

Dance Base seeks a way to protect its future but cuts to jobs and activities are on the agenda

Looking for options to remain open the board and senior management at Dance Base in Grassmarket have announced they will make cuts to programming and some staff will be made redundant.

The board recognised that their current financial model is no longer viable and have issued a new plan to establish a sustainable long term future.

Dance Base is thirty years and more old and has in the last twelve months alone engaged with 30,000 dance artists, teachers, participants and audiences.

In the short term the team is working to stem losses caused by external factors such as rising energy costs and inflation alongside declining financial support for the cultural sector.

This means temporary cuts in the programme from April this year and the board regrets that there will have to be redundancies.

There is some good news however with new funding from Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership and the centre will expand its work connecting people with the health and

wellbeing benefits of dance. This includes an expansion of Dance for Parkinson's Scotland and following up on work in care homes and hospitals.



Dance for Parkinson's

Jim Hollington, Chief Executive of Dance Base, said: "We are incredibly proud of the important role Dance Base has played over 30 years supporting dance and dance artists at our purpose-built centre that is the pride of Scotland. However, we are not able to cover a 350% rise in energy bills and the 10% increases in most other costs through simply increasing prices and cutting costs, and nor do we believe it is right to raise our prices at this tough time for everyone when so many need access to activities which support their health and wellbeing.

"Following such strong support through the Covid pandemic, we have actively engaged with our funders and the Scottish Government over the last six months to find a solution. It is deeply disappointing that in fact funding cuts were announced to Creative Scotland's budget as our situation worsened.

“However we firmly believe that there is a bright future for the work of Dance Base. By bringing together all those who care and recognise Dance Base’s role in Scotland’s cultural landscape we can find a new and sustainable model that ensures Scotland still has a national centre for dance long into the future.

“To create space to develop that model over the coming months, we will regrettably need to reduce our activity and staffing levels from April to ensure that we remain financially strong. This will mean the loss of valuable members of the team who have committed many years to dance and Dance Base, which is deeply saddening. We will retain a core of activity supporting dance artists and those who love to dance during this time, and look forward to expanding and developing new activity to support dance and dance artists in Scotland in the future.”

Tony Mills, Artistic Director of Dance Base, said: “Dance Base has pretty much been a constant throughout my career in one way or another. Yet despite my familiarity with the organisation as an artist, I never realised just how much it does in professional and public contexts and how far it reaches locally, nationally and across borders until I started working here.

“I really believe that this building has the power to lift people up. There’s a sense of possibility when you walk into Dance Base. It is what makes this place so special and exciting. It’s a place where we get to celebrate dance and those who engage with it.

“The level of impact Dance Base has had on people’s lives in the last 30 years, both artists and the public, is immeasurable. However, it is clear that Dance Base cannot continue to operate in the same way as it has done. This will be a tough process for all of us. But we have a vision for Dance Base and we will involve artists, public and partners in the development of this.

“Culture is inherent in everything we do. I believe that Dance Base can and should develop a more sustainable way of working, act to be truly responsive to the rapidly changing society we are living in and be as inclusive as possible. This is the journey we are on and we have some work to do. But I hope that recognition of our impact and value, and that of culture more widely, comes from those who can make a real difference to our future and society’s wellbeing. Dance Base is about joy. And as far as I’m concerned that is something worth protecting for now and the years to come.”

www.dancebase.co.uk/

