

Strategic Alliance for Black Dance Notes from National Meeting

Held on: Thursday 24 November 2011
At: The Place
From: 4.30-6.30pm
Followed by: Launch Event
Hosted by: Deborah Baddoo MBE (DB), State of Emergency (SOE)

DB opened the meeting with an outline of the Strategic Alliance for Black Dance (SABD) initiative, and where the idea for the project developed from. DB introduced the findings of the report *Altered States* that had included a wide consultation process within the Black Dance sector. There were six recommendation headings – Talent Development; Leadership; Recognition; Education and Training; Infrastructure Development and Archiving.

Notes from the meeting were taken in bullet point format, and these have been loosely grouped into these six heading areas. It was agreed to accept the Terms of Reference presented as a working document to be reflected upon once the SABD is more established.

Feedback from the Strategic Alliance for Black Dance (SABD)

Talent Development;

- There is a need to raise standards to compete at international level
- Bringing together quality dancers could bring the opportunity to tour to schools to showcase 'models of excellence'
- Consideration of how to develop established choreographers in the model of Akram Khan;
- There was a feeling that established choreographers must work within the mainstream;
- Could there be an agency for dancers? DB suggested this could be based on Adesola Akinleye's idea for a model to encourage choreographers to work with dance artists and test new work, as well as encourage better audition technique for dancers

Leadership;

- There was a need to identify barriers for the sector. DB referred the meeting to the *Altered States* report which identified barriers.
- There is a need to develop a network of venues that support the SABD
- How about developing a large-scale audience development campaign
- There is a need to consider a long-term leadership development programme
- An outcome of the work should be to develop role-models
- Could there be opportunities for peer mentoring within the Black dance sector?

Recognition;

- There is a need for the SABD to take an advocacy role – particularly to venues and Local Authorities
- The SABD should build partnerships
- Political lobbying for the importance of BD sector
- The SABD should build recognition of the sector
- It is important to remember and recognise the history of BD, and pass this onto young dancers
- The SABD should take a role in sharing information about who is who

Education and Training;

- There is a need for pathways for young Black choreographers
- A programme of work should be seen to 'raise the game' for the sector
- The SABD should challenge limited opportunities for BD
- Many artists are 'stuck in education' – and the SABD must take a role to provide career pathways away from education work
- Could there be greater awareness of Dance Educators in schools settings, and use existing schools databases to let schools know of local dance educators
- The SABD needs to work in dance schools to develop knowledge of the Black dance aesthetic – could this be through Summer School intensives?
- There is scope for formal training opportunities through Black dance arts organisations
- Is there an opportunity to develop a CATS Scheme for Black dance
- Black dancers need to focus more on technique training
- SABD needs to take a role in up-skilling dance educators
- As well as this, SABD should take a role in up-skilling community dance leaders exploring how people learn, lesson planning technique, how to deliver technique class, Health and Safety and so on
- An overall aim for SABD is to get Black dance and African Dance into the Curriculum

Infrastructure Development

- There was a need for the SABD not to duplicate existing work and to serve as an 'umbrella' organisation
- SMART objectives are required
- Objectives could be put together on a regional level as needs may be different from area to area
- Action: SABD should identify gaps in practice between the organisations
- Identify national contacts and explore the American model of 'The International Association of Blacks in Dance' Black Dance Network to develop the SABD
- Continue to develop the e-newsletters and noticeboards
- The SABD should not forget to develop collaborators across artforms for example with promoters, marketers and venues
- New technology should be part of the development of SABD - perhaps an app for Black dance!
- Use technology to get work seen; as well as to utilise existing film making talent e.g. Irven's Lewis's films
- Action: Explore Arts Council's new funding schemes to develop digital work
- Action: Venues could show films as 'digital venue partners'

Archiving

Deborah Baddoo announced that SOE had recently been awarded a first-round pass from HLF to develop a project to bring together archive materials related to British Black Dance over the past 50 years. The project will aim to collect ten collections from celebrated individuals and organisations, and further information would be available in forthcoming weeks for those individuals and organisations interested in being part of the project and having their work archived as a lasting legacy and placed within the National Resource Centre for Dance.

Points to Close:

- Fundraising, marketing and advice – Lisa Anderson agreed to think about developing a strategy?
- Strong emphasis on technique
- Find teachers to facilitate
- Advocacy
- Technology
- Leadership – at all levels
- Pooling of information
- Central point of information
- Access to resources already existing and contributing further to it
- Opportunities to shadow, mentoring and teach
- Develop double/triple bills of work to showcase talent in sector

What Next:

- Key organisations to aim to meet before the next National Meeting
- Notes from this meeting to be written up and distributed by State of Emergency
- SOE to organise next meeting with a performance or workshops in March
- Develop a Department of Imagination (to be led by C Poole)
- Possible date for next meeting to be circulated
- Possible dates and location for meeting 3 – May 17/18 in Leicester