



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **“DANCE MANCHESTER PASSES THE TORCH TO COMPANY CHAMELEON”**

Following the loss of Arts Council England NPO funding effective from 2018 and an extensive organisational development review, Dance Manchester, the dance development organisation for Greater Manchester has announced that it will close for business after 27 years of trading. In keeping with its longstanding tradition of support for the Greater Manchester dance sector, Dance Manchester will transfer its remit to Company Chameleon, an organisation it helped to seed over 12 years ago.

The transfer, supported by Arts Council England and Greater Manchester Combined Authority, was made to ensure investment into the North West dance sector is maintained and that dance continues to flourish in the region.

Alison Clark, Director, Arts Council North and National Director, Combined Arts, said,

*“Dance Manchester has been a long standing and significant part of the Greater Manchester dance ecology. It leaves behind it a substantial legacy for dance development in the North West. Continued service provision for the area has been assured by Company Chameleon. We look forward to seeing Company Chameleon foster the talent of homegrown dance artists and young dancers in the future, as well as engaging and developing new audiences for dance in Manchester and beyond.”*

Marie-Claire Daly, Principal, Cultural and Creative Policy at Greater Manchester Combined Authority, said,

*“We’re confident that Company Chameleon will build on Dance Manchester’s track record and reputation in its provision of high quality dance development opportunities, live events and dance projects for dance artists and people of all ages across Greater Manchester’s communities.”*

A spokesperson for the Dance Manchester Board of Trustees said,

*“Dance Manchester has had a fantastic run and our longstanding record of creative output and support speaks for itself. We are grateful to our generous donors and our loyal audiences for all*

*the support we have enjoyed to date. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our former Director, Deb Ashby, for her many years of service and unstinting creativity and commitment, and to all the creative artists who have worked with us over the last 27 years to propel Dance Manchester into the highly successful creative enterprise it became, but now it feels like the right time to pass the torch.*

*By transferring the Greater Manchester dance development remit to Company Chameleon, an organisation whose objectives match our own, we will be ensuring continued support for the local dance ecology of Greater Manchester and its role in a community that we have had the privilege to work for and with for over quarter of a century.”*

During its tenure, Dance Manchester brought incredible dance experiences and access to dance opportunities to communities across Greater Manchester, working with schools, youth centres, pupil referral units, with universities, in care homes & much more, and supported the development of professional dancers through training, development and commissioning programmes across Manchester.

As a key part of the national infrastructure supporting the dance sector, Dance Manchester brought high quality dance direct to the public, including, Urban Moves International Dance Festival from 2005-2014 which presented professional dance performances for

outdoors and in unusual spaces across Manchester from Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Spain, South Korea and the UK. It also worked in partnership with Company Chameleon on STRIDE, Greater Manchester's annual young men's dance project.

Leanne Feeley, General Manager, Company Chameleon, said,

*“Since establishing Company Chameleon twelve years ago, we've proudly flown the flag for dance in Greater Manchester, and throughout this time, always been committed to reaching as many people as possible through dance.*

*We've taken dance into theatres, onto the streets, into schools, community settings, prisons and hospitals, in many instances introducing people to dance for the first time. On the other end of the spectrum we've fostered and invested in the development of graduates and welcomed celebrated artists from all over the world to the region for professional development and employment.*

*It's fantastic that GMCA is committed in their continuing support and development of dance in the region and that we can work in partnership with them to fulfil this commitment. With their support, we can build on our work to date and further develop the network that we've created.*

*More than anything, we want dance in Greater Manchester to be on the map and we want it to be celebrated in every way that it can be. With GMCA's support, we look forward to continuing this drive and getting more people in Greater Manchester, of all ages and levels, experiencing, enjoying and taking part in dance."*

From 1st July 2019 all enquiries for dance development opportunities in Greater Manchester should be directed to Company Chameleon at [info@companychameleon.com](mailto:info@companychameleon.com) / 0161 223 6280.

**ENDS**

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

For more information about this press release, please contact Alex O'Toole at [alex@fablearts.org.uk](mailto:alex@fablearts.org.uk) or call 07854 951266.

## **About Dance Manchester**

Dance Manchester has been the dance development organisation for Greater Manchester from 1992 to 2019; (previously known as Dance Initiative Greater Manchester). It was one of four dance development organisations based in the North West of England and part of a national infrastructure supporting the dance sector. It ran a range of community projects & activities to increase access to dance in the area and raise the profile of dance, taking high quality dance

direct to the public. Key examples of previous programmes include STRIDE –Greater Manchester’s young men’s annual dance project in partnership with Company Chameleon which resulted in a sited or outdoor performance each year from 2009-2017 to Urban Moves International Dance Festival presenting professional dance performances outdoors and in unusual spaces from 2005-2014 and including performances by companies from Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Spain, South Korea and the UK. Most recently the organisation commissioned new dance works from Greater Manchester based professional dance artists for the outdoors and unusual spaces, these included *The Awakening* by Chad Taylor commissioned to be developed as an outdoor hip hop performance, exploring mental health themes and *Getting from A to B* by Hawk Dance Theatre, commissioned specifically for libraries & which with Dance Manchester’s producing support undertook its first tour to 20 UK libraries earlier this year.

[dancemanchester.org.uk](http://dancemanchester.org.uk) | twitter: manchesterdance | Facebook: /dancemanchester | Instagram: /dancemanchester | YouTube: /dancemanchester

## **About Company Chameleon**

For over a decade, Company Chameleon has produced dance theatre productions in its home city of Manchester, which have gone on to tour across the world.

Co-founders, Kevin Edward Turner and Anthony Missen, originally met at Trafford Youth Dance Theatre in the mid-1990s and both went on to train at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance.

After graduating, they travelled extensively, working with some of the world's foremost dance companies and choreographers.

They returned home to Manchester in 2007, to achieve their goal of setting up their own dance company and Company Chameleon was born. Today, Company Chameleon tour to wide acclaim and perform over fifty indoor and outdoor performances a year.

Learning and participation is an integral part of the Company's work with dance classes, workshops and professional intensives taking place in tandem with the touring programme all year around. As a result, Chameleon have introduced thousands of people, from countries all over the world, to a different side of dance and movement.

Company Chameleon has been nominated for several awards including Best Performance at the Manchester Culture Awards 2018; Inspirational Work in Education Award at the One Dance UK Awards 2018; Best Independent Company at the National Dance Awards 2015 and the Robert Robson Award for Dance at the Manchester Theatre Awards 2015.

In 2019, Company Chameleon welcomed Dame Darcey Bussell on board as the Company's first-ever Patron.

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