

Dance Dates

SPRING

95



FOCUS ON ...

- BOYS IN DANCE
- FAREWELL TO SIR PETER WRIGHT
- CDMF AND DANCE UK UPDATES
- PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

Free

The DanceXchange

The National Dance Agency for Birmingham & the West Midlands

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Front Cover: Featherstonehaughs Go Las Vegas
Birmingham Rep - April 10&11th

Photo: Chris Nash

SPRING DANCE 1995

The West Midlands is abuzz with dance. Activities take off with the Birmingham Repertory Theatre's Spring Fling - April 4-11th when three of the world's finest contemporary dance companies take to the stage. Never before have audiences had a chance to experience The Mark Morris Dance Group, Shobana Jeyasingh Dance Company and the all-male Featherstonehaughs - all in one week.

Mark Morris - one of today's finest choreographic talents concludes his tour in Birmingham with an exclusive two-day residency with his company of dancers. Morris himself will conduct a two-day "Lab" for professional dancers at The DanceXchange. There are also opportunities for dance students and children to participate in a range of workshops on April 6&7th.

Male dancing is the focus of this issue of *Dance Dates*. Boys in dance seems to be a hot topic. Whether it is an issue, concern or simply a matter of celebration will be discussed in a number of forums this Spring. Boys that do dance are having a great, creative time; from Bhangra to Ballet - boys are definitely dancing. And some have become Britain's brightest and most established choreographic talents, including Wayne McGregor, whose Random Dance Company visits *mac* on April 28th; Kim Brandstrup, whose Arc Dance Company is at the Warwick Arts Centre April 26-29th, not to mention Sir Peter Wright, who retires from his post as Director of The Birmingham Royal Ballet in a season that celebrates his contributions to British ballet at the Birmingham Hippodrome, June 19-July 1st.

Cheshire Dance Workshop is hosting a Specifically Boys Dance Conference on 8th April at Birmingham's University of Central England which will be addressing issues of boys in dance as well as celebrating their achievements through a range of performances

and workshops. Amanda Thornton, teacher for boys dance at Poynton High School in Cheshire discusses whether there are gender issues in dance or whether society has itself created false barriers.

The Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB), Coventry Centre for the Performing Arts (CCPA) and The DanceXchange are currently involved in a year-long Boys' Own project with Birmingham's Duddeston Manor School. Gary Neal, the school's PE teacher and Greg Sporton, lecturer at CCPA, discuss the integration of dance in boys PE classes and the development of creative and technical skills as the boys prepare for an Easter Holiday project with dancer/choreographer Matthew Hawkins and BRB dancers. The boys share their work at The DanceXchange on April 23rd and at CCPA on April 29th.

Partnerships, such as the forces behind Boys' Own, are key to the development of not only boys dance, but all dance locally, regionally and nationally. National Dance Agencies are not the only organisations supporting and developing networks for dance activities. In this issue of *Dance Dates*, Dance UK and The Community Dance and Mime Foundation (CDMF) offer insight into their areas of work. As it launches into a new era of critical debate for dance in the community, we've invited CDMF to tell our readers about the multitude of services it offers the community.

We hope you too 'fling' into Spring and join in the many activities and performances on offer in Birmingham and the West Midlands over the coming months.



Assis Carreiro
Executive Director, The DanceXchange

VISITING THE REGION

ADZIDO PAN AFRICAN DANCE ENSEMBLE

Oya's Choice

Ludlow Festival, 29th June

The pulsating drum rhythms and innovating dance of Europe's leading African Dance Company arrives at the Ludlow Festival with a new small scale production. The 15 Adzido members, drawn from the 26-strong ensemble, are all highly accomplished dancers and drummers. *Oya's Choice* blends traditional and authentic African music and dance with the moral dilemmas and conventions of African culture.

Set in Nigeria, *Oya* is the story of a woman's battle to preserve and ensure security for her family and community illustrated through a variety of African dances including the Gahu dance from Ghana, the Mbende dance from Zimbabwe, and the Azania from South Africa. The company perform with zest and vitality to the pounding rhythms of Africa. At times spiritually moving but always physically exuberant, the energy and enthusiasm is infectious.

George Dzikunu, Adzido's Artistic Director, co-founded the company in 1984. The original concept of the venture was to perform an educational role in the promotion of African dance, music, and cultural heritage. The company has grown in size and stature through the years, touring both small and large productions to great success in the UK and further afield. As part of their regular education programme, the company will lead an open workshop on 29th June from 11am to 12.30 pm.

For more information contact the Ludlow Festival Box Office on 01584 872150.

Shobana Jeyasingh
Photo: Hugo Glendinning

Performances

SPRING FLING - A NEW DANCE SEASON DAWNS

*Birmingham Repertory Theatre,
April 4-11th*

Spring is finally here and with it, The Birmingham Repertory Theatre presents a new, exciting dance season in association with *mac* and The DanceXchange. This is a rare opportunity to see three of the most innovative companies in contemporary dance.

The Mark Morris Dance Group, the sensation of consecutive Edinburgh Festivals, perform on the 4th and 5th April at 7.30 pm. Morris and his company conclude their three-week English tour in Birmingham, so don't miss your chance to see the work of one of the most gifted choreographers in the world today!

The Prudential Award-winning Shobana Jeyasingh Dance Company follow on the 7th and 8th April with a stunning double bill of mythology, warfare, music and dance in their newest piece *Raid* and the revival of the critically acclaimed *Making of Maps*.

Finally, kick up your heels with The Featherstonehaughs as they *Go Las Vegas* on 10th and 11th April. The all-male group sink their soft shoe shuffle into the glitz and glamour of the revue world and the underworld, in a dazzling visual and musical feast.

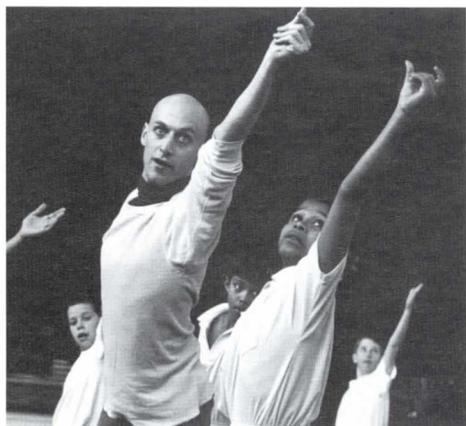
For further details and information on discounts telephone the Birmingham Rep's box office on 0121 236 4455.

NEWSFLASH!!! The Mark Morris Group will lead two days of workshops (6&7th April). Telephone The DanceXchange on 0121 622 3253 now for more information.

DANCE DIARY

April

- 31th Mar New Dance Festival -
-2nd *Coventry's Annual Dance Showcase*
Coventry Centre for the Performing
Arts, Coventry
Details 01203 418868
- 1st Claire Russ Ensemble -
Dangerous When Wet/Sweet Boy
mac, Birmingham
8.00pm 0121 440 3838
- 1&7th The Wendy Bates School of Dance
- *Beats and Barres*
(Showcase Extravaganza)
The Brewhouse, Burton upon Trent
7.30pm (2.00pm, 1st) 01283 516030
- 4&5th Phoenix Dance Company -
Mixed Programme
Swan Theatre, Worcester
7.30pm 01905 27322



Matthew Hawkins and boys from Duddeston Manor - *Boys' Own* Photo: Roy Peters



Mark Morris Dance Group
Photo: Tom Brazil

- 4&5th Mark Morris Dance Group -
Mixed Programme
Birmingham Repertory Theatre
7.30pm 0121 236 4455
- 7&8th Shobana Jeyasingh Dance
Company - *Raid/Making of Maps*
Birmingham Repertory Theatre
7.30pm 0121 236 4455
- 8th *Specifically Boys Conference*
University of Central England,
Birmingham
Details 01606 861770
- 10&11th Featherstonehaughs -
Go Las Vegas
Birmingham Repertory Theatre
7.30pm 0121 236 4455
- 12&13th The European Ballet -
An Evening of Classical Ballet
Malvern Festival Theatre
8.00pm 01684 892277

The DanceXchange

THE NATIONAL DANCE AGENCY FOR BIRMINGHAM AND THE WEST MIDLANDS

On September 1 1994, the Birmingham National Dance Agency (formed in 1991) and Birmingham Dance Centre joined forces to form The DanceXchange, the National Dance Agency for Birmingham and the West Midlands. The DanceXchange is located above the Birmingham Hippodrome Theatre in Birmingham City Centre and houses three large dance studios and a small-scale performance space.

The DanceXchange offers a range of classes, workshops, residencies, training seminars, summer schools, rehearsal facilities, and other projects and activities in its home base and in the broader community to people of all ages and abilities. The Agency supports the education work of visiting dance companies and is currently developing a number of education and community outreach projects in partnership with the region's other arts organisations.

The DanceXchange supports professional dance through choreographic 'labs', professional level classes, residencies and collaborations with professional dance artists and companies.

The DanceXchange commissions new work and presents seasons of dance in its home theatre, while also co-presenting dance with venues in Birmingham and the West Midlands. In addition, The DanceXchange acts as an information and resource centre offering guidance and advice on the programming and marketing of dance.

Dance Dates, the voice for dance in the West Midlands, is a free quarterly magazine and listings service with a regional and national circulation of 15,000.

The DanceXchange

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a national
dance
agency



THE NEXT ISSUE OF DANCE DATES WILL BE PRODUCED IN
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If you are not currently on The DanceXchange mailing list and would like future issues of **Dance Dates** sent directly to you, please complete the details below and return to the above address.

Name: _____

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