

## About IRIE! dance theatre

The logo for IRIE! dance theatre is a bright yellow square. Inside the square, the word "IRIE!" is written in large, bold, black, sans-serif capital letters. Below "IRIE!", the words "dance" and "theatre" are stacked vertically in a smaller, bold, black, sans-serif font. The "d" in "dance" is lowercase, while "theatre" is all lowercase.

### A Snapshot

IRIE! dance theatre was founded in 1985 with the primary aim to lift the profile of Black dance and dancers in Britain. From the start the company has been at the cutting edge of fusing Caribbean dance as part of its choreographic expression. The company has developed a dance vernacular that is instantly recognised as the IRIE! style, which is directly linked to the essence of reggae music and Caribbean culture. IRIE! has created over 25 works, which have toured nationally and internationally.

IRIE! dance theatre is Britain's leading dance theatre company working in the field of African and Caribbean dance fusion and Training. The Company's musical orientations are drawn from African and Caribbean drumming and percussion, Reggae and Ragga, Calypso and Soca. The term for dance and music related forms within this genre is recognised by the dance sector as Dance of the African Diaspora (DAD).

### Moonshot Centre

The building is owned by the London Borough of Lewisham and was built specifically for the African and Caribbean communities in New Cross from funding made available by an Urban Program of the time. Moonshot underwent a £3m refurbishment and in 2007 the building became **the home of IRIE! dance theatre**. The building houses, office space with a library and archive, 2 large dance studios, 1 seminar room, a teaching/meeting room and a small Café. In 2017 IRIE! took on the management of the centre, which also houses Playhouse Nursery and Double Jab Boxing Club. We are currently in the process of expanding the range of activities we offer to the local community, hiring space for a range of workshops for all age groups with the view to increasing community engagement and providing a creative space for development.

IRIE!'s programme at the Moonshot centre carry a legacy of the early work of the pioneers who worked at the Pagnell Street Centre, and other local people wanting to be part of building a better future for children and young people in the area.

### Education & Community Outreach

The company delivers a highly effective and much sought after, local and national, training and outreach programme reaching between 3,500-4000 young people and adults on an annual basis, through its **Education Programme**. IRIE! works with a range of young people and organisations that support them. The community outreach work focuses on activities, which include intergenerational programmes, activities for families, and local open access events.

Our **Community Programme** also includes weekly dance and exercise classes, drumming & percussion and our annual community fun day event in Fordham Park.

Our work with **Children and Young People (CYP)** covers working in schools; delivering African and Caribbean dance and drumming. We also focus on delivering creative programmes to support young people at risk of exclusion. We run half-term and summer school music and dance programmes for CYP.

Our **Elders Programme** includes the Moonshot Lions Dominoes group, who are a generation of pioneers who, amongst other things, were the original founders of the centre. Their early work still has a presence that runs through our building and our work. IRIE! hosted its first Vintage Tea event at the Moonshot Centre in 2017 in partnership with local organisations working with older people. Since then, we have attracted further funding and developed the programme through relationships with individuals, self-organised groups and organisations that support and work with older people, such as Cinnamon Court; Vista Reminiscence; Milliners Court and Meet Me at the Albany.

## Research

IRIE! has commissioned and produced important pieces of research into DAD; Namely the Arts Council funded research paper on the need for an archive for Black Dance in Britain and the Dance and Diversity Research Project looking at the place of African & Caribbean dance within Britain's formal education system. Dedicated to its main aim the company is committed to making Moonshot a focal point for the practice and development DAD.

## Accredited Qualification & Professional Development

IRIE! is committed to the development of all artists working in the field of DAD. The company delivers a number of classes and initiatives, which support DAD practitioners. These include open classes, professional summer schools and master classes.

From 2009 – 2017 in partnership with City and Islington College and London Metropolitan University, IRIE! delivered the UK's first foundation degree in dance with African and Caribbean dance at the core. Since September 2018 (validated by University of Roehampton) IRIE! has delivered the UK's first BA (Hons) Diverse Dance Styles. The degree is fulltime and is delivered at the Moonshot Centre.

## Partnerships

Over the years IRIE! has nurtured and developed a number of important and inspired partnerships. The Company's partnership with **City & Islington College** have led to many important projects such as, The Diploma in African & Caribbean dance, Dance & Diversity research and the Foundation Degree in Dance. Since 2000 IRIE! has been a central partner of the Re:generations international conference. This is a creative and academic platform with a particular focus on DAD. The conference is a bi-annual event and delivered by **One Dance UK**. We also have long-term relationships with local and regional schools, as well as local community projects such as **The Midi Music Company** and **Vista Reminiscence**. IRIE! is a partner of Lewisham London Borough of Culture. We are also partnering with the local university, Goldsmith's on a project entitled In Living Memory which looks at key post World War II events that shaped the local community. IRIE! is focusing on the Black People's Day of Action that took place in 1981

## Staffing

IRIE! dance theatre has a diverse and talented team of staff representing the local community, academia and the arts making it a dynamic and focussed group lead by our CEO & Artistic Director, Beverley Glean MBE.

# IRIE! dance theatre Staffing Structure April 2022

