

The BDE Venues by David Massingham

Here in Birmingham, we're blessed with some of Britain's best stages for dance. As the host city for BDE 2002, I remember many delegates saying what fantastic venues we have. This led to us suggesting to our partner, Birmingham Hippodrome, that an international dance festival would be good for the city. This has now become a reality with the first International Dance Festival Birmingham bursting forth onto the city streets and into our best venues in 2008. Here at dx, we're gearing up for the next one, IDFB 2010, which will be from 19th April for four weeks.

Back to BDE...

As in 2002, we're committed to showcasing artist's performances in the best possible conditions and venues for their work. This Edition will take you on a magical mystery tour not just of our established theatre venues but also of alternative and unusual spaces for dance performance. We're pleased to announce some new theatre venues for this BDE; Birmingham Hippodrome, Town Hall and Elmhurst School for Dance.

The new **Birmingham Hippodrome** complex had only just been completed when BDE 2002 began. It was not possible then to use the main auditorium (1800 seats) but we did utilise our own new venue The Patrick Centre (206 seats). This time round, BDE 2010 will have its final show in the larger auditorium (courtesy of our partners Birmingham Hippodrome) and The Patrick Centre will be worked day and night as before to house six shows.

Birmingham Hippodrome's current programme is 30% dance and, together with our own programming and development work and the presence of Birmingham Royal Ballet in the building, makes for an impressive national/international dance force.

Town Hall was recently renovated, re-opening its doors once again to performance in October 2007. The auditorium is a beautiful space with a capacity of around 900 seats, although for this Edition we're using the venue in a different way. Housing the Trade Fair on Friday will give all the delegates and exhibitors a chance to enjoy this magnificent space.

Elmhurst School for Dance was built in 2004 and has a studio theatre just a short bus ride from the city centre. Architects have created a fantastic school for future talented dancers to train in and this building adds another element to an array of dance facilities throughout the centre of Birmingham.

Birmingham Repertory Theatre (825 seats) will have three performances in the main house and additional performances in its studio theatre The Door. These two spaces will be added to by a new additional venue when The REP closes for major refurbishment and extension later in 2010.

Ikon Gallery has been a long standing partner of DanceXchange. In 2002, we used their main gallery in Brindleyplace for a Michael Hulls film installation. This time we're at the new **Ikon Eastside** space in Digbeth with several shows that reflect the visual arts within their aesthetic. Digbeth is renowned as an area that houses cultural businesses from graphic design agencies to TV companies.

Stan's Cafe is a successful theatre company based in the Jewellery Quarter. We're pleased to be able to show a few performances in their new home. And, if you want to take time out during BDE, the Jewellery Quarter is a lovely area to wander around with its museum, bars and cafés.

Perhaps BDE 2010's most unusual space is the **Council House** where we are showcasing Liz Aggiss in *Professor Liz Aggiss: Survival Tactics*. The Council Debating Chamber is a fascinating space used for centuries by Council officials and dignitaries to settle disputes democratically, cast votes and debate the issues of the day.

We hope you enjoy being introduced to our great spaces for dance during BDE!