



**Accredited Schools**  
**Annual Report of a Performance**  
**Academic Year 2018/19**

Please find attached your report.

This report is confidential to CDMT and the Principal of the school who may use it at his or her discretion within the school.

**No part of the report may be presented in any form to the press, members of the public, nor in any publicity or promotional material of the school.**

A report on a performance is not a verdict on provision within a vocational school; rather it is an assessment of observed current practice, offering senior managers points for consideration. The report is neither exclusive nor comprehensive and is final and non-negotiable, except in matters of fact.

Liz Dale  
Head of Education and Training

**Production: Graduation Showcase 2019****Date of Performance: 21<sup>st</sup> June 2019****Performance Type: End of Year Show****Venue: Lilian Baylis Theatre, Sadler's Wells****Consultant: Sue Passmore****Context and Nature of Material**

The annual Creative Academy Graduation Showcase has been, until this year, a 3<sup>rd</sup> Year project for the students on the performance strand of the BA (Hons) Dance Programme validated by the University of West London. In this year's performance the format has been updated in preparation for a new BA Dance programme that will be validated in July 2019. In response to students requests, the criteria and module outlines for the final year assessment have been revisited enabling both the teaching and the performance streams to collaborate in the annual Graduate Showcase. The structure is not greatly altered and the year group are still tasked with additional roles in marketing, fundraising, lighting and technical design and costume but the contribution and involvement from the whole year group has made the production much more challenging and rewarding. The students share their ideas with the Creative Academy Manager and agree the choreographers, casting, choice of music and budget.

This was the first of two performances. There was no interval and the duration was one hour with seventeen items in the programme.

**Venue:**

Creative Academy in Slough presented their annual Showcase at the Lilian Baylis Studio Theatre, Sadler's Wells in London. They have used this prestigious venue for several years and the facilities are excellent for their performance needs. There is a steeply raked auditorium with good sightlines from any seat. The stage is particularly suited to dance production although the wings are a little restricted for entrances and exits.

**Direction and Choreography**

The responsibility for efficient delivery of the entire production is spread amongst the year group and they cover all aspects that culminate in the dance performance. The learning curve for students is steep but rewarding for these young people. There were fifteen choreographers, including a student piece. The year group will only include a piece of student choreography if it is deemed to sit well within the programme.

**Casting**

There were twenty-five female dancers in the 2019 Graduation Showcase, joined by four ex-graduates for one of the pieces. When the performance pieces have been selected and agreed the casting takes place with the choreographers. All the casting provided sufficient opportunity for the dancers to showcase their individual technical skills and, regardless of the role as ensemble or cameo or solo, every dancer could be seen as an individual performer.

**Staging**

The Lillian Baylis is a dance house that offers a sophisticated technical lighting rig that can provide innovative design states. In this Showcase the students who were responsible for the lighting design used colour and dramatic states that added another level of visual impact and theatricality throughout the performance. There was no use strobe or flashing light effects that distract

attention from the staging, and the transitions between each dance pieces were subtle and effective.

### **Costume**

Costume choices were generally modern and suited the choreography without being excessively theatrical, there was no repetition in colour and the range was broad and stylish. The footwear varied considerably throughout the performance, but the dancers were equally proficient in boots, trainers or heels and in all the heel work the stance and control was excellent.

### **Acoustics**

Throughout the show there were several highlights in music editing that underpinned innovative choices in the choreography. Complex soundscape tracks were created to show the contrasting styles and text-lead movement and the sound quality was well balanced. Radio-mics were used for *The Audition* based on the song *There's Gotta Be Something Better Than This* from the musical *Sweet Charity* but the acoustic level did not compare favourably with the overall sound balance and the singer's vocal quality sounded slightly forced at times.

### **The Performance**

This graduate company of confident and focused dancers produced a mature professional performance from the outset. The first item in the programme was *He Had it Coming* from the musical *Chicago*. The choreographic concept for this very familiar musical theatre song was unexpected and powerful and individual characterisation was impressive.

The programme continued to impress with a contrasting piece entitled *Insomnia* in which six dancers struggled with different levels of sleeplessness and prolonged anxiety. They were dressed in orange all-in-one night attire which was an effective colour choice in the atmospheric side-lighting. This was a memorable piece of choreography by *Tiara Foo* with disturbing moments in the staging that skilfully analysed the pain in each dancer through the quality of the movement. The cast identified with aspects of insomnia, the interpretation was realistic and articulate and the score was suitably disturbing.

Andre Rebelo from Yasmin Vardamon Dance Company was guest choreographer for the aptly named piece *Riot*. The cast showed an extraordinary energy in a tirade of frenetic movement with long hair providing the focal point of the movement vocabulary. The costumes were also a statement resembling mutiny in kilts and boots. It was difficult to reach a conclusion about the intended response to this piece because it was strangely humorous and chaotic, and also technically demanding but whatever the intention, it was remarkable and immensely enjoyable. In contrast there was a more lyrical but moving piece entitled *Don't Look Down* choreographed by Pippa Holliday which featured a sensitive and technically capable solo dancer dressed in white.

The commercial vocabulary in Joshua Pilmore's second piece *Cluedo* was another example of the energy and commitment as typical of a Creative Academy student. This style of diverse street based choreography demonstrates the fusion of styles that so many commercial choreographers currently utilise. Caroline Bridges choreographed *Sirens* on four ex-graduate male dancers, who were invited to return to participate in this piece that really challenged the dancers. One piece of student choreography was included in this year's showcase which successfully contrasted with other items in the programme. *Pulling Strings* created by Sunita Bolton was another enthralling dance for four young artists, it was an original concept with clever choreographic ideas and staging. The dancers were able to show some innovative interaction and original movement

quality. The entire programme was well structured and entertaining. It had a good range of emotive moments and also a few theatrically challenging ideas.

June 2019