

PRESS RELEASE

DECEMBER 2008 IMMEDIATE

URBAN MOVES INTERNATIONAL DANCE FESTIVAL REPORTS HUGE SUCCESS IN MANCHESTER

- Evidence of huge success with new audiences in Greater Manchester
- 11 companies (5 North West) and 38 performances in 3 days
- Professional opportunity for artists and promoters
- New engagement and changing impressions towards dance
- 2010 dates announced

Urban Moves, Manchester's summer festival of live professional dance performance outdoors, has reported huge successes in 2008.

The Festival surprised and delighted a record crowd across three days in July with a unique blend of dance and spectacle. An audience of more than 10,000 enjoyed the performances, an increase from 6,000 attendees at the inaugural festival in 2005.

Urban Moves celebrates the cityscape and architecture of Greater Manchester. Some of the best companies from Britain, France and Spain have performed out in the parks and in the fountains, in the squares and in the gardens. There is always some awesome aerial dance as well as unusual and exhilarating ideas. 2005 included a swimming pool, an underground car park and a performance with dancers and mechanical diggers. 2006 brought a climbing wall into the city centre while 2008 involved some wicked waterplay and an interesting use of pedestrian crossings! Performances are free and suitable for all ages and in addition to the performance programme there are scheduled events where the public can participate in dance.

One of the key areas in which Urban Moves 2008 was successful was in the range and diversity of the audience, in particular regarding the high proportion of attenders who were either completely new to dance or were typically non-traditional arts attenders. The festival is extremely proud of this achievement.

Urban Moves has also been applauded from within the dance world for the artistic quality and variety of the international programme, and the professional opportunities offered to the artists and promoters involved. The range of dance styles involved in the programme and the choreography have been described

as “creative”, “innovative” and “ambitious”. 47 international and British delegates registered for this year's Festival. Many successful relationships were developed between promoters attending and artists presenting work and our evaluation shows that there is a real demand from UK and international delegates for such a showcase of outdoor dance in the UK. Of the programmed companies (listed below), all have expressed a keenness to return to the Festival.

The figures show that 23% of those who saw the performances came from outside the North West, and a further 8% were from outside the UK proving a very successful reach for Urban Moves. 80% said they were likely to come to the next Urban Moves suggesting the Festival made a very strong positive impression. The feedback also suggests that Urban Moves has been very influential in changing peoples' impressions and feelings towards dance.

The presenters of the Festival, Dance Initiative Greater Manchester, are delighted with the evidence that Urban Moves has extended on traditional arts audiences and established a genuine connection with those who might not normally engage with the arts. In addition, DiGM are looking forward to developing this year's relationship with x.trax. x.trax is Britain's largest and most significant showcasing agency, responsible for attracting programmers from across the world to large events in the UK, to see the best in outdoor and culturally diverse performance.

Preparation is now beginning for Urban Moves 2010, confirmed to take place Friday 23 – Sunday 25 July.

For a full Festival flavour see:

Urban Moves Video <http://www.youtube.com/user/danceinitiative>

Urban Moves photo gallery

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/urbanmovesfestival/>

www.urbanmovesfestival.co.uk

Presented by Dance Initiative Greater Manchester with Manchester International Arts and in association with x.trax www.digm.org, www.streetsahead.org, www.xtrax.org.uk

The adventurous Urban Moves has taken its place in the network of European dance festivals alongside Barcelona, Zurich and Genoa, to become an official festival of worldwide Cities That Dance http://www.cgd.info/home_eng.htm

Urban Moves 2008 was funded by Manchester City Council, Arts Council England North West, Piccadilly Partnership, Oldham MBC, Bury MBC, Instituto Cervantes and Alliance Francaise de Manchester. Support was also received from Arts About Manchester, Bury Met, Carcoons SSI Ltd, University of Salford, The Green Room, Zion Arts Centre and Twice Manchester.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Background

DANCE INITIATIVE GREATER MANCHESTER DiGM is the dance agency for Greater Manchester. The agency runs creative projects throughout the region, and provides grants, advice and information. Current active projects include: Signatures Youth Dance Showcase; Older People Dancing Network events; District Dance Forums; Greater Manchester Community Dance Network; Danceworks - community dance showcase; Commission of Chameleon Dance Theatre; Partner in the development of Commotions Youth Dance Company in Salford; Partner in MOVES dance and film festival; Partner in Discover Dance, audience development project; Dance Train - training in community dance for dance practitioners; CONNECT - a network for Greater Manchester dance practitioners and artists; Pro-Active professional level contemporary technique classes held on a weekly basis; Pro-Active Plus - professional level contemporary workshops led by a visiting artist. □ www.digm.org

MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL ARTS AND STREETS AHEAD

EVENTS MIA is a leading promoter of international performing arts in the North West, celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. The organisation remains driven in bringing the best international work and local community arts to a widest possible public audience. MIA festivals have an all important goal - to create an exciting, energising atmosphere in a town or city centre that maximises its existing potential, (shops, cafes, restaurants, open spaces and squares), by the addition of carefully chosen special events. These are all free or nearly free, with an inclusive family friendly atmosphere and an appeal to people from many different cultures. Almost all of MIA's work is outdoors and branded as Streets Ahead Events. www.streetsahead.org

XTRAX is Britain's largest and most significant showcasing agency, responsible for managing large events attracting programmers from across the world to see the best in outdoor and culturally diverse performance available in the UK. x.trax will host the British and international dance promoters attending as delegates for Urban Moves. www.xtrax.org.uk

The 2008 Urban Moves programme featured:

Axial Dance (Britain, North West) *Night Cocoons*. A visually extraordinary performance, Night Cocoons is a brand new work with seven dancers encased in seven giant transparent pods. An Urban Moves 08 commission.

<http://www.youtube.com/user/danceinitiative>

Collision (Britain, North West) *The Line*. A large-scale choreography, involving people from all walks of life, this project is designed to connect and unite. Scores of participants will join hands to form The Line. www.collisiondance.co.uk

Dance In Tension (Britain, North West) *Point of Synthesis*. Flamenco, Kung Fu, Contemporary and Street Dance to name but a few meld together, weave and compete creating a new and exciting experience - cultural fusion! www.danceintension.co.uk

[EK!] Eklektika (Britain, North West) *The Greenman*. Dancers make their way across the city using pedestrian crossings to mark their route. Car passengers and onlookers are treated to a surreal few seconds of dance. *The Garden Project* brings history to life and looks into the role of the gardens today.

Cie Gianni Joseph (France) *Ladies & Men*. Inspired by what he sees in the streets of the world Gianni brings a humorous take to the inexhaustible subject of love at first sight. A jubilant, graceful and rather wet celebration! www.ciegiannijoseph.com

Hofesh Shechter (Britain) *Uprising*. Hofesh Shechter's work is supremely physical and charged with atmosphere. His recent choreography for Channel 4's *Skins* and appearance on *The Culture Show*, is adding to his growing audience. www.hofesh.co.uk

Liz Lea (Britain & Australia) *Bluebird*. Previously seen in Manchester at the 2002 Commonwealth Games Liz returns from a tour of India with a transfixing and imaginative work for Urban Moves. www.leadance.com

Circle of Trust (Spain) '72° is a hip hop piece highlighting the company's own key moments from the four years they have been together. With an emphasis on high energy dynamics, this work expresses pure originality. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUAQRX8_uKM

Provisional Danza (Spain) *Calle 4*. A romantic and spectacular performance from Madrid that features a climactic dance under water, courtesy of a fireman's hose! www.provisionaldanza.com

Cie Retouramont (France) *Vide Accorde*. An awesome and thrilling piece of

aerial dance Vide Accorde will catch the breath in your throat.

www.retouramont.com

Wired Aerial Theatre (Britain) *Fervorosa* A skin-tingling collaboration between UK based Wired Aerial Theatre and Brenda Angiel from Buenos Aires. A heart racing, high-tempo spectacular that will spiral, twist and lunge high above the crowds to an original tango sound score .A Without Walls commission.

www.wiredaerialtheatre.com