

STARTIN' POINT FESTIVAL

An exciting brand-new three day festival curated by Hakeem “Mr Impact” which celebrated the connection between music and dance from the African Diaspora.

Sounds and rhythms from Africa have been moving us for generations. Blues, Reggae, Jazz, Funk, Disco, Hip-Hop, House.

Our bodies have responded very differently to these various genres of music, creating extremely rich and diverse movement vocabulary.

Over three days Startin' Point showcased work that honoured African heritage. The first night featured work from Untold Dance Company (Amsterdam, Netherlands). The second night was the Startin' Point Commission which saw the three selected artists performing for the chance to win the commission – Ffion Campbell-Davis, Kloe Dean and Saskia Horton. Saskia Horton won the commission and will receive financial support and mentorship towards developing her work into a full-length piece, and to find opportunities to present it across the UK in 2019/2020. Finally, “Future4Youth” which saw a night filled with youth performances.

STARTIN' POINT COMMISSION

The night featured work from three artists chosen from a submission call out alongside an excerpt of the critically acclaimed Headwrap Diaries, choreographed by The Place's Work Place Artist, Vicki Igbokwe.

A panel of industry experts were impressed with the quality and quality of submissions. After much deliberation the artists chosen to perform on The Place stage and compete for a chance to win the Startin' Point Commission and audience vote were:

Ffion Campbell-Davies
Kloe Dean
Saskia Horton

The three artists selected were chosen from an open call which asked for submissions of works in progress which were rooted in dances of the African diaspora. The works were developed into a 20 minute pieces that were presented on Sat 20 Oct at Startin' Point Festival. In an effort to offer support beyond the evening of performance, the three selected artists had the opportunity to be awarded the Startin' Point Legacy Commission 2019.

A panel of industry experts watched the three works on the night of the performance. Post event, they deliberated, and met with the artists and decided on the work they felt had the greatest potential for future development. This choreographer will be given significant financial support and mentorship to develop the presented work into a full evening's work and to find opportunities to present it across the UK in 2019/2020.

Furthermore, the audience had the opportunity to support their favourite work of the night by voting during the interval. The winner of the audience prize will receive £1000 on the night of the performance.

Saskia Horton won the commission and will receive financial support and mentorship towards developing her work.

STARTIN' POINT FUTURE4YOUTH

Future4Youth is the brainchild of Impact Dance's founder and Artistic Director Hakeem Onibudo.

An exciting partnership between London-based hip hop theatre company, street dance organisation and educational facilitator Impact Dance, which has been established since 1995 and Birmingham-based African Cultural Exchange (ACE) Dance and Music, which has been established since 1996.

The start of the programme co-incided with Impact Dance's 20th Anniversary Year.

In June 2015 twenty selected UK-based youth companies were invited to two workshops with the theme of dance of the African Diaspora and its relationship with hip-hop dance. The companies worked with leading artists including: Kenrick Sandy, Vicki Igbokwe, Paradigmz and Alessandra Seutin before reuniting in July 2015 to share work in an informal scratch sharing. From this point, ten selected companies continued on and performed at a formal platform in October 2015. Finally, Myself UK Dance Company and CAOS Dance Company went on to perform at the Lilian Baylis Studio, Sadlers Wells in December 2015 and at the Peacock Theatre in February 2016. Running parallel to this was a mentoring/leadership programme for the young dancers in the companies.

Three years on the STARTIN' POINT festival reconnected with five of the youth companies; ACE Youth, Fusions Elite, Impact Youth, MYSELF UK Dance Company (youth), Reading School of Dance (RSOD). In addition to this a special collaboration between choreographer Colleen Joseph and Centre for Advanced Training, The Place, was premiered. The Future4Youth artists performed on The Place stage on Sun 21 Oct at 5pm.

The festival was a celebration of the contribution from national and international artists to this legacy and encourage the youth to find their voice and push the boundaries of expression.
