

## PRESS RELEASE

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# DANCE UMBRELLA ANNOUNCES LIVE PROGRAMME FOR 2021 FESTIVAL



L to R: *Club Origami*, Takeshi Matsumoto photo by Summer Dean; *Extra Time* Ahilan Ratnamohan, photo by Joshua Morris; *Happy Father's Day*, Dani Harris-Walters, photo by Sophie Bradbury; *Traces*, Kesha Raithatha, photo Vimel Budhev; *DanceStory*, Jennifer Irons, photo by Camilla Greenwood; *Transverse Orientation*, Dimitris Papaioannou, photo by Julian Mommert

- **DANCE UMBRELLA WILL PRESENT A HYBRID FESTIVAL OF LIVE PERFORMANCES AND DIGITAL EXPLORATIONS FOR ITS 2021 FESTIVAL**

Dance Umbrella, London's annual international dance festival has today announced that it will return this October with a number of live, in-person performances for the first time since 2019, alongside a collection of digital events aimed at sparking conversations, inspiring creativity and celebrating choreographic talent. Dance Umbrella will take place from **8-24 October 2021** across the capital city.

In his first year as Artistic Director and Chief Executive, **Freddie Opoku-Addaie**, who started in March this year, said *'This is very much a transitional year for Dance Umbrella. As a freelance creative practitioner, and in my new role as Artistic Director/Chief Executive, I know and see the inequities that have been exacerbated during the past 18 months. Working with its partners, DU has a vital role to play in continuing to widen the offer of diverse work and championing artists to find new ways of working collaboratively. The new twin-track programme of live and digital work reflects the festival's ongoing aspirations, but also indicates a new direction and some fresh perspective, with Dance Umbrella debuts from many independent artists. DU welcomes audiences from across and beyond London to enjoy many different forms of dance and share the excitement in our global city.'*

The live programme includes performances from the extraordinary visual artist and theatre-maker **Dimitris Papaioannou**, and a Dance Umbrella Festival debut from Japanese artist **Takeshi Matsumoto** with a new sensory show for under 5's. Dance Umbrella continues to expand the reach of its work in outer London Boroughs as it travels to Bell Square in Hounslow to present an exhilarating live outdoor work created by performance-maker **Ahilan Ratnamohan** and a brand new piece from Dance Umbrella's Assemble project with **West Thames College** by **Becky Namgauds** and **tyroneisaacstuart**.

The live work continues with a takeover of Watermans Arts Centre in Brentford with two action-packed days of live performances including a double-bill from **Dani Harris-Walters** and **Kesha Raithatha**, an International Dance Short Film programme curated by **Omari 'Motion' Carter** and join host **Jennifer Irons** for a live dancesploration of where contemporary dance came from, where it is now and how we got here in DanceStory. Dance Umbrella's online programme will bring audiences closer to choreographers and how they create in Choreographer's Cut, celebrate pioneers in their fields in intimate conversations between established artists and those they have inspired to dance, as well as give audiences exclusive access to a curated film programme and streamed performances, thought-provoking articles and topical panel discussions and workshops.

2021 is a transitional year for Dance Umbrella as it emerges from the pandemic and its leadership moves between Emma Gladstone OBE and new Artistic Director and Chief Executive Freddie Opoku-Addaie ahead of his 2022 inaugural festival. At this unique moment in time, Dance Umbrella will continue to listen and respond to the urgent needs of dance artists and to champion the creativity that is shaping the future of contemporary culture.

Further programming and full digital event schedule to be announced in September.

### **Live performances:**

#### **Takeshi Matsumoto - *Club Origami***

Dive into the magical world of Club Origami, an immersive and interactive dance show touring across London that invites family audiences to create, imagine and explore whole new ways of thinking, playing and moving. Dance, fashion and live music meet the magic of origami to sweep us up on a spirited and inspiring adventure in a land made purely of paper and play. Club Origami is presented by Little Big Dance – a pioneering national initiative creating new dance work for under fives and their families, led by South East Dance in partnership with DanceEast, Take Art and Yorkshire Dance.

## **Dance Umbrella @BellSquareLDN**

### **Ahilan Ratnamohan - *Extra Time***

Going head-to-head on a concrete pitch, join six footballers as they battle it out...without a ball.

Exploring the choreographic potential of football movement, this brand new work by DU debut artist Ahilan Ratnamohan challenges our perceptions of the beautiful game away from the green grass, the stadium and the urgent need for a result.

Bringing together individuals from a diverse movement background, Ratnamohan's work investigates the cultural and choreographic possibilities of football and athletics. After attempting a career as a professional footballer, Ratnamohan has been creating live performance pieces since 2007 that have been seen in Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and previously in London at LIFT.

### **Assemble**

Witness the culmination of Dance Umbrella's Assemble project in Bell Square as students from **West Thames College** working in collaboration with previously presented DU artists **Becky Namgauds** and **tyroneisaacstuart** perform their brand new dance work.

## **Dance Umbrella Watermans Takeover**

### **Double Bill:**

#### **Dani Harris-Walters - *Happy Father's Day***

Hip-hop dance vocabulary, rap and narration are wondrously crafted in solo work *Happy Father's Day*; a reflective coming-of-age story with a comedic edge.

Through anecdotal sketches, Dance Umbrella debut artist Dani Harris-Walters takes audiences on a heart-stirring journey exploring a vital relationship from an unexpected point of view.

Immersed within the realms of Hip Hop culture and theatre, Dani Harris-Walters is an experienced performer, choreographer, teacher and DJ. Touring nationally and internationally Harris-Walters has worked with leading industry figures including Olivier Award Winner Botis Seva | Far From The Norm, Ivan Blackstock, Just Us Dance Theatre and Boy Blue Entertainment.

#### **Kesha Raithatha - *Traces***

Travel on an abstract journey of human experience, DU debut artist Kesha Raithatha explores rejection, abandonment and loss in her stirring solo work *Traces*.

Repelling formal structures to build an extraordinary dance language, Raithatha purges the body of memory and traces of the past, to find herself without form and floating in flux. *Traces* is an urgent and vulnerable physical enquiry.

Embodying Kathak and Contemporary movement, dancer and choreographer Kesha Raithatha creates work that experimentally reconsiders South Asian dance. Training and working as an independent artist between India and the UK since 2009, Raithatha is Associate Director of Aakash Odedra Company, Work Place Artist at The Place in London and a Curve Resident Creative at the Curve Leicester.

### **Jennifer Irons - DanceStory**

From Martha Graham to Beyoncé; experience a blast from the past to a taster of today as your host Jennifer Irons guides you through a live dancesploration of where contemporary dance came from, where it is now and how we got here.

Commissioned by Dance Umbrella, DanceStory is a dance-theatre piece that physically and verbally reveals the history of contemporary dance for a younger audience. The work includes historical information, physical demonstrations, visuals and moments of participation, as well as revealing what the world of dance looks like today.

There's something for all the family at DU Watermans Takeover, as Japanese artist **Takeshi Matsumoto** brings his immersive and interactive dance show *Club Origami*. Family audiences are invited to create, imagine and explore whole new ways of thinking, playing and moving. In the cinema, enjoy an **International Dance Short Film Programme** curated by **Omari 'Motion' Carter**. Around the building, there will also be free public dance workshops spanning a variety of dance styles.

### **Dimitris Papaioannou – Transverse Orientation**

Dimitris Papaioannou returns to Dance Umbrella for the third time following his sold-out debut in 2016 and 2018's sold-out and Olivier-nominated production *The Great Tamer*. Summoning an entirely distinctive universe once more for his latest work, *Transverse Orientation* is co-commissioned by Dance Umbrella and Sadler's Wells. A true master of visual spectacle, the Greek artist explores existential themes, mining mythology and art history to conjure vivid and often humorous imagery. Taking inspiration from the natural behaviour of moths to seek light, *Transverse Orientation* follows the human compulsion to find meaning on the journey of life.

With a background in fine arts, Papaioannou's creations blur theatre, experimental choreography and live performance to transform bodies and objects by illusion. Coming to international prominence following his direction of the 2004 Olympic ceremonies in Athens, his work has been seen by audiences across the world and was first seen in London as part of Dance Umbrella 2016. Originally scheduled to premiere at Onassis Stegi in Athens, due to the pandemic *Transverse Orientation* was first performed on 2 June 2021 at the Biennale de la Danse de Lyon in France and will tour to more than 30 cities.

**-ENDS-**

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## **LISTINGS**

### **Takeshi Matsumoto**

#### ***Club Origami***

Presented by Little Big Dance

Co-commissioned by Dance Umbrella

Tour Venues - Stanley Arts (8th), Albany (9 Oct), The Place (10th), Waterman's Arts Centre (17 Oct),  
Arts Depot (24 Oct)

Recommended age: Five and under

Duration 40 mins + 10 mins stay & play

Free front of house craft activities

Times and prices vary, see venue websites for details.

Tickets bookable via tour venues.

### **Dance Umbrella @BellSquareLDN**

Bell Square Saturday 9th October

#### ***Extra Time***

#### **Ahilan Ratnamohan**

#### **+ Assemble**

### **Dimitris Papaioannou – *Transverse Orientation***

Co-commissioned by Dance Umbrella and Sadler's Wells

21st – 23rd October, 7.30pm, Sadler's Wells

### **Dance Umbrella Watermans Takeover**

#### **16th & 17th October**

Saturday 16th October

Double Bill, 7.30pm

#### ***Happy Father's Day***

#### **Dani Harris-Walters**

Presented by Dance Umbrella, supported by Artists4Artists

#### ***Traces***

#### **Kesha Raithatha**

Presented by Dance Umbrella, supported by Akademi Dance

Co-Produced by Curve Theatre Leicester. Initial Commission by Akademi and Esmée Fairbairn  
foundation. Supported by Phizzical and Arts Council England.

### **International Dance Short Film Programme**

#### **Curated by Omari 'Motion' Carter**

Film schedule and timings to be announced.

#### ***DanceStory***

#### **Jennifer Irons**

Times to be confirmed

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### About Dance Umbrella

Dance Umbrella is London's international dance festival, celebrating 21st century choreography across the capital and beyond. It's mission is to entice audiences, nurture artists, innovate practice, and stimulate interest in the power of the body in motion. Since 1978, the annual festival has brought outstanding contemporary dance to London, presenting more than 785 artists from 40 countries to over one million people. Dance Umbrella has commissioned over 85 new works and presented at 136 different venues ranging from Smithfield Market to the British Library; from canal long boats to Alexandra Palace Ice Rink; from inner city car park rooftops to outer London parks. Alongside the festival, Dance Umbrella creates year-round creative learning initiatives for all ages, develops new choreographic talent, hosts thought-provoking debates and discussions, and offers skill sharing opportunities for creative industry professionals.

[danceumbrella.co.uk](http://danceumbrella.co.uk)

### **Ahilan Ratnamohan**

Ahilan Ratnamohan is a performance-maker working with atypical forms in the theatre context, in particular football and language-learning processes. He works almost exclusively with people without classical performance training. After completing a film degree at the University of Technology, Sydney in 2005, he attempted to make a career as a professional footballer in the Netherlands, Sweden and Germany. Since 2007 he has been creating live performance pieces. His development came through working with diverse Sydney-based companies and artists, in particular Urban Theatre Projects, Branch Nebula and Martin del Amo. In 2013 he premiered his first work as a director, *Michael Essien I want to play as you...* in Antwerp, which led to the formation of The Star Boy Collective - a performance troupe made of West African football migrants - and the creation of Star Boy Productions, *Reverse Colonialism!* and most recently *Look On The Bright Side*. Through productions such as *SDS1*, *Drill* and *Klapping* he has investigated the cultural and choreographic potential of football and athletics. Since 2013 he has been working in Europe, with a base in Antwerp mainly in residence at Monty Kulturfaktorij. He continues to work both in choreography as well as social-political theatre. In 2017 he created a trilogy of works exploring the political power of language in residence at Homo Novus Festival in Riga and he continues to research the performativity of language learning through a research project at the Antwerp Conservatoire. In 2020 Ahil joined the Brussels collective Robin vzw.

### **Becky Namgauds**

Becky Namgauds is a choreographer and dance artist creating intense, powerful work inspired by personal and political issues, her work is female-driven and internationally influenced. Namgauds has created dance for theatres, outdoor festivals and film. In the past she has collaborated with Hofesh Shechter Company and LIFT, Arbonauts and Scarabeus Aerial Theatre. Her show *Like Honey* was part of the British Council Edinburgh Showcase 2019, and her solo *Exhibit F* premiered at Dance Umbrella 2019, touring in early 2020. Her outdoor work *Rodadoras*, performed by three dancers in half a tonne of soil is performed nationally and internationally.

### **Dani Harris-Walters**

Dani Harris-Walters is a Dance Artist, performer, choreographer, teacher & DJ who immerses himself within realms of Hip Hop culture and theatre. An experienced figure in the industry, he loves to experiment, reform and restructure movement from many dance styles to create a unique and distinctive dance language.

Graduating from University of East London with a B.A Honours degree in Dance: Urban Practice, Dani propelled into the hip-hop theatre world working with Tony Adigun's Avant Garde Dance, touring nationally and internationally both *The Black Album* and *Fagin's Twist* co-produced by The Place. touring the UK & China. His first job came as a professional dancer in the London Olympic Games

2012 Opening Ceremony being a part of the *Second to the right, and straight on till morning* cast, performing with NHS workers choreographed by Temujin Gil. Within the theatre world he has also worked with many of the leading names in Hip Hop Theatre including the Olivier Award Winner Botis Seva | Far From The Norm, Ivan Blackstock, Just Us Dance Theatre's *Born To Manifest*, and the infamous Boy Blue Entertainment in their production *Blak, Whyte, Grey* touring the UK, America and Taiwan.

### **Dimitris Papaioannou**

Born in Athens in 1964, Dimitris Papaioannou gained early recognition as a painter and comics artist, before his focus shifted to the performing arts, as director, choreographer, performer, and designer of sets, costumes, make up, and lighting. He was a student of the iconic Greek painter Yannis Tsarouchis before studying at the Athens School of Fine Arts. He formed Edafos Dance Theatre, in 1986 as an initial vehicle for his original stage productions, hybrids of physical theatre, experimental dance, and performance art. Originating in the underground scene, the company challenged perceptions and gained an expanding number of dedicated followers. *Medea* (1993) marked the company's transition to big theatres and is considered its iconic work. The Edafos company spanned 17 years, to 2002, and set its indelible stamp on the arts scene in Greece. Papaioannou became widely known in 2004, as the creator of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games. Restarting in 2006, with his production 2, he found himself in the odd position of creating avant-garde works in major theatres in Athens that enjoyed record-breaking long runs, with over 100.000 tickets sold. In 2009, he began using this platform to create theatrical experiments on a large scale: *Nowhere* (2009) for the inauguration of the renovated Greek National Theatre and *Inside* (2011) for the Pallas Theater. In 2012, stripping down his work to bare essentials, he created *Primal Matter* for the Athens Festival, with him back on stage after a ten-year absence. On the same quest for simplicity, he created *Still Life* (2014), the first work that toured extensively in Europe, South America, Asia, and Australia. In 2015, he created the Opening Ceremony for the Baku 2015 First European Games. Papaioannou's 25 productions range from mass spectacles with thousands of performers, to intimate pieces, and have appeared in a wide variety of venues, from his famous underground squat theater in Athens, to the ancient theatre in Epidaurus, and from Olympic stadiums to Théâtre de la Ville – Paris, and Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza. In 2017, he created *The Great Tamer*, his first international co-commissioned work with ten co-producers, including the Festival d'Avignon. *The Great Tamer* is currently on an international tour, scheduled until 2019. *The Great Tamer* was bestowed with the special award Europe Theatre Prize in Rome in 2017, and Papaioannou was nominated in 2019 for the Olivier award for "outstanding achievement in dance". In 2018, Dimitris became the first artist to create a new, full-length work for Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch. *Since She* premiered in May 2018 in Germany.

### **Kesha Raithatha**

Kesha is a dancer and choreographer who embodies Kathak and Contemporary movement. She creates work that is rich in detail and experimentally reconsiders contemporary South Asian dance. Her curiosity and exposure to a wide range movement training informs and invigorates her dance-making vocabulary. In 2021, Kesha was appointed as one of the Associate Directors at Aakash Odedra Company; Work Place Artist at The Place Theatre London and a Resident Creative at The Curve Leicester. Her primary Kathak training began under her mother, Priti Raithatha and Smt. Nilima Devi M.B.E. with whom she accomplished 6 National ISTD examinations. Since 2009, Kesha has divided her time between India and the UK training in Kathak under Smt. Nirupama Rajendra of Abhinava Dance Company and Smt. Daksha Sheth. She also trains in Contemporary dance, whilst exploring various Indian movement forms including Kalari Payatt, regional folk styles and physical theatre. Kesha has been a company dancer for India's celebrated Classical and Contemporary Dance companies: Nritarutya Indian Contemporary Dance Company under Mayuri Upadhyaya and Daksha Sheth Dance Company. Her most recent choreographic projects include; *Virtual Ghost* - A dance film in collaboration with Gurdeep Sian supported by Akademi's Seed Commission 2021; Synapse' (Dance for Screen) by Aakash Odedra 2 Young Company 2020; *Bollywood Jane* (Musical) Curve Theatre 2019; Phoenix Dance Youth Company's Heritage Project *Black Waters* 2020; BBC 4's *My Asian Family* musical documentary 2018 and Bandish Projekt's *Common Tongue* 2016.

## **Jennifer Irons**

Jennifer Irons grew up in Yukon, Canada and now resides in the UK. She is an award-winning choreographer, creating large-scale mass movement for international outdoor festivals, working across commercial music videos, film and TV, and making dynamic new work for theatre. Jennifer is Director of ironINC in Africa; an arts and cultural exchange program in Africa and the Middle East, supported by the British Council. Mass Movement direction includes Kadamati for Akram Khan Company, featuring over 1000 dancers across Edinburgh at the Edinburgh International Festival and Paris Hotel de Ville, Complicité's Everything That Rise Must Dance, and Made in Hull, for the launch of Hull UK City of Culture 2017 with makeAMPLIFY, arts and technology company. 2019 commissions include Strange Creatures Tide of Light festival with makeAMPLIFY. Commercial work includes choreography on feature film Hero, and on music video promos for Olly Murs and Rizzle Kicks, and Wave Machines. 2019 work includes movement direction for Brand Passion's 3-D Body Scanning project. Theatre credits include *Due to Unforeseen Circumstances* with ironINC, *Make Me Happy* with Generation Arts at the Yard Theatre, and *Othello* for Birmingham Opera.

## **Omari 'Motion' Carter**

Omari 'Motion' Carter is a screendance practitioner, lecturer and body percussionist based in London and, for the past decade, has been choreographing, teaching, and performing for music videos, film, television, and theatre. A first-class BA (Hons) degree in Performing Arts at London Metropolitan University led Omari to perform for 7 years in the West End and international touring productions of *Stomp!*. During this time, Omari choreographed, directed, performed, and produced a varied reel of dance on film work with Screendance production company, The Motion Dance Collective, which he founded in 2011. As a director, videographer, and editor, Omari has created digital-dance and documentary content for Breakin' Convention Hip Hop Theatre Festival (UK), Parkinson's UK, Dance Woking, DanceXchange, South East Dance, Akademi (UK), Calmer UK, National Centre for Circus Arts, Jason Mabana Dance, Pagrav Dance Company, and Mouvement Perpétuel (Canada). As an independent choreographer and dancer, Omari has created works for Google, Britain's Got Talent, Weetabix, Stanton Warriors, Greenpeace UK, Diabetes UK, and ADAD (Association of Dance from the African Diaspora). A graduate from the world's first master's degree in Screendance at London Contemporary Dance School (LCDS), Omari went on to become associate lecturer in Screendance at the University of East London, University of Lincoln, and LCDS. Most recently Omari was co-curator of Akademi Dance-Film Festival 2021, Digital Creative for Pavilion Dance South West, on the event programming team for San Souci Festival of Dance Cinema (USA), and features twice in Vol. 12 of The International Journal of Screendance which was released earlier this year. <https://www.motiondancecollective.com>

## **Takeshi Matsumoto**

Takeshi Matsumoto is a Japanese inclusive dance artist, performer and choreographer. He is also a qualified dance movement psychotherapist, having experience in working with children with autism and learning disabilities both in the UK and Japan. Growing up in Japan, his practice both in life and performing art is influenced by 和-Wa, harmony, peacefulness, quiet and contentment ways of living and balancing with others and environment. As a dance performer Takeshi has worked with Christian Duarte, Henry Oguike, Darren Johnston, Beatrice Allegranti, Paul-Andre Fortier, 2nd Hand Dance and is a long term collaborator with Hagit Yakira. Takeshi has also been engaged with dance projects for and with children and adults with learning disabilities (SLiDE, Icandance, RADiate) and people living with dementia (Beatrice Allegranti) in the UK. On a global level, he has led dance projects for families who survived nuclear disaster in northern Japan and stateless refugee children in Thailand collaborating with other artists. He continues to explore possibilities of dance and performance as a way of acknowledging differences and creating mutual understanding with particular emphasis on empathy, communication, empowerment and body mind integration.

## **tyroneisaacstuart**

tyroneisaacstuart is an interdisciplinary artist who uses Jazz music, Krump & contemporary dance to create audio-visual experiences.