

# News

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## I Move: Dance in Education with Urdang Academy

6 Jan 2022

This month we chat to educators and students from Urdang Academy and the University of East London to find out about their dance practise, the importance of dance of the African Diaspora in Education and their hopes for the future of dance.



### Karina H Maynard

Board Member and Former Executive Director at Urdang Academy

I am a Board Member and Executive Director at the Urdang Academy, based in London, UK. I also work in the wider creative and cultural sector as a curator, producer and consultant. Through my curatorial and production work, I develop exhibitions, films, TV and media content that showcase the cultural influence of the African Diaspora in performing arts and contemporary society.

I am the founder of Muntu Arts consultancy. I specialise in representation for the education sector, museums, the media, and the entertainment industry. I work to improve the engagement and experience of people from diverse cultural backgrounds through professional training, strategic development and performing arts courses for young people.

Dance is the physical expression of self that embodies diverse narratives, musicality, creativity and identity. It engages the body, mind, and soul to create a sense of freedom for the dancer and a unique experience for the audience. Dance and music go hand in hand – they take you on rhythmic visionary journeys. I use dance as the medium for self-development workshops for young performers and creatives. It provides the opportunity for young people to explore themes of race, identity, and culture through movement – which is fun and feeds physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. It is fulfilling to see young people develop their confidence, as they improve their dance skills and feel a sense of pride in their final performance.

My hope for the future is that the UK makes great strides to fully acknowledge the cultural influence of the African Diaspora in dance. This will enrich the dance landscape and provide a more honest reflection of the historical contributions that have shaped dance. We need to continue to include more influential figures and movements from the African Diaspora in dance education and history. We need to honour African Diasporic dance through film, TV, and live entertainment. We will benefit from more role models from the African Diaspora in all aspects of dance performance – on stage and behind the scenes, in education and leadership roles.

Diverse representation in dance provides students and professionals with the opportunity to explore the full spectrum of dance and inspires them to be proud of who they are because a diversity of culture and experiences is the fuel for creative excellence.

#I Move

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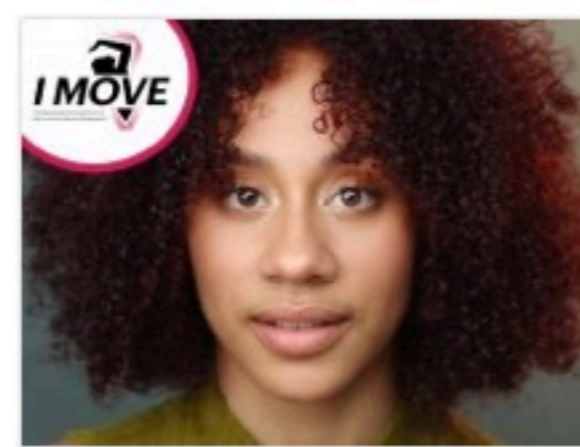
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