

PHOENIX DANCE THEATRE

ANNUAL REPORT
April 2019 - March 2020



YEAR IN REVIEW

It has been an incredible year of change and achievement here at Phoenix Dance Theatre. We're delighted to have presented new work and forged new connections with companies across the world.

Like many other organisations, we have been reeling from the effects of the COVID-19 crisis, which has had an unprecedented impact on our work, and our sector more widely. Nonetheless, we remain committed to looking at new ways to bring work to our audiences. Despite these challenges, we're celebrating some of the incredible achievements over the past year, which includes reaching new audiences with our acclaimed, groundbreaking work, forging connections with artists and companies in Leeds and further afield, and expanding our youth provision.

International collaborations

In February 2020, Black Waters had its premiere at Leeds Playhouse before touring to venues across the country. The production saw us collaborate with the Kolkata-based company Rhythmosiac for the first time. Sharon Watson co-choreographed the production with the Artistic Directors of Rhythmosaic, Shambik Ghose and Dr Mitul Sengupta to produce a fusion of western contemporary dance movement and classical kathak Indian dance. Black Waters explored the long

lasting effects of British colonialism and demonstrates our ongoing artistic mission to increasing representation of unheard or underrepresented voices on stage.

The Black Waters tour was unfortunately cut short by COVID-19 outbreak.

Growing education provision

We once again saw an increase in the number of people participating in our workshops, classes and education provision. September 2019 saw the launch of our third Phoenix Youth Academy cohort in York, which runs in partnership with York Theatre Royal. January 2021 will see the launch of our fourth cohort in Doncaster. Further successes around our Youth provision can be found on pages 13-17. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 outbreak has had a significant impact on our ability to run classes, but we have managed to produce new online classes for our Youth Academy and Saturday School students. We were also able to provide online provision for our NO BOUNDS groups and older adults classes.



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN NUMBERS

Over 6000 audience members reach

28 performances at 17 venues

Over 110 press and media features

Fundraising Income of £143,631

Access and Education team delivered a total of 1323 sessions nationally to 5604 unique users. The number of repeat users was over 40,000.

130,000 unique views of digital content

The Access & Education participants performed to record audience numbers of over 8000 people

Box Office Income of £88,924*

Worked with 25 artists throughout the year

96% of our audiences are either extremely likely or likely to recommend our work to their friends

98% of our audiences thought that our work was good or very good**



*this would have been in the region of £18000 if the tour had not been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic

**Very Good and Good were the top two ratings possible

THE RITE OF SPRING & LEFT UNSEEN

Spring 2019 saw Phoenix Dance Theatre collaborate with Opera North for the very first time to present an evening of contemporary dance and opera. Our dancers performed the reworked version of Stravinsky's iconic work The Rite of Spring alongside Opera North's 60-piece orchestra in four large scale venues to over 8,000 people.

In Autumn 2019, we toured The Rite of Spring along with Left Unseen, choreographed by Amaury Lebrun. We toured to 13 venues, delivered 17 performances and reached over 3800 audience members

Reviews for The Rite of Spring

★★★★

"a gripping, at times beautiful spectacle"
The Times

★★★★

"Visually compelling"
The Yorkshire Post

OTHER PERFORMANCES

We have been delighted this year to have had the opportunity to take our work to non auditorium spaces.

Since 2013 we have delivered multiple Rural Tours, which have given us the chance to take our work to remote settings. In 2019, we embarked upon another Rural tour, performing to audiences in Devon, Somerset and Cumbria. Excerpts were performed from the following productions: Windrush: Movement of the People by Sharon Watson, Maybe Yes Maybe, Maybe No Maybe by Aletta Collins, Calyx by Sandrine Monin and Lux by rising choreographer Michael Marquez. The programme, curated by Sharon Watson, was designed specifically to bring the Company to rural, unconventional and hard to reach performance locations.

Our company dancers also performed at events in the city, include the Love of Leeds events as well as the Forward Ladies launch.

Our film of Windrush: Movement of the People, which was produced in December 2018, played at the Migration Leeds Festival, Eden Court and the Leeds Film Festival. The film received its television broadcast in February 2019 as part of BBC Four's

Windrush series.

We were also able to live stream the production in June 2019 as part of the Windrush Day celebrations. Alongside this, we have set up a two year contract with streaming platform Marquee Arts TV, which will enable subscribers to watch the production online for free.

We were delighted to take part in the Essex Cultural Diversity for Windrush Day 2019. Sharon Watson, who choreographed the production, spoke about the inspirations behind the show which was then followed by a conversation with company dancer Prentice Whitlow and an Audience Q and A.

Our company dancers were due to participate at this year's Leeds International Festival with a mass participation event called The Time Is Now, which was sadly cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Choreographed by Sharon Watson, The Time is Now intended to bring people of all ages and cultures together as a collective to dance for their environmental future. We were in the process of releasing the choreography videos on social media when the lockdown was put in place. We're hoping that this piece, which speaks pertinently to our present moment, can have some future life.

BLACK WATERS

This spring, we presented Black Waters which saw Sharon Watson co-choreograph for the first time with Shambik Ghose and Dr Mitul Sengupta, the Artistic Directors of Kolkata-based company Rhythmosaic. From this unique collaboration, came this groundbreaking performance, which was a fusion of western contemporary dance movement and classical kathak Indian dance.

Black Waters was an emotionally evocative piece which explored the impact of British colonialism.

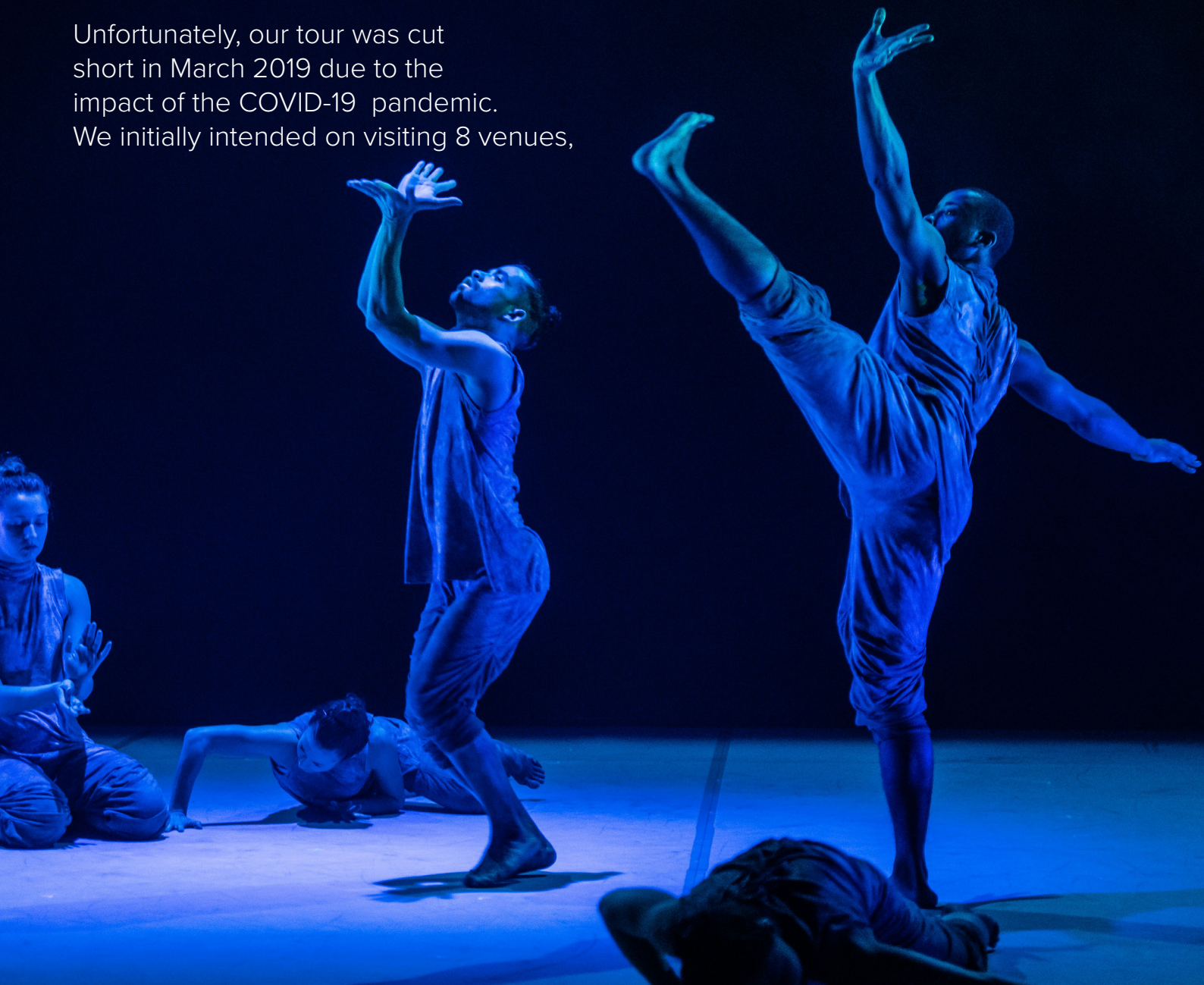
Unfortunately, our tour was cut short in March 2019 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We initially intended on visiting 8 venues,

and delivering a total of 14 performances. Due to the pandemic, we delivered a total of 7 performances at 3 venues reaching 2300 audience members.

Reviews for Black Waters

“anguished and marvellously nuanced”
The Guardian

“Incredibly moving, visceral and honest, the whole thing is quite literally, breath-taking”
The Yorkshire Post



PHOENIX AT HOME 2019

The Stanley & Audrey Burton Theatre
25 - 28 September

583 tickets sold

Survey Highlights

The programme featured:

- The Rite of Spring
- Excerpt from Black Waters
- Lux, a new work by Phoenix Company Dancer, Michael Marquez
- Kabbalah, performed by our Phoenix Academy Junior Students

87% of audiences thought the performance was very good.

95% of those who saw Phoenix At Home would book to see another performance from Phoenix Dance Theatre in the future, based on their experience.



NEW DEVELOPMENTS

A change in leadership

It has been an extraordinary year of change for the leadership of Phoenix Dance Theatre. We've said farewell to our Executive Director Mark Hollander, who departs the company to take up the role of Executive Director at Leeds 2023. Artistic Director Sharon will be leaving later in the year to take up the role as CEO and Principal at Northern School of Contemporary Dance.

Charis Charles was appointed Executive Director in March 2020 and moves into the role from her previous position as Director of Access and Education.

National Lottery Funding

We were pleased to have been awarded funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver our Black Waters Heritage Project. The project saw our Access & Education department work with eight groups of young people from across Leeds, using movement and music to learn about the impact of British Colonialism. We also grateful to have been supported by Heritage Corner and South Asian Arts - UK in the delivery of this project. You can find out more about the project on page 17.

Award Success

We're thrilled to have achieved award successes at the inaugural Black British Theatre Awards which took place at The Old Finsbury Town Hall. We won the award for Best Dance Production for our production of The Rite of Spring, premiered at Leeds Grand in February 2019 alongside Opera North's Gianni Schicchi. Company Dancer Prentice Whitlow also won the award for Best Dance Performance in a Production.



Collaboration with Opera North New Commissions

We will once again collaborate with our neighbours Opera North on an original dance production. This is the second collaboration with Opera North, following The Rite of Spring in 2019.

We will present a unique double bill of works by Leonard Bernstein. West Side Story Symphonic Dances will be a new dance production devised and choreographed by Aletta Collins. It will play in a double bill with a revival of Bernstein's short opera Trouble in Tahiti, directed by Matthew Eberhardt. The production had been scheduled to premiere this Autumn, but due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it has been postponed to Autumn 2021.

Choreographer's & Composers Lab

We hosted our second Choreographers and Composers Lab between Tuesday 2 July – Saturday 13 July 2019 at our studios in Leeds, thanks to funding from the Jerwood Charitable Foundation and Leeds Dance Partnership. The artists were mentored by Artistic Director, Sharon Watson, and composer Alexander Campkin. Guest Artists on the Lab included Kim Brandstrup, Peter Wiegold, Sandrine Monin and Nadine Benjamin.

Following their involvement in the CC Lab, choreographer Jamaal Burkmar and composer, Christella Litras have created a new work piece of work for presentation in non-theatre spaces.

Jamaal and Christella begin creation in early December and will produce a number of contemporary dance pieces set to original music which will tour in our 2021 season. The pieces will work together as a full-length performance or as standalone pieces, with the intention of presenting these works in non-theatre spaces.



ACCESS & EDUCATION

During this financial year, our Access and Education team delivered a total of **1323 sessions nationally to 5604 unique users. This resulted in 42600 repeat engagements: a 15% increase from the previous financial year.**

Here are some highlights of some of the department's activity:

YOUTH ACADEMY

Phoenix Youth Academy is a pre-vocational training course for talented young dancers, aged 13-19 years, interested in pursuing dance as a career. We have academies in Leeds, Newcastle, York and January 2021 will see the launch of our fourth cohort in Doncaster.

64 students were enrolled in our Leeds Academy across the Juniors (13-15 years) and Seniors (16-19 years) who took part in over 180 sessions and performed at eight public events including Phoenix At Home, Dance it Up North, FRESH and Rodillian Arts Festival. Our students had the opportunity to work with four choreographers during the year, including Mathieu Geffre', Sandrine Monin, Kevin Turner (Company Chameleon) and Alleyne Dance. 14 students went on to begin vocational training in September 2019.



In partnership with Gateway Studio Project, Phoenix Academy North East enrolled 18 students who participated in over 65 workshops and performed at six public platforms including PULSE at Dance City and a curtain raiser performance for the professional company at Northern Stage.

September 2019 saw the launch of our third Phoenix Youth Academy cohort in York., which is ran in partnership with York Theatre Royal. 17 students were enrolled, and they took part in over 35 sessions. PYA York performed for the first time at ResTec 2019 and were successful in their application for FRESH 2020.



SATURDAY SCHOOL

We continued to deliver our weekly Saturday School classes to children aged 3-16 years and in September 2019 we were able to launch 2 x additional satellite classes at the new Leeds City College Quarry Hill campus, to meet demand and clear the lengthy waiting lists.

In July 2019, all of our Saturday School students performed at the annual Summer Dance Platform in the Stanley & Audrey Burton Theatre to sold out audiences.

130 students were enrolled across all six classes and across the financial year we delivered 166 sessions. 8 students also went on to secure places in Phoenix Youth Academy and began training in September 2019



OLDER ADULTS

We continued to deliver our Morley Movers dance classes, that aim to reduce isolation and improve balance, mobility and physical and mental well-being. The sessions take place at Morley Town Hall each week, offering participants the chance to come and dance and have a social over a cup of tea and a biscuit! The group also created a piece that was performed at the Summer Dance Platform.

Due to the growing success of our Morley group, Spring 2020 saw the launch of an additional older adults group in Armley at St Bartholomew's church hall. We were able to launch this group thanks to funding from the Wades Charity.

Across both groups, we delivered a total of 44 sessions during the financial year to a total of 75 unique users, reaching a total engagement of 2029.

ILLUMINATE DANCE

We continued to deliver sessions to children and young people (aged 6-18 years) with additional needs. 18 students participated and a total of 108 sessions including weekly and holiday provision. The sessions aim to improve participants' dance technique, as well as their health and fitness, and support them to develop social and communication skills.

Our older cohort performed in our Summer Dance Platform, Northern Ballet's accessible dance platform 'Expressions' and were also successful in their application to perform at the Yorkshire Youth Dance Platform 2020. We received funding from Short Breaks to deliver this programme.



July 2019 marked the end of the project funding though Paul Hamlyn Foundation. However, due to the ongoing success of the project and high demands for classes, we were able to continue delivering three of the five No Bounds classes from the Autumn term onwards.

We have also seen some of the participants transition onto Saturday School and even successfully gain a place in Phoenix Youth Academy.

NO BOUNDS

We continued our work aiming to engage boys in dance through our No Bounds project. These classes were delivered in a total of five locations across Leeds and Bradford and the boys engaged in a total of 145 sessions. All five groups performed at our Summer Dance Platform at the end of the academic year and a total of 15 boys from across the project were selected to take part in weekend intensives to create a new piece to also perform at this event.

Other performances within this project included COLLIDE, a city centre event hosted by Northern School of Contemporary Dance, and a platform hosted by Kala Sangam Arts Centre.



KICK OFF

Access and Education continued to work in partnership with Northern School of Contemporary Dance, DAZL and Leeds City College to deliver dance provision for boys aged 12-18 years. The boys took part in weekly sessions and holiday intensives to create performance pieces for events including COLLIDE and our Summer Dance Platform. In total, the boys accessed 42 sessions across the year.



Funded by Healthy Holidays, we ran two weeks of summer activity for two cohorts at Hovingham Primary School engaging with 35 children over 20 sessions. Each week was themed, exploring the ideas of pirates and the jungle. Both weeks culminated in a studio sharing for families and friends. Free meals were provided to all the young people attending the course.

YOUTH DANCE PLATFORMS



HOLIDAY ACTIVITY

We hosted two summer school activities - one for children aged 7-11 years and the second for those aged 12-16 years. 20 participants took part in a total of 20 sessions across the 2 weeks; with the younger cohort exploring Windrush rep, as well as completing their Arts Award Discover, and the older cohort working with 5 different practitioners to create 'A Dance in a Day'.



We continued to stage our annual dance platforms which brought together a total of 480 participants who performed to sold out audiences (a total of 627). We hosted our Summer Dance Platform (held over two days) and our ResTec Platform.

An additional 195 participants were due to perform at the Yorkshire Youth Dance Platform in March 2020 but unfortunately this event didn't go ahead due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

GCSE DANCE

Due to its ongoing success we sold a total of 28 copies of our digital resource for Shadows by Christopher Bruce, both nationally and internationally, and engaged with a total of 245 GCSE Dance students/teachers through Shadows rep workshops and CPD across the UK.



SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP SCHEME



We continued to grow our activity and welcome new partnerships with schools both in Leeds and beyond. We had partnerships with a total of eight schools (7 primary and 1 secondary), delivering a total of 205 workshops, to 1125 students across the financial year. Within these partnerships we delivered themed workshops, cross-curricular and BTEC and GCSE tuitions.

Through the schools partnership scheme we also provided support for schools applying to get the Arts Mark. Our workshops also are part on Arts Award delivery and led to accreditation for the young people.

We also welcomed 165 of these students to the open dress rehearsal of Phoenix at Home as well as 253 students to the Black Waters open dress rehearsal at the Leeds Playhouse.



BLACK WATERS HERITAGE PROJECT

Thanks to funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Access & Education were able to deliver an exciting and informative project based on the new creation Black Waters. 130 participants engaged in the project, which was made up of Phoenix Youth Academy and No Bounds students, SAA-UK as well as students from three partner schools.

As a part of the project, participants had the opportunity to explore Indian and Afro-Caribbean histories and their importance to British Heritage by working with various artists who delivered dance, music and storytelling sessions.

A total of 112 sessions were delivered throughout the project, where each group worked towards creating a piece of work. The groups would each then come together to showcase their heritage learning in an exhibition day in the Stanley & Audrey Burton Theatre.

The exhibition day was due to take place in March 2020, but unfortunately couldn't go ahead due to the COVID-19 outbreak.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Public Subsidy
£490,262 (Arts Council England and
Leeds City Council)

Earned Income
£117,924 (other income)

Access & Education Income
£172,735

**Grants, Donations & Other
Income**
£136,415

Artistic Production & Touring
£134,938

Access & Education
£100,782

Company Dancers
£303,184

Staffing & Overheads
£380,532





STAFF

Board

Keith Evans (Chair)
Susan Coffey (Vice Chair)
Stephen Derrick
Brian Daniels (until March 2020)
Andrew Fryer (until September 2019)
Simon Kamstra
Matthew Roberts
Bobsie Robinson
Suzanne Robinson
Heather Paul

Directors

Artistic Director: Sharon Watson
Executive Director: Mark Hollander (until March 2020)

Rehearsal & Touring

Rehearsal Director: Tracy Tinker (until October 2019)
Interim Rehearsal Director: Martin Hylton (January - March 2020)
Technical Manager: Kieron Johnson
Company Stage Manager: Taisa Stefanska
Wardrobe Manager: Emma Louise James

Dancers

Manon Adrianow
Natalie Alleston
Aaron Chaplin
Carmen Vazquez Marfil (until August 2019)
Carlos J. Martinez
Michael Marquez
Vanessa Vince-Pang
Shawn Willis (from March 2020)
Prentice Whitlow (until August 2019)
Apprentice Dancers:
Hannah Connor
Jessica Nixon

Access & Education

Director of Access & Education: Charis Charles
Access & Education Officer: Stacy Wraith
Access & Education Officer: Catherine Muckle (until August 2019)
Molly Watson (from October 2019)
Youth Academy Coordinator: Antonio Boriello
Access & Education Administrator: Sophie Wyatt
Administrative Support: Kendall Mackenzie

Communications & Administration

Marketing & Communications Manager: Josh Babcock (until March 2020)
Finance & Office Administrator: Catherine Goode
PA to the Directors: Bev Taylor
Company Assistant: Lesley Blades



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