

A Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance media item:

### **ASPIRING YOUNG BORO DANCERS ARE TAUGHT THE MAGICAL WONDERS OF URBAN LATIN DANCE**

A group of young aspiring dance students from a Middlesbrough-based academy are being given the opportunity to work with one of the UK's leading dance companies as part of a creative residency being delivered by *dancemiddlesbrough* in association with the 50<sup>th</sup> Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance.

This week a group of sixteen young people, aged 11 to 16 years old, of Macmillan Academy in Middlesbrough will enjoy an intensive workshop with Ella Mesma, Artistic Director of London and Leeds-based, Elements Arts Company (EAC).

The young people will learn a new dance form combining elements of Afro Cuban, Afro Brazilian and Samba. They will also experience specialist dance techniques, performance skills and create a community performance piece.

[Please see below for information about a media opportunity being set up this coming Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June at Macmillan Academy that includes a flamboyant and stunningly beautiful Brazilian style costume].

EAC is passionate about the development and mentoring of their dancers and students. They run community projects, classes and performance opportunities to invest and progress the Latin Dance scene.

EAC implement the various styles of Salsa, Afro-Cuban, Samba and Afro-Brazilian fused with Contemporary dance theatre to create an exciting blend of culture, music and dance.

As well as working closely with Macmillan Academy – EAC will also be delivering workshops with other schools and groups across Tees Valley including Bellamy School of Ballet; Corpus Christi Primary School; Breckon Hill Primary School; Abingdon Primary School; St Clare's RC Primary School; and Chandlers Ridge.

Nearly 180 young people aged 7-21 years old will experience the creative energy of EAC during their forthcoming two-week residency. This reflects the whole vision and philosophy of the Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance as the Festival wants to see as many people across Tees Valley exploring the exciting elements of Contemporary dance.

The Festival enjoys support from Arts Council England's Grants for the arts programme, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The results of the exclusive workshops will form part of the wider Festival programme, when Ella and EAC return to Tees Valley in August to perform in the *International Concert* being staged at the Festival Arena (Billingham Forum) on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> August / tickets are priced at £6 & children under 12, £1; and at the Empire Theatre in Middlesbrough on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> August as part of a dance triple-bill / all tickets are priced £5.

They will be premiering two unique dance pieces that have been especially commissioned by BIFF 2014 entitled *Orixas* and *Birds of Paradise* (further details about both pieces can be sent on request).

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**Date:** Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2014

**Time:** **11:30** (if this time doesn't suit your media diary then a potential afternoon slot could be arranged but this would need to be discussed in advance as we've been advised the stage costume takes up to 60 minutes to put on by the choreographer).

**Location / Address:** Macmillan Academy, Stockton Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland, TS5 4AG

**Content:** Ella Mesma, Artistic Director of Elements Arts Company will be wearing a stunning Latin dance costume with accompanying headdress. She will be joined by young people of Macmillan Academy; as they perform some of the dance moves learnt during the Festival's residency.

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#### **Further information:**

The Macmillan Academy dance residencies have been organised by *dancemiddlesbrough*, a programme developed by Middlesbrough Council Cultural Services to deliver a series of professional and community dance performances and events.

Phil Douglas, Middlesbrough Council Arts Development Officer, said: "We are exceptionally pleased to be working alongside the Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance to bring such a unique opportunity to all of the young people involved in the dance residencies. We wish them every success as they take to the stage in August."

Joe Maloney, Festival Director, Billingham International Folklore Festival, said: "We aim to inspire local schools and pupils to learn about the Festival's proud history, its heritage and the multi-cultural arts projects we've been involved with over the past five decades.

"The Festival also looks to encourage children and young people to engage in their own projects to help celebrate our 50th anniversary and to champion the elements of community involvement."

Ella Mesma, Artistic Director and a founder member of Elements Arts Company, said: "The Festival's residency will teach the young people about the importance of community, help develop their self confidence, self discovery and self improvement - all at the same time as creating of a wonderful piece of art!"

Everything you will ever need to know about *Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance* can be found at [www.billinghamfestival.co.uk](http://www.billinghamfestival.co.uk)

This website contains the full Festival programme, information about the artists and performers, and it even contains an archive of material covering the last five decades. People can also contact the team by calling 01642 553 220 or by emailing [info@billinghamfestival.co.uk](mailto:info@billinghamfestival.co.uk)

[An education and teaching toolkit can be also be downloaded from the Festival's website].

The Festival also has a dedicated ticket office situated in the heart of Billingham Town Centre, where people can buy their tickets in person / address – 5 West Precinct. The office is open Monday to Saturday, 10:30am until 2pm.

There will be a host of free and paid for events in August spread across various venues including BILLINGHAM - Billingham Town Centre, The Forum Theatre, The Bandstand, The Ramp, St Aiden's Church Hall and John Whitehead Park; MIDDLESBROUGH - The Empire Theatre, The Crypt, mima and Middlesbrough Theatre; and NEWCASTLE - Dance City.

You can get up to date information about BIFF 2014 from the Festival's dedicated Face Book and Twitter pages [www.facebook.com/billinghamworlddancefestival](http://www.facebook.com/billinghamworlddancefestival) and @BillFest

For further information about the work and education projects delivered by Elements Arts Company please visit [www.elementdance.co.uk](http://www.elementdance.co.uk)

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