

# DORAFRANKELDANCE

16/10/2012

To Lisa Ullman Travelling Scholarship Fund

Please find enclosed two copies this letter and of my report from the splendid and wide-reaching conference *Ballet: Why and How?*, which I attended in Stockholm on September 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> 2012.

The main aim of the conference was to illuminate the role of ballet in vocational training now and in the future and the aim of my visit was to deepen and increase my knowledge of current practice in



this area and to participate in the discussions and arising discourse. This was also a fantastic opportunity to reconnect with my some of my peers.

I feel that these aims were completely achieved; particular highlights were encounters with esteemed colleagues with whom I'd lost contact. I was also made new acquaintances from Europe and America reminding me that dance is an international art form. The opportunity to see two excellent dance performances, Shobana Jeyasingh's *Classic Cut* and Stejn Celis' *The C-minor Mass* for the Royal Swedish Ballet, at two different dance venues inspired me and helped contextualise my practice.

My report will be available to my colleagues in Dance UK, Dance City and my board.

I would like to thank every-one for this opportunity which has enriched my

professional life.

I also enclose a certificate of attendance.

Best wishes

Dora Frankel, Artistic Director Dora Frankel Dance

## REPORT

### Conference Ballet: Why and How ?

The main aim of this exciting and wide reaching conference was to illuminate the role of ballet in vocational training now and in the future. It brought together a wide range of people from vocational schools, colleges and universities including conservatoires such as Paris Opera Ballet and Juilliard, as well as professional artists, Artistic Directors and medical experts. Freelance teachers and choreographers also attended.

A fantastic range of talks and discussions were planned as well as smaller events focusing on practical sessions such as ballet classes taught by Lawrence Rhodes, Juilliard and Derrick Brown ArtEz. These sessions highlighted changes and developments within vocational training. Ballet: Why and How? Was held in Stockholm from 13<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> September 2012 and was impressively hosted by Ballet Academy Stockholm across 4 centrally located venues and included a reception at the magnificent Stockholm Town Hall as well as two very fine dance performances. The venues were Ballet Academy, Dance Centre, The Dance House and Norra Latin Conference Centre. The other conference partners were ArtEZ School of Dance, Arnhem Netherlands and Juilliard School, New York and patrons included Princess Christina of Sweden and Mikael Baryshnikov.

In terms of content, the discussion subjects were good, ranging from preconceptions about ballet to how to get boys in ballet. There were also practical sessions offered on ballet training and alternative methods as such as Gaga technique. Some lectures and discussions obviously offered more than others; for example, the preconceptions in ballet were tackled in the lecture *Ballet: Dancing under the weight of Pre-conceived ideas?* which was delivered by Sanna Nordin-Bates but could have been even more in depth. The range of needs among participants meant that some discussions would have gained from being in smaller groups such to allow more focus on particular aspects of the topic; for example teaching ballet at gymnasium level; Sweden is very different from teaching ballet at the level of schools such as Central School of Ballet London. I also felt that Sweden has very particular concerns, especially at gymnasium level that are less relevant for other countries – I have worked extensively in both Sweden and the UK so have direct experience of this. The moderator didn't always seem as well prepared or conversant with the details of the subjects as such a large conference would require. However speakers such as Artistic Director, Eduard Lock, were highly articulate and impressive, as was Lynda Mainwaring, associate professor at Toronto University.

In conclusion, I found the 3 days stimulating, exciting, sometimes thought-provoking and often fun. The performances by Shobana Jeyasingh Company and by The Royal Swedish Ballet were inspiring. Many of the sessions were extremely useful and rewarding and I was able to make a number of contributions to the discussions. I was the only Artistic Director leading a project-based dance company based in North East UK and was able to give information about the whole of the northern region dance sector as well as discuss particular aspects of my company and my concerns.

I met many, many people I hadn't seen for 20-30 years and also made new connections and friends. It was really worthwhile for me, helping me to articulate my ideas as well as gaining from other

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people's knowledge and experience. The conference organisers plan to have further conferences on these themes and a book will be available from April 2013 on this year's conference.

Thank you Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund for supporting the travel costs.

Dora Frankel Artistic Director Dora Frankel Dance

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