

September

Dear LUTSF

Please find attached my report covering my Intensive Studies and Creative Exchange Award. My particular trip was to finance travel to attend the Aerial Dance Festival 2006 in Boulder, Colorado, and additionally an internal flight to San Francisco to meet with renowned bay-area directors and choreographers, aerial Joanna Haigood (Zaccho), Jo Kreiter (Flyway Productions) and Amelia Rudolph (Bandaloop) during the month of August.

I was able to make all flights as arranged very helpfully by John Lesirge despite leaving the country on August 11th (the day after the first terrorist suspects were arrested) and with only minimal disruption, amazingly enough.

The ADF course in Boulder was wonderful – really informative, well taught and managed, and hugely enjoyable. I came away very excited by everything I had learnt and am keen to find ways very soon in which I can start to pass on some of the information, in particular the injury prevention and conditioning for aerialists, little of which is actively practiced or taught in this country to my knowledge. One possible venue to disseminate this information would be through teaching a series of classes at Circus Space in London, initially for degree course students but also to open up this opportunity to professionals through the professional development scheme there. There are plans for me 2006 to go in and teach this term but as yet we haven't discussed quite what I would focus on. We are also hoping to stage a shorter British aerial dance festival in 2007 which would additionally provide an ideal platform for sharing skills and information gained this year.

In addition to meeting with, I also had opportunity to attend a morning rehearsal and even try out some of the equipment with Jo Kreiter from Flyway Productions who is currently working on a new large-scale site-specific work for presentation in San Francisco next month (The Billboard Project). It was very valuable and affirming to witness someone else's process dealing with many of the same creative interests and influences and I came away buoyed up with enthusiasm for starting to create new work.

A hugely enjoyable, worthwhile and rewarding trip!

Many thanks,

Lindsey Butcher

Report from Lindsey Butcher

I have recently returned from a period of intensive study and creative exchange in the USA funded jointly by the Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund (LUTSF) and the Arts Council of England (ACE). Below is a report on my findings:

Intensive studies

Attendance at the Aerial dance festival 2006

The festival seemed to have improved vastly since my previous visit in 2004 in terms of technical standards and artistry, both in the teaching process and performance and also amongst the general standard of the students attending. The environment at the festival was one of supportive learning and investigation and was both open and encouraging with refreshingly few egos in any of the classes. All the studios were very well equipped and in a stunning location, Colorado university campus in particular, with the only drawback being the long distances between the venues. Shuttle buses were provided between some and car-pooling arranged by class proctors where necessary and much emphasis was placed when booking classes not to timetable subjects back-to-back which were not achievable practically.

Classes:

- Both the injury prevention and conditioning for aerialists were incredibly valuable courses to have attended. I learnt an extraordinary amount which will truly be not only beneficial to myself but also to other practitioners. The teaching was very clear and concise and exactly what I could have done with learning at the beginning of my career - better late than never!
Exercises were taught at all levels with variations given for most so as to be able to tailor the information for both beginner and the experienced professional.
- Advanced fabrics was again very well taught with the tutors finding a good balance between technical information and creative play and additionally was a great class in which to try to apply some of the principles learnt in conditioning earlier in the day.
- Contact was a wonderful class and a great way to finish a strenuous day. The tutors had a very playful approach but managed to cram in so much information. Each class had a theme e.g. spirals, crescents etc which led into structured improvisations with lots of hands on practical information delivered by the tutors through partnering and relating of the movement to aerial sensation, dynamics and experience.

Future plans arising directly from visit to ADF:

- The ADF course in Boulder was wonderful – really informative, well taught, managed and hugely enjoyable. I came away very excited by everything I had learnt and as such am keen to find ways in which I can begin to pass on some of this information, in particular the injury prevention and conditioning for aerialists, little of which is actively practised or taught in this country to my knowledge. One possible venue to disseminate this information would be through teaching a series of classes at the Circus Space in London initially for the degree course but also to open up this opportunity to professionals through the professional development scheme based there. There are plans for me to teach this term but as yet we haven't discussed quite what I would focus on so this would seem to offer an ideal opportunity as an initial step to sharing this very useful and practical knowledge.
Another possibility would be through a British aerial dance festival tentatively planned for 2007 - tbc.
- Additionally, I have been invited to submit a proposal for both performing and teaching at next years' festival subject to my availability for 2007 or for the following year as a direct result of my showing examples of my work to the artistic director.

Creative exchange

- In San Francisco I was able to meet up and watch rehearsals and play along with Jo Kreiter's company (Flyaway productions), who were working on a large-scale outdoor site specific piece for performance next month in San Francisco. It was a very valuable & affirming experience to observe someone else's' process for dealing with similar artistic concerns and practicalities.
I came away from the exchange very excited about the possibilities and opportunities thrown up by the discipline of applying a dance aesthetics to aerial suspension techniques and in redefining what & where a dance floor can be and buoyed up to begin working afresh..
- Due to unforeseen circumstances both personal and professional neither Joanna Haigood (Zaccho) or Amelia Rudolph (Bandaloop) were able to meet

me but we are continuing emailing back and forth, exchanging questions, answers and ideas.

Benefits

- This trip was of genuine benefit to me in very terms of furthering my own practice and widening my practical and experiential knowledge as a performer, teacher, choreographer and director and in giving me new skills to work with and pass on. It also afforded me some much desired space to research and re - evaluate future creative plans and have time to reflect upon past experiences.

Evaluation

- I came away from this period of study and exchange not only with a huge amount of notes and handouts (all of which are legible and understandable) but also with renewed energy and enthusiasm for this relatively new form of creative expression.

THANK YOU