

Meet a Member



In our series of Q&As with members, Membership Manager *Barney Darnell* caught up *Ithalia Forel*, Co-founder-director of *Movema*, which connects people and communities through dance in Liverpool and Bristol. She is currently taking part in the *Clore Leadership Programme*, and talks about her inspirations, passions and future plans.



What are your first memories of dancing?

What sticks out is being part of the Caribbean Carnival at the Merseyside Caribbean Centre in Toxteth, which was set up by many migrated people from the Caribbean, including my father. I remember the colours, the food, smells, the floats, the steel pans, and loud and symbolic sound systems.

In what style of dance did you originally train?

Initially all typical Europeans forms, including ballet, jazz, contemporary. I earned a HND in Dance at City of Liverpool College and through my constant exploration of other dance training I enrolled at the José Limón Institute New York City where I was exposed to West African and Afro Caribbean dance, and that would form the basis of my work.

What advice would you give to someone hoping to start a career in dance?

Push yourself, be courageous, step outside of your comfort zone. Believe in your gift because no one else will until you do. Champion self-care, look after yourself, both your physical and mental wellbeing, and if you need help, ask for it.

What's the most common misconception about dancers?

That we are all the same, and that the overall aim is to be aesthetically beautiful. Dance is for everyone and can happen anywhere. Dance is such diverse access points, and we all have different techniques and approaches that derive from non European structures and practice.

What concerns you most about the future of dance in the UK?

That it will disappear, as it already has done in many schools, colleges and universities. Dance is already an underprivileged artform with a lack of funding and lack of platforms in relation to other art forms.

Who is your all time favourite dancer?

What moves me the most is when I witness others connect

and joyfully express themselves through dance. This is when I think of my little boy Luther and when he finds that place where he is connecting to his natural movement and enjoying each and every moment. Bliss!

Why did you join One Dance UK as a member?

I have hope in the message that One Dance UK advocates for the dance sector and is a national voice. Being part of this organisation will ensure that different perspectives are considered and championed across the UK, in particular the North and South West.

What does dancing do for you?

It heals me and connects me to my environment. It connects me to the community I serve with the passion to get people to self-express through their personal movement. It's my journey to joy – it's spiritual, it's raw and it feels so good!

What do you have in the pipeline?

We have just secured funding from Arts Council England for the second year of the Wildfire Rising programme, which supports dance artists from underrepresented diasporas. Our classes and community work continues at pace!

Finally... you can have one last dance....what would that be, and why?

It would be carnival with everyone I know taking part! My family, old friends and new taking to the streets! One last protest that celebrates collective liberation with vibrancy, big moves and music.

www.movema.co.uk

One Dance UK connects and supports members

For information about One Dance UK membership or if you'd like to be featured in our Meet a Member Q&A section in the future, please visit onedanceuk.org/memberships or email membership@onedanceuk.org