELANCERS IN THE UK DANCE SECTOR

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**BY LINDSAY JENKINS MSC  
AND NATASHA KING MSC,  
DANCE SCIENCE,  
UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE  
[FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)**

Freelancers are an essential but under-researched part of the UK dance industry. The aim of this research project was to better understand the working lives of freelancers in the dance sector, their support needs, the impact they have regionally and nationally, and to gain insight into aspects of their psychological wellbeing. The University of Bedfordshire was commissioned by One Dance UK to conduct a research study – the first large-scale investigation of freelancers working in dance – to explore these areas and inform the type of support and advocacy they can offer this valuable work.

The project took a multifaceted approach in order to gain comprehensive insight into freelance work in dance. An online survey asked 499 freelancers about roles, working conditions, education, wellbeing and resilience. Following on, a supplementary tracking survey examined pay and hours over three months. Focus groups with current freelancers, former freelancers, and organisational representatives provided further detail about working lives, support needs, feelings about pay, and perceived hierarchies within the sector. Organisations also discussed how the resources they offer meet freelancers' support needs. A final seven interviews investigated specific roles and incomes to begin exploring freelancers' contributions to the economy and society.

A range of roles were represented, such as performer, educator, manager, producer and healthcare provider, with many participants performing a multitude of roles within a portfolio career. Freelancers reported a rich variety of training routes and were highly educated: over 40% held postgraduate qualifications.



ADX Workshop © Carolyn Lilly of Feel the Rhythm Productions



© Brian Slater



**"EMPOWERING  
FREELANCERS  
TO ARTICULATE  
THE VALUE OF  
THEIR WORK"**

© Legge

Average annual income from freelance dance work was well below the national average and additional work was often undertaken to supplement earnings. Participants felt fees were too low and did not account for preparation, travel time, or experience level, and few roles provided pensions and other pay-related benefits. Many freelancers therefore relied on the support of families and partners. Notably, much work was unpaid, which perhaps speaks to many 'invisible' roles that supported broader professional responsibilities.

Despite these challenges, participants reported relatively high levels of wellbeing and resilience, scoring particularly highly for personal growth and purpose in life. This could indicate that their work provided meaning and opportunities for self-development. Analyses also revealed freelancers' significant contributions to various sectors beyond dance, including enhancing the knowledge-based economy, improving labour productivity, reducing NHS costs, and generating income through tourism and heritage activity. To capitalise on these contributions, participants expressed a desire for

more training in skills such as finance, administration and enterprise, as well as for more subsidised workspaces, CPD opportunities, healthcare, and greater access to peer networks for professional and personal support.

Recognition of the spectrum and impact of the roles freelancers undertake may help empower them to articulate the value of their work more confidently. Overall, this report represents an important move forward in understanding this population, providing a detailed picture of working conditions and needs that can be used to champion activity and ensure a relevant and resilient future for dance.





# SPOTLIGHT ON GREGORY MAQOMA

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BY JANE SEKONYA-JOHN  
AND MBULELO NDABENI  
[vuyani.co.za](http://vuyani.co.za)

Mercy Nabirye, Head of Dance of the African Diaspora, asked myself Jane Sekonya-John and Mbulelo Ndabeni, as fellow Mzantsi natives to record a chat with Gregory Vuyani Maqoma for *HOTFOOT Online*. I knew Gregory Maqoma because he was in Moving Into Dance conservatoire along with my older sister Angie. We were the generation of black contemporary dancers that witnessed the dismantling of apartheid.

“Our ancestral stories play a crucial role and form a big part of our existence, identities, culture and heritage.” - Mbulelo Ndabeni



**"ANCESTRAL  
STORIES TOLD  
THROUGH  
MOVING  
MEMORIES"**

CION © Siphosihle Mkhwanazi

Gregory Vuyani Maqoma, is the descendant of Chief Maqoma ka Nqika ka Rharhabe a division of the Xhosa Nation, who fought against the British in the Eastern Cape in 1850s. He was twice captured and sent to the infamous Robben island prison where he passed away. Gregory celebrates his ancestors through his work.

Before training formally with Moving Into Dance conservatoire, Greg was already experimenting with movement vocabulary, creating work and entering dance competitions in Soweto. He also studied in Belgium before returning to Johannesburg to form Vuyani Dance Theatre. Over the last 20 years, Gregory has collaborated with stellar artists such as Hugh Masekela and Akram Khan and has toured the world extensively. Vuyani Dance Theatre is still the only black led dance company in South Africa. We came from the true apartheid era. Sadly, not much has changed.

Greg is a sponge; he has an endless curiosity and enjoys blending cultures. Through his collaborations his body becomes a moving memory, a cultural tool.

He is a global citizen, creating work that reflects his identity. In October 2019, Gregory and Vuyani Dance Theatre will be performing in the UK's Dance Umbrella festival taking place across London.



Gregory Maqoma © Marijke Willems

# SPOTLIGHT ON KENDRA HORSBURGH AND BIRDGANG LTD

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BY DR SARAHLEIGH CASTELYN  
[birdgangltd.com](http://birdgangltd.com)

## How would you define resilience?

Resilience for me is self-care, sustainability and legacy. The key to resilience for me lies in three key pillars.

**Intelligent Information:** It is important to educate yourself on all levels; health, fitness, mindset, financial sustainability and leaving a legacy. After my training at the Urdang Academy, I completed a BA Hons at Middlesex University and later, my MBA at HULT International Business school. Education and information are irrelevant if they are not used proactively and intelligently. In a world of constant noise, the skill lies in picking out the information that is important and putting that into practice.

**Independent Identity:** It is vital to have a distinct voice, your way of creating work and a positive reputation through the people you work with. We at BirdGang Ltd now know that our unique way of working and our creative voices have given us independence and a strong identity that has kept us resilient.

**Infinite Impact:** Resilience is also in the change you create, the impact you have on others and how you are remembered. The most powerful reminder to continue working on your craft is receiving constructive feedback from people around the world who have been positively impacted by your work.

## Why do you think it is an important skill needed in the dance industry?

As rewarding the industry can be, it can also be challenging, confrontational and scary. There is



© BirdGang Ltd



© Distinct London



Kendra Horsburgh © Luke Lentos

no 'how to...' booklet. The three pillars, previously listed, have been vital for BirdGang Ltd in forming who we are today and why we do what we do as a company. Established in 2005, BirdGang Ltd is a leading UK creative company that creates, teaches and distributes avant garde dance content for stage, theatre and film. We tell thought provoking stories and paint vivid and striking images. We challenge social stereotypes with an aim to create positive social change, guided by the ethos that dance, like all art forms, must use a knowledge of its past, fused with unexplored possibilities. Our mission is to demonstrate that there is an evolving hip hop culture of great artistic intellectual depth!

#### **What strategies do you use to be resilient in order to maintain your long-lasting career in dance?**

We have put a lot of work into creating a sustainable financial structure for the company. Although the Arts Council plays a vital part in the funding and development of our arts, we believe that we must learn from small business start-ups and source other

ways of collaborating with bigger businesses and institutions.

Our ethos behind our work has always been that our company has many creative leaders; each with their own creative identity yet with a common goal. It has always been our mission to impact. Whether it's building up the confidence and independent attitudes of our members and creatives or leaving a positive change in our audiences.

#### **What experiences helped build your resilience?**

The most fitting example would be the relationship between our founding members: Simeon Qsyea, Ukweli Roach and myself. Within the hip hop theatre space, we do not have the same infrastructure and support typically found within ballet or contemporary companies. This made it difficult for us to maintain a full-time career in hip hop theatre. Life kicks in with bills to pay, families to build and pensions to save for. Maintaining a full-time company in the hip hop theatre space is difficult to sustain without expanding



## "BUILD A STRONG TEAM WITH A COMMON GOAL"

our capacity and skills. As a result, we have all made a conscious effort to work to our strengths, divide into our areas of expertise and create a legacy for BirdGang Ltd. Simeon's focus lies in film direction and dance on film, Ukweli creates hip hop theatre concepts for stage and video, and my work focuses on merging live theatre with immersive technology for all platforms and objectives. Nevertheless, we can always refer to each other for support, and we work closely in collaboration. Personally, my greatest tool for resilience is a growth mindset. It's the constant search for improvement and proactive change that has kept me resilient.

### **What advice would you give to younger artists who are training or just starting their careers?**

Although your art comes first and your artistic mind should not be numbed by business strategy, it is vital that we have a foundational understanding of what it means to be an independent artist or independent business. I am very passionate about this and currently offer support to independent creatives in the industry. My vocational education did not prepare me to maintain financial accounts, invoice for my work and complete tax returns, which motivated me to study business in my later years. I can now give back to the young creatives working as self-employed artists in the industry.

My advice would be to think about the three pillars mentioned. What do they mean to you and how can you maximise on them in what you do? Reach out to people in all industries, even those that are unknown. Network and build a strong team with a common goal!

### **My University of East London students raised three key topics in relation to resilience: injury, mental health, and financial investment (in no specific order). What are your thoughts on these?**

Injury is a reality. As we know it can happen to anyone. Maintain your body, eat well and do ALL the physio exercises you need. Always think long-term and look after your health and fitness.

Be awake. The '5 second fame syndrome' is real in the YouTube era we are in. The 'fake friends'

and 'bad eggs' are real, and 'rejection' is part of the journey. Stay humble, be true to yourself and your artistic expression. Always be proactive. Surround yourself when a supportive network, especially for times when challenges arise that help build resilience within your

mental health. Speak!

Invest in yourself, pay yourself first and always keep an eye on your return on investment.

### **If you could go back in time, what advice would you share with your younger self?**

There is so much I would say, but the main message would be, "I am proud of you for treading a path with no blueprint and constantly evolving!" I would advise myself to keep my eyes open to the world, put in place a financially sustainable and strategic plan from the start and to do as much to maintain physical health as possible. Build a versatile team of people around you that share a common goal and possess different strengths, such as finance, marketing, business development, fundraising and more. Also, be better at letting go of the people and things that are not good for you.

### **Any final thoughts on resilience?**

BirdGang Ltd are honoured to have worked with, for and alongside amazing talent and incredible organisations. We are focused on growth and leaving a legacy that is bigger than any individual in the company. Get in touch with us if you have any questions. I provide support and mentorship for creatives and their professional development.

Currently BirdGang is in search for co-producers and funding for our latest work, NOX. This production is a multi-sensory 'Techxperience' that seamlessly combines VR (virtual reality), AR (augmented reality) and live dance theatre. NOX invites audiences to meet their 'digital shadow', their eternal footprint online, by merging data with all four senses; allowing for a deeply personal, life-changing experience.

[Click here](#) for more information about NOX and Kendra Horsburgh's work.

# STRATEGIC PLANNING IN THE ARTS

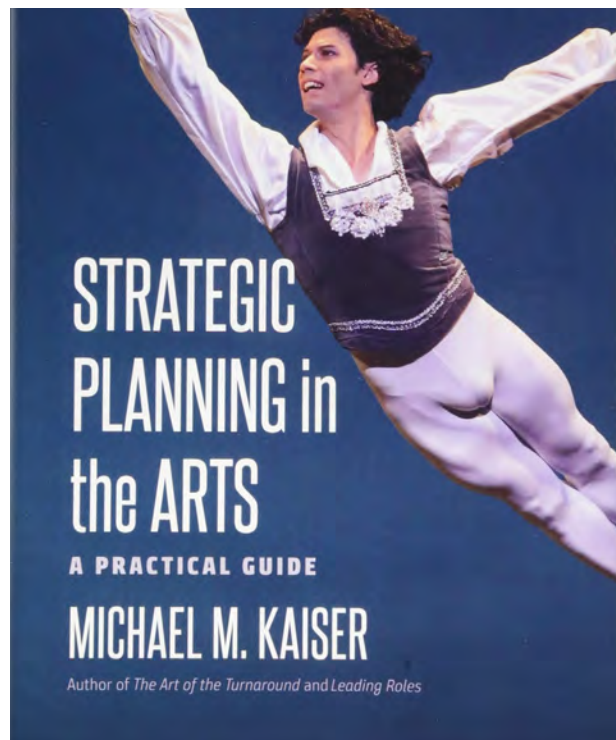
## BOOK REVIEW

BOOK BY MICHAEL KAISER  
REVIEW BY SUSI PINK  
ISBN: 978-1-5126-0174-9

Michael M. Kaiser is an arts management guru and has been dubbed 'the turnaround king' for his work at major arts organisations. He is known for reversing the fortunes of the Royal Opera House, which was facing a £30 million deficit. Within two years he led them to a position of stability – the deficit was paid off, the new building paid for and opened, and an endowment fund established to protect the security of the Royal Opera House's future.

His book *Strategic Planning in the Arts* is a practical guide aimed at staff and board members of not-for-profit arts organisations who are responsible for developing, evaluating, or implementing plans. The approach is firmly rooted in marketing strategy and describes the challenge of arts management from the perspective of a marketplace. As a marketeer, I found the references to Philip Kotler's marketing management theories and Michael Porter's *Five Forces* a reassuring inclusion. The book explores the vital factors for success: strong artistic programming, Board involvement and participation and the proximity between development and marketing departments.

However, what makes this an inspiring read is the 'just do it' attitude to take arts managers through a planning cycle. There is little room given to rumination. The book takes the reader swiftly through several stages, starting with defining a mission, analysing, strategising, and onto implementation. It includes practical examples and useful checklists to help an



organisation stay focused on the task of planning and provides many examples to make the process real. I would highly recommend this book to any arts manager, especially Board members and leaders looking to re-energise their organisation's strategy.

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